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Gypsy Policy and Roma Activism: From the Interwar Period to Current Policies and Challenges

Editors

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Editorial

Gypsy Policy and Roma Activism: From the Interwar Period to Current Policies and Challenges

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Abstract
The editorial introduces the key ideas of this thematic issue, which originated within the European Research Council project 'RomaInterbellum. Roma Civic Emancipation between the Two World Wars.' The period between WWI and WWII in the region of Central, Southeastern and Eastern Europe was an era of worldwide significant changes, which marked the birth of the Roma civic emancipation movement and impacted Roma communities' living strategies and visions about their future, worldwide. The aspiration of this thematic issue is to present the main dimensions of the processes of Roma civic emancipation and to outline the role of the Roma as active participants in the historical processes occurring in the studied region and as the creators of their own history. The editorial offers clarifications on the terminology and methodology employed in the articles included in this issue and their spatial and chronological parameters while also briefly introducing the individual authored studies of this issue.

Keywords
Central Europe; civic emancipation; Eastern Europe; equality; Gypsy Policy; inclusion; Interwar Period; nation-state; Roma Activism; Southeastern Europe

Issue
This editorial is part of the issue "Gypsy Policy and Roma Activism: From the Interwar Period to Current Policies and Challenges" edited by Elena Marushiakova (University of St Andrews, UK) and Vesselin Popov (University of St Andrews, UK).

1. Introduction

This thematic issue addresses the history of the Roma—known at that time under different local denominations, translated into English as Gypsies—in the period between WWI and WWII in Central, Southeastern and Eastern Europe, and its impacts in current policies and activism.

The period in analysis represented an era of significant changes worldwide, encompassing the breakdown of old Empires, the re-drawing of borders, the beginning of new-world relations on a macro-level and new inter-ethnic relations on micro-levels, huge movement of populations, the birth of new nation states, the rise of nationalism and internationalism, exchange of populations, civil wars and more. All these events not only marked the beginning of a new stage in world history but, on a micro-level, had a direct impact on living strategies and visions for the future of Roma communities worldwide. It was also the time when, for the first time, different solutions, strategies and models for social inclusion of Roma communities were proposed and applied by different actors, including Roma themselves.

Clarifications on the terminology and methodology employed in the articles in this thematic issue of *Social Inclusion* are due, as well as on their spatial and chronological parameters. We start with the latter.

2. Spatial and Chronological Scope

The spatial scope of the articles included in this issue is fixed as the region of Central, Southeastern and Eastern

Europe. This definition is not based on purely geographical reasons, but on historical and geopolitical criteria. Until the early 20th century, these were the lands of the three great Empires—Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman and Russian—where, after their disintegration, numerous new nation-states emerged. This is also the region where, at the time, the processes of Roma civic emancipation emerged and developed. Finland's short-lived membership within the Russian Empire (1809–1917) proved sufficient in developing the Roma emancipation movement in sync with a common paradigm for this entire region, which justifies the inclusion of Finland, part of the Scandinavian historical region, in one of our articles. At the same time, some other countries in the region (such as Austria, Albania, Lithuania, Estonia), where no written evidence has yet been found concerning the process of Roma civic emancipation, are absent.

The chronological scope of the issue is not determined by specific dates but according to respective historical eras. In the original idea of this thematic issue, the chronological limits were intended to be the two World Wars. Nevertheless, it also includes reflections on today's Roma policy, activism and failures of strategies for social inclusion which simply cannot be realized without a fuller understanding of the region's history during the interwar period.

Along with presenting results from current historical research, the aim of this thematic issue is to reflect and respond to anxieties coming from parallels with current failures of policies for inclusion, increased ethnic hatred and clashes and unfulfilled promises for equality. However, based on existing and newly discovered historical sources, and due to the purpose of the individual articles themselves, it appeared necessary to go beyond the range of our intended chronological limits: namely, the interwar period. In order to better explore and explain the processes of Roma civic emancipation, there was an evident need to start at the roots, wherein the first manifestations of Roma civic emancipation took us further back in time. As seen from the articles, though to some extent conditional, the inceptive time is set, in some cases, in the mid-19th century. This was when modern nationalism rapidly developed, especially after the revolutions of 1848, and when the processes of Roma civic emancipation began to take root.

In this thematic issue we have attempted to look at these processes while avoiding the 'trap' of Orientalism (Said, 1995) and Balkanism (Todorova, 2009). For us, Roma are not characterised by a "belated modernisation" (Jusdanis, 1991), belated even in comparison with surrounding nations in Eastern Europe. Just the opposite: For us, they are part of the modernisation of the region viewed through the lenses of "multiple modernities" (Eisenstadt, 2000). Roma emancipation as a national building process is here perceived as part of a global social process of re-arrangement of group solidarities, as a by product of modernity (Todorova, 2005). Roma emancipation as a process is strengthened by the ethnic solidarity that inevitably emerges among groups which are relegated to inferior positions in a cultural division of labour (Hechter, 1975).

The end caesura of our focus is the WWII, which fundamentally changed the worldwide social and political order and greatly influenced the processes of Roma emancipation. The end of the WWII marks the beginning of a new and quite different historical era.

This frontier however is not 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 new social, economic and cultural conditions brought about by the conflict. 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. We also extend our chronological boundaries to include the contemporary dimension, i.e., the striking similarities between Roma emancipation in the interwar period and current concerns.

Chronological boundaries are not to be perceived literally. They are not absolute, since both the historical roots of particular processes and their later appearances, and present-day manifestations are reflected upon.

3. On Terminology

The two key terms used in the literature, source material and now analysed in the articles in this issue 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 (mainly European) international and national levels (Marushiakova & Popov, 2018, pp. 385–418). In this case, we take a pragmatic approach and consider it sufficient enough to briefly explain the principles underlying the use of the two key terms in the thematic issue.

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 include 'Αθιγγανοι' (Byzantine Empire, Greece), 'Kıbtı' and 'Çingene' (Ottoman Empire, Turkey), 'Цигани' (Serbia, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia), 'Ţigani' (Romania), 'Zigeuner' (Austro-Hungarian Empire, Austria), 'Cigányok' (Hungary), 'Cikáni' and 'Cigáni' (Czechoslovakia), 'Cyganie' (Poland), 'Цыгане' (Russian Empire, USSR, Russian Federation), 'Čigonai' (Lithuania), 'Čigāni' (Latvia), 'Mustalased' (Estonia), 'Mustalainen' (Finland) and more. Over time, and especially after WWI, 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 denom-

inations of the Roma communities in their respective countries. All these denominations are usually translated into English 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 the scholarly jargon, is used to denominate diverse nomadic communities regardless of their ethnic origins and identity (Hancock, 2010, pp. 95–96). The term, as well as all its equivalents in local languages, is used in referrence to all these communities throughout history, and certainly so during the period in analysis, from the mid-19th century to the end of WWII, despite its 'inappropriateness.' Modifying this in historical sources would mean de facto rewriting and falsifying history (including the quoted historical sources) from a contemporary perspective.

The Roma activists themselves, in the period of the birth of their civic emancipation movement, except when they wrote in the Romani language, also used these terms, and in their struggles for the civic emancipation of their own community they proceeded from the official discourse set out in their respective countries precisely. Without adequately reflecting on this discourse, one could not understand the first attempts to change it, especially in Romania and Finland, by replacing the designation 'Gypsies' with 'Roma,' which began during this period. In the end, in the translation of such local terms into English, the articles use the word Gypsies simply because a more adequate term does not presently exist.

For these reasons, the designation 'Gypsies' is used in this thematic issue in the historical sense, i.e., when presenting historical realities. The designation 'Roma' is, however, used as well, when speaking from the contemporary point of view, wherein the movement for Roma civic emancipation is considered globally, and as a movement that is still evolving today.

4. The Contributions

Within one single thematic issue, the overall dimensions of the processes of Roma civic emancipation cannot be covered in its entirety, and perhaps it is even less possible to present all their specific manifestations. Our aspirations are more modest: Through this issue we intend to represent the diversity of these processes, and in different countries of the Central, Southeastern and Eastern Europe region because, in each of them, they differ in certain and more or less clearly expressed specific traits (which does not, however, exclude their commonality as a whole).

Each of the articles included in this issue deals with a different dimension of the processes of Roma civic emancipation in an individual country of the framed region. The only exception is that of Marushiakova and Popov (2020), who present the attitude of the new Roma civic elite towards nomadism of part of the Roma in the region. The article clearly illustrates how, years before contemporary scholars started to abandon nomadism as the primordial and inherent feature on which Romani identity is built, this Roma civic elite rejected the colonial approach which exoticized their community.

Šarenac (2020) pays attention to the participation of Roma from Serbia in the ranks of the army, which is a turning point from which Roma civic emancipation actually begins. This participation is perceived by Roma themselves, as well as by the entire macro-community, as an important sign for their social integration as part of the Serbian civic nation, in which Roma seek their equal place while preserving their community identity.

Turning to the much more general and comprehensive plan of the newly created post-war Yugoslavia, Zahova (2020) elaborates on this topic further by presenting the work and vision for the future of the Roma community of one of the most important Roma visioneers, Svetozar Simić.

Marinov (2020) reveals yet another issue related to the processes of the Roma civic emancipation by focusing on the Bulgarian society of the interwar period and the integration of Roma, which, the author shows, is just about existing negative social stereotypes as it is about the reaction of the new Roma civic elite and their fight against these stereotypes.

Two of the articles in the issue are devoted to the processes of Roma civic emancipation in Romania. Matei (2020) presents the overall dimensions of these processes in context, revealing the existing dependencies and alliances and outlining the leading trends and directions in their development. Ploscariu (2020), on the other hand, studies the introduction of the new evangelical churches among the Roma, a process that has become especially important today since belonging to Evangelical movements and churches is now one of the leading trends in the life of the Roma in the whole region.

Hajnáczky's article (2020) is dedicated to a hitherto almost unknown and unexplored phenomenon, namely Gypsy music associations in Hungary. The emphasis here is not so much on presenting their activities in protecting the professional interests of Gypsy musicians, but on the overall incorporation of Gypsy music as an integral part of the Hungarian musical culture, which proves to be an important factor in the overall process of social integration of Roma in the Hungarian nation.

Gontarek (2020) presents one specific aspect of the processes of Roma civic emancipation—the so-called 'Gypsy Kings' in Poland. This represents a historical curiosity as well a media phenomenon with no further advancement. The author's focus is not so much on the verisimilitude of the publicly proposed ideas for the creation of a 'Gypsy state' in different parts of the world but, rather, in presenting the competitions and alliances as documented in the Gypsy Kings' struggles for shaping the future of their communities, including the emergence and development of the very idea of a national Roma state.

While in other countries in the region the movement for Roma civic emancipation generally did not succeed to attract the active support of the authorities, which,

in most cases, treated it negligently, in the Soviet Union of the 1920s and 1930s the situation was quite different. Within the framework of the common national policy of affirmative action (Martin, 2001), the new Soviet Roma elite was given the opportunity to turn part of its ideas into state policy and to participate actively in its implementation. The article by Shapoval (2020) presents a comprehensive picture of the Soviet state's cultural policy toward the Gypsies and assesses it as Romani Cultural Renaissance. Chernykh (2020) reveals another aspect of the common affirmative policy of the Soviet state toward Gypsies—the development of economic activities in the Keldarari group through the system of artels (small productive cooperatives) as a form of social inclusion of Roma.

The final article in this thematic issue, by Roman (2020), is dedicated to the specific case of the development of Roma civic emancipation processes in Finland, a country which does not presently belong to the region under research. Here, the development of these processes begins along the path of the evangelical churches and, as said above, this direction of development continues to be relevant to this day. A fascinating element in this study is connected with the combination of individual elements, many of which have parallels in examples from other countries and which, once again, underline the importance of the country's historical legacy.

5. Conclusion

One of the important features of this issue is that all the articles are largely based on materials written by the Roma themselves. This sets a basis for a new, holistic approach in studying the main dimensions of the processes of Roma civic emancipation in the region of Central, Southeastern and Eastern Europe. It clearly outlines the role of the Roma as active participants in the historical processes occurring in the studied region and as the creators of their own history. Our ambition is that this issue will contribute to a change in the leading paradigms of Romani Studies and Roma will cease to be presented only as passive victims of certain governmental policies towards them. Rather, they will become active participants in the presentation and analysis of their own historical processes.

Acknowledgments

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Article

‘Letter to Stalin’: Roma Activism vs. Gypsy Nomadism in Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe before WWII

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Abstract
From the beginning, academic research on Gypsies in Western Europe has presented their nomadic way of life as their most important and essential feature, a key pillar of their community identity. Measures for their sedentarisation were perceived as a shackle in a chain of persecutions, and the policy of sedentarisation conducted in the 1950s–1970s in Central, South-Eastern, and Eastern Europe has continuously been interpreted as an example of the crimes of the communist regimes against the human and cultural rights of Roma. What has been missing, however, in these interpretations is the stance on the issue of nomadism as expressed by the Roma themselves and, more specifically, by the Roma civic elite: namely, by the Roma activists who initiated the Roma civic emancipation and created the first Roma organizations in the regions. In recent years, a need to critically re-think the field of Romani Studies in order to take into account the viewpoint of the studied community comes in the foreground of academic and civil society discussions. Such re-consideration is unavoidable also in studying the field of Roma history. This article strives to fill this knowledge gap and to initiate a new discussion about the issue of the so-called Gypsy nomadism. The viewpoints on this issue, coming from the Roma civic elite itself, are presented primarily on the basis of historical evidence from the interwar period, but are not limited to its framework. Finally, later historical developments in the issue of Roma activists’ approach to Gypsy nomadism will also be outlined, including its contemporary dimensions.

Keywords
Central Europe; Eastern Europe; Gypsy nomadism; interwar period; Roma activism; Roma organizations

Issue
This article is part of the issue “Gypsy Policy and Roma Activism: From the Interwar Period to Current Policies and Challenges” edited by Elena Marushiakova (University of St Andrews, UK) and Vesselin Popov (University of St Andrews, UK).

1. Introduction

Up until now, in the field of Roma history research, the main focus has been on the various policies pursued towards Roma/Gypsies, without however showing their own attitudes towards these policies. The major issue here is constituted by the leading predetermined discourse according to which Roma are viewed as passive objects of the policies of authorities rather than as active creators of their own history. In this way, the Roma point of view is de facto absent, and the reaction of the Roma themselves (or lack thereof) to the policies implemented towards them, as well as their visions about the future of their communities, are neglected. From this point of view, the title of our article refers not only to the specific letters of Roma activists to Stalin (which are discussed later in the text) but more broadly it is a metaphor for the citizens’ requests to authorities. In our case, it expresses the aspirations of the new Roma civic elite to turn the problems of the Roma into a public issue that needs to be addressed by the political class in their respective societies, of which they are an integral part.

A standard explanation for omitting a Roma point of view is that this is due to the lack of sufficient historical sources which present Roma visions. However, the opposite is true. The preserved sources are numerous but, at the same time, under-researched. In reality, as our recent research shows, a huge amount of sources written by Roma or reflecting their views is preserved in archives dispersed in different countries, yet they are still, to a large extent, neglected. For example, until the start of WWII, a total of 19 Roma newspapers and journals (one newspaper in Ottoman Empire, one newspaper in Yugoslavia, three newspapers in Bulgaria, six newspapers in Romania, three journals and one newspaper in Hungary, and two journals and two newspapers in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics [USSR]) were published in the region of Central, South-Eastern, and Eastern Europe (CSEEE). Numerous Roma books and collections of different types also began to be published during this period. We can find such publications in Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Romania, Czechoslovakia, and Latvia. Particularly striking is the case of the early USSR, where a total of 257 books published in the Romani language have thus far been discovered. On top of this, the archives in these countries store a huge amount of a wide variety of other documents written by Roma (for example, statutes and documentation of Roma organizations, letters to institutions, etc.), many of which have not yet been studied. This source base reveals the Roma perspective on a wide variety of public issues which concerned the Roma during this historical period. The type, quality, and number of preserved sources in different countries are different, but it nevertheless enables us to draw an overall picture of the region (with the particular specificities for each country).

At this point, we have to emphasize that this article does not aim to study Roma nomadism in the region nor the state policies for their sedentarisation. The purpose of the article is to present the Roma perspective on community issues (with the example of Gypsy nomadism), as perceived in the context of new civic nations, of which the Roma are also a part. Even though this perspective includes quite diverse and uneven discrete country-specific parts, it is subordinated to a common vision for the future of their community. This forms a common Roma narrative, namely a narrative of the new Roma civic elite, which expresses the ideology of the Roma civic emancipation movement in the region of CSEEE.

The Roma civic emancipation movement began with the transition to the modern age when the level of civic integration of the Roma had already reached a certain level. It could be understood in the backdrop of the general socio-political context of the 19th century, which marked the beginning of modern nationalism in CSEEE. The general social and political processes inevitably exerted their influence on the Roma who lived in these lands. Individual members of the community, which formed its elite, started looking for a new, better balance between the two main dimensions of the existence of Roma: namely, as a separate ethnic community and as an integral part of the society in which they lived (Marushiakova & Popov, 2016a, p. 15). And this is, in fact, the very process of Roma civic emancipation (which presupposes equality, full social inclusion, and preservation of ethnicity).

Miroslav Hroch's (2000) arguments concerning the formation and evolution of the national movements helps us in better understanding these processes. The emergence of the Roma civic emancipation movement was initiated by a relatively small circle of the Roma elite, at least in the first stages of its development (until WWII) and, accordingly, the second stage (propaganda and the agitation of these national ideas among their ethnic community) covered only a limited circle of their community. This is similar (at least as a model) to the creation of all new modern nations in the region, where it was the elites who created national concepts that became subsequently adopted by the masses (Hroch, 2000). That is why our article is primarily focusing on the visions put forward by the Roma elite and its leading representatives concerning the future of their community, while the attitude of the community itself towards these ideas should be the subject of another study.

2. Bulgaria, Serbia/Yugoslavia, and Greece

In the 19th century, new independent nation-states (Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria) separated from the Ottoman Empire, and it was here that the first civic forms of Roma organizations emerged. A full neglect of the nomadic Gypsies is noticeable from the program documents of all these organizations that were created in the Balkans before WWI by settled Gypsies, such as the First Serbian Gypsy Association, founded in 1890 in Belgrade ("Pokret Cigana," 1922, p. 3), and the Association of Egyptian Nationality from the town of Vidin founded in 1910 in Bulgaria (Ustav, 1910). Also the Gypsy Guilds (Esnafs), that originated under the conditions of the Ottoman Empire (Marushiakova & Popov, 2016b, pp. 76–89) changed their forms and social functions under new conditions and became professional organisation and associations, e.g., the Porter's Association, founded in Lom in 1896 (Tahir, 2018), the Porter's Association 'Labour' in Kyustendil (founded in 1901), the First Sofia Flower-Selling Association 'Future' in Sofia (founded in 1909), among others, all of which were established by settled Gypsies.

The neglection of nomads by their sedentary counterparts is especially visible in the case of Roma suffrage struggles in Bulgaria, where no single Gypsy nomad was present among the participants in the 'First Gypsy Congress,' convoked in 1905, asking for the reinstallation of electoral rights revoked from Muslim Gypsies and Gypsy nomads (Marushiakova & Popov, 2017, pp. 38–42). The complete disinterest in Gypsy nomads by activists, all of whom came from sedentary communities, continued in the coming years. In 1919, the

Sofia Common Moslem Educational and Cultural Mutual Aid Organization 'Istikbal—Future' (Bulgaria, 1919) was established. This organization also requested the restoration of the Gypsy suffrage (Pashov, 1957, pp. 101–102). At the end of 1919, a new electoral law was passed, which introduced a compulsory vote for all Bulgarian citizens, and in this way the settled Muslim Gypsies once again obtained their electoral rights; deprived from suffrage remained only persons without a permanent residence (i.e., Gypsy nomads). No voice in their support was raised after the changes in the Election Law, nor even later in the 1930s, when the organization Istikbal was transformed into the Common Mohammedan-Gypsy National Cultural-Educational and Mutual Aid Union. There was no word on Gypsy nomads in the charter of the organization either (Bulgaria, 1933), nor in the *Terbie* newspaper published by this organization in the period 1933–1934. Furthermore, there was also no reaction in 1937, when the suffrage of the nomads was restored within the new ordinance-law on the election of Members of Parliament.

After WWI, in Yugoslavia, the First Serbian Gypsy Association for Mutual Assistance in Sickness and Death was inaugurated in the 1920s. In 1930, the newspaper *Romano lil/Ciganske novine* was published. In 1935, the new Association of Belgrade Gypsies for the Celebration of Aunt Bibia was established, while the Educational Club of Yugoslavian Gypsy Youth, which grew into Yugoslavian-Gypsy Youth, also took shape (Acković, 2001, pp. 43–59). In general, Gypsy nomads are not mentioned at all in the documents and publications of these organizations. Perhaps the only exception is the following text, which makes it clear that Roma activists clearly distinguish themselves from the former:

> It is necessary to distinguish between nomadic Gypsies and Gypsies who are permanently inhabiting villages and towns. The nomadic Gypsies do not have a permanent place of residence, nor do they seem to have a sense for it; their moral is in conflict with our morals and they have no sense for what can and cannot be done….The environment controls the moral behaviour of the Gypsy inhabitants in villages and cities, and they take care of being honest. (N[ikolić], 1939, p. 10, authors' translation)

In Greece, the Panhellenic Cultural Association of the Greek Gypsies was founded in Athens in 1939 (Marushiakova & Popov, in press). It is clear from the recently discovered organization's statute that its members lived sedentarily, and there are no historical records that it has ever engaged in the problems of Gypsy nomads.

In summary, the attitude of the pioneers of the Roma civic emancipation in the Balkans concerning Gypsy nomads in the period up to WWII can be reduced to total ignorance (and only in some cases a firm distinction from them).

3. Romania

A clear vision in the attitude of Roma activists towards the nomadic way of life of the Gypsies in the discourse of Roma civic emancipation emerges for the first time in Romania. The first Roma political Assembly in the postwar Romania, held in Rupea on the 16th of January 1919, formulated concrete demands to local authorities and representatives of the new Romanian state, one of which was the assistance in the sedentarisation of the nomads (Matei, 2013, pp. 449–450). Similarly, Naftanailă Lazăr, the President of the first Gypsy civic organization, the Neo-Rustic Brotherhood, established in 1926 in Făgăraș, addressed his fellow members in Transylvania with the following words:

> Tent Gypsies should stop wandering and begin a life of settled people. Their children should attend school and the church. Their sons should join the army, where they will receive good and useful teachings. (Lazăr, 1934, p. 1, translation by Raluca Bianca Roman)

This attitude to the issue of Gypsy nomadism is evident also from the documents and the activities of both national organizations founded in 1933, namely the General Association of Gypsies in Romania, headed by Ion Popp-Şerboianu, and the General Union of Roma in Romania, headed by Gheorghe Lăzăreanu-Lăzurică, (Achim, 2004, pp. 153–161). In his Appeal to All Gypsies in Romania from August 27, 1933, Ion Popp-Şerboianu defined as one of the goals of its organization:

> The insistence to colonize[1] all nomadic Gypsies by giving them the necessary land in the various parts of the country, and the Association to take full responsibility for their settlement and their proper correction, cutting off the theft and begging. (Năstasă & Varga, 2001, p. 97, translation by Raluca Bianca Roman)

The Statute of the other national organization, the General Union of Roma in Romania, Article 4, point 2, states one of its main objectives:

> To stand for the nomads so that they will be settled on the land on the outskirts of towns, or in villages, so that they, once they do not wander anymore, will no longer commit theft, dishonouring the Roma nation, as a pariah of society. (Năstasă & Varga, 2001, p. 120, translation by Raluca Bianca Roman)

In general, Roma activists (who all originated from settled communities) recognized the heterogeneity of their community and made attempts to establish relationships with the heads of the nomadic camps and to respond to their expectations they proposed a differentiated approach towards them. Concerning nomadism, Roma activists were unanimous in their position: Nomads

[1] During the interwar period this term was used in the sense of sedentarisation.

should be sedentarized through special measures of the Romanian state, which must create the appropriate conditions (land allocation, housing, employment) for this. They even proposed special steps for sedentarisation, and the most appropriate locations for the settlement of nomads were discussed: at the periphery or through the formation of suburban communes near cities, fairs, and urban communities, where they would have the opportunity to sell their work weekly (Tache, 1940).

The most rigid and consistent supporters of the idea of sedentarisation of Roma nomads were the leaders of the Oltenia Circle of the General Association of Gypsies, whose vision in this respect is reflected in a number of articles published in the organization's newspaper *Timpul*.

The calls for sedentarisation made by Roma activists did not lead to any reaction from the part of the Romanian state. However, the idea of getting rid of the nomadic way of life among the Gypsies, which was seen as a social problem, paradoxically fitted into the general social context of the Interwar period of time. Under such conditions, several years later, the tragic experiment of solving the issue of nomadism through the deportation of the nomad Gypsies to Transnistria during WWII was realized (Achim, 2004, pp. 167–188). Seen from today's point of view and taking into account the results of this deportation, of special interest are the proposals from Roma activists:

> In the labour colonies, where most of them are likely to be sent, it would be desirable for this broader re-education based on broader and more humane understandings. (Tache, 1940, p. 2, translation by Raluca Bianca Roman)

4. Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Poland

During the interwar period in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, the processes of Roma civic emancipation took different forms.

In Hungary (at that time part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire), at the end of the 19th century, the Association of Hungarian Gypsy Musicians was founded, which published the *Journal of Hungarian Gypsy Musicians* (1908–1910). In 1923, already in independent Hungary, the Hungarian Gypsy Musician's National Association was re-registered and renewed the publishing of the journal. In 1935, the association was transformed into the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Federation and, in 1938, it began publishing the journal *Hungarian Gypsy Music* (Hajnáczky, 2019). The main aim of Hungarian Gypsy musicians activists was the rise of their status and the defence of the professional rights. As such, they were hardly thinking about Gypsies with other occupations and even less about Gypsy nomads.

In Czechoslovakia, the development of the Roma emancipation movement come via the establishment of civic organisations. In 1929, in the city of Košice, Eastern Slovakia, a civic, non-Roma organization was created, having a significant Gypsy presence among its creators' constituency under the name of the League for Cultural Uplift of Gypsies. It was transformed in 1930 into the Society for the Study and Solving Gypsy Question. This organization supported the establishment of a Gypsy organization, named 'Lavutarisz' Cultural and Social Society of Gypsies in Slovakia (Horváthová, 1964, pp. 168–169; Jurová, 2014, pp. 53–62).

What unites the various forms of Roma civic emancipation processes in both countries is the complete neglect of the problems of the Gypsy nomads, which is reflected in their absence from the documents of the organizations, and their publications. However, an interesting nuance is the performance of a play called 'Gypsy Wedding' with a story from the life of the traveling Gypsies, performed by the Gypsy Theater in Košice, in the framework of the celebrations marking the 500th anniversary of the arrival of the Gypsies in Slovakia ("Oslava 500. výročia príchodu Cigánov na Slovensko," 1938, p. 2). In other words, the nomadic lifestyle of Gypsies was seen as part of the history of the community, which strengthened its identity, but not as a problem of its present, and even less as a prospect for its future development.

The case with the so-called Gypsy Kings in Poland differs more or less from other forms and pursued goals of the Roma civic emancipation movement in the countries of the region during the interwar period. The interesting thing about this case is that its moving force were representatives of a nomadic Gypsy group, the Kelderari, who were new migrants to the Polish lands from Romania in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Already the very first Gypsy who was declared as the Gypsy King, Jan Michalak (Michalescu), appealed to Polish authorities for a legal reform that would allow nomad Gypsies to settle ("Cyganie w Polsce wystawiają wlasną listę," 1928, p. 2). In fact, the need for the settlement of nomads and the constant emphasizing of the place of Gypsies as full citizens of Poland, who should perform their civic duties, including serving in the army, are found in one form or another in all public messages of all Gypsy Kings and applicants for this position.

The leading vision of the Gypsy Kings for the implementation of Roma civic emancipation was by creating an independent Gypsy state, whose future location was sought on three continents—Asia (in India), Africa (indicated alternatives were Abyssinia, Eritrea, Somalia, Uganda, and Namibia), and South America. This vision implied, as a prerequisite for its realization, the cessation of the nomadic way of life. The Gypsy Kings saw pompous actions, press releases, and interviews as being the essential tools and main ways to attract public interest for their actions, as well as the main ways for them to achieve their aims. It is thus that these types of activities coming from the Polish Gypsy Kings were also widely reflected in the worldwide press.

5. The USSR

All example of the attitudes of Roma activists to the Gypsy nomadic way of life in the interwar period presented thus far were only in the field of leadership's visions and almost none in field of practice. But there was a country where the Roma activists got the opportunity to realize their visions in actual practice: this was the early USSR and therefore this case deserves special attention.

The Soviet totalitarian system itself is usually perceived as a pyramid, with party leadership at the top, and all the units located below serving to carry out the decisions taken at the top. In fact, as the case of Roma activists and the policy towards Gypsy nomads will show, things can happen not only following the initiative from top to bottom, but also vice versa.

Surprisingly, it appears that the active side pleading for the sedentarisation of Gypsy nomads in the USSR were initially Gypsy activists, and the Soviet state affirmed and realized these ideas more or less successfully. In January 1924, a meeting of the Initiative Proletarian Group of Gypsies was held, which decided to set up a Society of Gypsies, living on territory of the Moscow governorate. One of the main aims of this Society was "preparing the members of the Society for advanced land processing and agricultural work for the purpose of a transition to a sedentary way of life" (Russia, 1924).

This was followed by a lengthy process lasting more than two years, in which, according to the legal requirements, the Statute of the new organization, now called the Union of Gypsies Living on Territory of RSFSR was coordinated with the Department of Nationalities at the All-Union Central Executive Committee (VTsIK), and in a revised version was submitted for endorsement by the People Commissioner for Home Affairs (NKVD). This proposal for endorsement Statute, Article II (Aims of the Union), § 1 reads:

> The Union aims at uniting and organising the Gypsy working masses living on the territory of the RSFSR [Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic], 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. (Russia, 1925a, authors' translation)

In the Statute of Union, approved by NKVD on July 23, 1925, however, this sentence was removed. The problem with the nomadic way of life is mentioned in Article III, § 6d, which in the new version reads:

> The Union…conducts a moral struggle with the public evil among its members, such as: drunkenness, fortune-telling, begging, gambling, nomadism. (Russia, 1925b)

The Gypsy activists themselves, however, had other views on the matter, and as early as in the All-Russian Union of Gypsies' Plan of Works for 1926, they laid out the following plans:

> 2/ The Union proposes: a/to allocate in a Southern region a territory for the settlement of Gypsies on which (territory) to unite all kinds of agricultural organizations, as well as the Gypsies who wish to settle independently. (Russia, 1926, authors' translation)

At this stage, the Soviet authorities were reluctant to support such a policy of state-controlled sedentarisation of Gypsy nomads. 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" (Russia, 1927a), 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 matter of principle. The Soviet legislature does not know the measures you propose to combat the tribes that lead a nomadic way of life. (Russia, 1927b, authors' translation)

It sounds incredible but, in this case, the NKVD was the guardian of Soviet laws and opposed compulsory sedentarisation. In terms of combating nomadism, for which the Gypsy activists made appeals, in the end they were only given the opportunity to lead a 'moral struggle' against nomadism.

In the 1920s and 1930s, the struggle of Gypsy activists against the nomadic way of life of the Roma was fruitful, reaching support from the highest authorities of the Soviet state. Together with the Department of Nationalities, Gypsy activists prepared two special decrees which were endorsed: On Measures to Facilitate the Transition of Nomadic Gypsies to a Settled Way of Life of October 1, 1926, and On the Allocating Land for Gypsies who are Transitioning to a Sedentary Working Way of Life of June 20, 1928. By the first decree, the 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 not only confirmed those privileges but extended them further by assuming the costs of settling from the state budget. In this way, the Gypsies were given the opportunity to enjoy privileges that were inaccessible to the vast majority of the population of the USSR.

In all administrative documents of this period, it is constantly emphasized that the sedentarisation of the Gypsy nomads must be voluntary, without any coercion, and therefore the Gypsy activists have the responsibility of persuasion of the nomads in the advantages

of the sedentary way of life. In 1927, the All-Russian Gypsy Union came out with a special appeal 'To Gypsy Inhabitants of RSFSR.' It is worth to quote the beginning of this appeal:

> Ten years ago, thanks to the October Revolution, all national minorities oppressed by the tsarist government received the right to freely build their well-being. The nomadic tribes, with the help of the Soviet authorities, begin to settle on the ground, engaged in agriculture. They have their own steading, their own hamlets, villages, own schools. Every year the number of nomads decreases and soon there will be none at all. (Russia, 1927c, authors' translation)

In this respect, indicative are also the articles in the national press written by leading Roma leaders (cf. Savvov & Lebedev, 1930, p. 3; Taranov, 1927, p. 6). Many similar articles in this regard have also been published in the Romani language journals of *Romani Zoria* and *Nevo Drom*, and also in the two newspapers *About the Bolshevik's Kolkhoz* and *Stalinist*, published by the Gypsy kolkhoz Gypsy Labour in the region of Mineralnye Vody, where in the village of Kangly in 1932 a Gypsy national selsovet (village council) was created, which existed de-jure until 1952 (Russia, 1952). In the 1930s, a mass publishing of books in Romani language began and a significant part of them was devoted to agriculture, in support of the created Gypsy kolkhozes. An example of this is the book by Mikhail Bezlyudskiy (Bezlyudsko, 1933), or a guide for the creation and legal registration of the Gypsy kolkhozes (Bezlyudsko & Germano, 1933).

The Roma activists could rely on scientific justification concerning their attitude towards Gypsy nomadism, using the thesis of the famous Russian ethnographer Lev Sternberg:

> Gypsies, to a large extent, and perhaps completely, are a victim of the historical injustice of the surrounding peoples. (Sternberg, 1903, pp. 307–308, authors' translation)

This thesis is repeated and enlarged in the text 'About the work among Gypsies' prepared for the official use of Soviet institutions by Ivan Lebedev (1926), known later as Ivan Rom-Lebedev, a secretary of the All-Russian Union of Gypsies, in 1926. There, he explains Gypsy nomadism, with an emphasis on the centuries-old persecution to which they had been subjected over the centuries, and the argument that only the October Revolution opened before them the way to new life (Lebedev, 1926). Also, on this basis, the Roma activists have, for the first time, formulated the concept of anti-Gypsyism (Lebedev & German, 1929, p. 4; Taranov, 1931; cf. also Holler, 2014, pp. 84–88), which is so popular nowadays.

In this way, the overall logic of Roma visionaries' attitude towards Gypsy nomadism was shaped: Once the nomadic lifestyle has arisen as a result of the injustice of the surrounding peoples and their respective institutions, its discontinuation must accordingly be conducted by the Soviet institution, who took over the historical responsibility to care for the creation of a rightful society. The mechanisms by which Gypsy activists in the 1930s strived to influence the main directions within the Soviet policy included the usage of addressing the authorities in frames of the popular genre of the time, the 'Letter to the Leader.' This form of address to the authorities was imposed in Soviet society as soon as the pyramid of the Communist rule was finally established, and it became clear to all who the real 'Supreme Leader' of the Soviet state was (at that time, Stalin, the Secretary-General).

Unlike many other letters of this genre, the letters written by Gypsy activists concern not specific problems, but rather pose general questions of principle about the overall dimensions of Soviet politics towards the Gypsies, its main aims and tasks, and the forms and mechanisms of its implementation in specific basic fields (in our case, the issue of sedentarisation). Thus, these letters once again confirm that Gypsy activism appears (or at least tried to be) an active factor in the formation and implementation of Gypsy policy in the USSR.

Chronologically, the first letter of this type is from Ilya Gerasimov, from the region of Smolensk, at that time (the letter is dated November 9, 1934) a cadet in Higher Courses of Soviet Construction at the VTsIK, and was addressed to the Chairman of the VTsIK of USSR, Mikhail Kalinin. The main message of the letter is as follows:

> I ask you to bring up the matter of the sedentarisation of the nomadic Gypsies, having in mind dedicating a special Gypsy territory in the form of a [national] rayon. (Gerasimov, 1934, authors' translation)

The next letter is from the Summer of 1935, from Trofim Gerasimov, an engineer at the Train carriage factory in the town of Zaporizhzhia-Kamenskoe in the Ukrainian SSR. The letter is addressed to "the Dear Leader of the Party and Workers' Class—Comrade Joseph Vissarionovich STALIN" (Gerasimov, 1935) and it argues for the need for rapid sedentarisation of Gypsy nomads and specifies how this can be done:

> The settlement of the toiling Gypsies is truly significant. The available kolkhozes would go to their designated rayon with great willingness and this will allow the Gypsy camps to be liquidated….[The] important issue, is the initial detachment of a Gypsy rayon, which would have to grow and turn into an autonomous Gypsy republic….In the rayon where the Gypsies would be settled, people's education could be conducted in all social dimensions….With the organization of the rayon which will, with enormous speed, turn into an autonomous republic, this army of toiling Gypsies will become a direct conduit for the construction of Socialism—our direct and main task. (Gerasimov, 1935, authors' translation)

In 1935, Ilya Gerasimov returned to Western Oblast (with the center in Smolensk) after completing his training at the School for Soviet Personnel Leaders and was appointed Instructor of the Western Oblast Executive Committee. In early 1936, he organized a major public event for Gypsy activists, namely the First Union consultative meeting on the issue of cultural and economic service to the working Gypsies from the entire USSR. There, on behalf of the delegates of Western Oblast, a letter was adopted unanimously and sent "to the Great Teacher, the Genius Leader of the Working People from all over the World, the Great Leader of our Communist Party VKP(b), Comrade Stalin!" (Russia, 1936a). This letter raised the question of the need for the rapid transition of the nomadic population to a sedentary lifestyle:

> We are asking on behalf of the Gypsies to allocate a territory, at least in the form of a rayon, for the compact settlement of the toiling Gypsies. (Russia, 1936a, authors' translation)

In the Summer of 1936, the so-called nationwide discussion of the draft USSR Constitution (adopted on December 5, 1936) was held. Within this discussion, the newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, in the heading 'The Workers Propose,' published opinions of three workers from Moscow, who offered:

> To create a Gypsy Autonomous Oblast within the RSFSR or the Ukrainian SSR, uniting presently scattered Gypsy kolkhozes; thanks to the creation of the Gypsies Autonomous Oblast, we will be even more successful in the transition of Gypsies to a settled status and their cultural revival. (Maslennikov, Smirnov, & Pletnev, 1936, p. 2, authors' translation)

Immediately afterward, a message was published on behalf of the "Moscow Gypsy Activists Group at the Central Gypsy Club and the plenipotentiaries of the once again organized Gypsy kolkhoz in Kharkiv," supporting this proposal with the argument that "the establishment of the Gypsy Autonomous Oblast will contribute to the rapid settlement of toiling Gypsies on the allocated territory" ("Rabochie predlagayut," 1936, p. 2), i.e., the Gypsy activists again put to the fore the need for the urgent sedentarisation of the Gypsy nomads.

A few months later, in the public debate about the new Constitution, Ilya Gerasimov reported that:

> Among the nomadic population a great craving for a settled life can now be seen; when discussing the draft of Stalin's Constitution in the Gypsy kolkhozes and among the nomadic population there were many motions asking the government to allocate one area in the Union for the settlement of the Gypsies. (Gerasimov, 1936a, p. 3, authors' translation)

Along with this, he sent a letter to the Constitutional Commission, under the leadership of Joseph Stalin, which reads:

> The discussion of the Stalin's Constitution project of the USSR in the Gypsy kolkhozes and among the nomadic population provoked great activity….The nomadic population asks the Constitution's Commission, under the leadership of J. V. STALIN, and the Government to allocate a rayon in the [Soviet] Union for the compact settlement of the Gypsies….There is now a particularly great attraction to sedentarisation….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. (Gerasimov, 1936b, authors' translation)

The proposals made by the Gypsy activists for the creation of a Gypsy territorial-administrative unit, which they associated with the sedentarisation of Gypsy nomads, received support from the Soviet authorities. In 1935, a circular request was sent by Department of Nationalities of VTsIK to the subjects of the RSFSR with the question whether they are able to provide vacant land for the compact settlement of Gypsy nomads, for the purpose of sedentarisation (Russia, 1935). The answers received were diverse. Some of the local authorities (e.g., North Caucasus kray, Azov-Black Sea kray, Crimean Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic [ASSR] were adamant that they had no vacant land. Gorky kray, on the contrary, 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). The West Siberian Territory bound the provision of vacant land in the Chisto-Ozersky rayon (today in the Altai Kray) with the need to receive additional budgetary investments (Russia, 1935). Most of the Gypsy activists continued to push for a territory in southern Russia, and for his part, Ilya Gerasimov, using his administrative position, proposed the Western Oblast, justifying it with the presence in the area of an already prepared primary structure—Gypsy kolkhoses, Gypsy 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" (Russia, 1936b).

Finally, after long debates at various levels within Soviet institutions (with the active involvement of Gypsy activists), on April 7, 1936 the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR adopted a decree on Measures on the Employment of Nomads and the Improvement of Economic and Cultural Services for Toiler Gypsies (Council of Nationalities at Central Executive Committee of the USSR, 1936). However, for various reasons (the overall changes in USSR national policy, the preparation for WWII, disagreements between

institutions, etc.), the successful implementation of the plans to create a Gypsy national territorial administrative unit was hindered (for more details see Marushiakova & Popov, in press; O'Keeffe, 2013, pp. 177–186).

The last letter to Stalin during the interwar period was from Nikolay Pankov written in 1938, and is different from the rest (Pankov, 1938). In it, the leading theme was not the Gypsy nomadism; it offers a relatively much more comprehensive and detailed program for the need to work on a solution to the problems faced by the Gypsies in the USSR. The emphasis is placed on the development of the Romani language, education, and culture, and even on the question of the need for political representation of the Gypsies in the highest state bodies. Moreover, the letter de facto protests against the already started policy of closing down Gypsy schools and of suspending Romani language publications, which is distinctive compared to the other letters to Stalin. This letter should be viewed in the context of an already launched radical change within the nationalities policy of the USSR, which put an end to the affirmative action policy.

In general, the leading line in nationalities politics in the early USSR was its ideology of affirmative action. There were no set criteria as to which nationalities of what exactly national structures were entitled. Each case was decided individually, but in general, the leading line in nationalities politics in the early USSR was its ideology of affirmative action with respect to individual nationalities, including Gypsies, who in no way were detached from other nationalities (Martin, 2001). Therefore, changes in the Soviet policy towards the Gypsies after 1938 should not be interpreted as some special anti-Gypsy policy of the Soviet state, but as part (and certainly not the most important) of the overall change in the paradigm of Soviet nationalities politics.

It is interesting to note that, in fact, we only have the manuscript of Nikolay Pankov's letter, in which it is noted that an edited version of it had been sent to Stalin. However, unlike the thousands of others that have been scattered across various Soviet institutions, this letter is not stored in the state archives. According to the recollections of family members of Nikolay Pankov, months after the letter was sent, he lived in anxious expectation to be arrested, but nothing happened. It was only three years later that he was visited by NKVD officials, who informed him that Comrade Stalin had become acquainted with his letter. However, no further reaction from the authorities followed (Kalinin, 2005, pp. 56–57). It should be noted that none of the Gypsies' letters, although addressed personally to Stalin, came with a resolution written by him, as it was usual in other such cases. Thus, we have reason to believe that these letters did not reach Stalin at all but were forwarded by his secretariat directly to the appropriate institutions (about official proceedings with the thousands of letters to Stalin see Khlevniuk, 2015). The only exception to this was Nikolay Pankov's letter.

After the end of WWII, a group of Roma activists from Moscow, led by Ivan Rom-Lebedev, sent a letter to Stalin, in which they expressed their hopes for the return of the active state policy towards the Gypsies, including in the field of the nomads' sedentarisation (Rom-Lebedev et al., 1946). The letter remained unanswered, and the Soviet institutions' neglect of the problems of the Gypsy nomads continued. This only changed in the early 1950s. The soviet archives preserve huge volume with numerous letters to the authorities at various levels, including the Council of Ministers, written during the period 1952–1953, in which nomadic Gypsies from different regions ask for help with their sedentarisation, permanent residence, employment, and housing (Russia, 1953). The Roma activists were not left out of this process either.

On June 12, 1953, Nikolay Pankov sent a letter to Pyotr Pospelov who was the secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, in which he pointed the Gypsy nomadic way of life as a serious problem and asked for a resumption of the state policy towards them (Druts & Gessler, 1990, pp. 304–305). In 1955, a new letter from Andrei Taranov (the former chairman of the All-Russian Union of Gypsies) and Nikolay Pankov was sent to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of USSR, to the USSR Council of Ministers, and the *Pravda* newspaper (Ivashchenko, 1996, p. 43). Desperate for the lack of answer, on March 14, 1956, Nikolay Pankov wrote a letter to the new Soviet Party and State Chief, Nikita Khrushchev, in which he asked:

> The positive experience of the recent past, on the one hand, and the present situation of the Gypsies in their capacity as an unorganized roaming tribe, prompt me to turn to you, Nikita Sergeyevich, with this letter, the purpose of which is—the request to discuss the situation of the Gypsies of the USSR and to find an opportunity to resume work among the Gypsies on the transition to a settled way of life, employment and culture. (Druts & Gessler, 1990, p. 305, authors' translation)

Unlike previous letters, it seems as though this letter had a substantial result, and it was very quick. On October 5, 1956, the decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on the Admission to Labor of the Gypsy Vagrants was issued. It cannot be said that the issuing of this decree is a direct result of Pankov's letter and it is quite possible that Soviet authorities independently have reached this solution. But at first glance it seems that Roma activists, after more than three decades, have finally been able to convince the Soviet authorities of the need to eradicate the Gypsies' nomadic way of life. However, the ban on the Gypsy nomadism does not entail any other changes in the Gypsy policy of the Soviet state; in fact, such a policy was de facto absent, and the policy of affirmative action against the Gypsies was finally abandoned. Thus, with one blow, the Soviet state deprived the Gypsy elite of its main argument—the need to fight the nomadic way of life—which they had constantly used in trying to convince the authorities of the need for pro-Gypsy politics to be more active from the

early days of the USSR until the Decree was issued. This was actually the end of the attempts of the Roma elite formed in the 1920s and 1930s in the USSR to become an active subject in the policy of the Soviet state regarding Gypsies, through active dialogue with the state institutions. As shown, these attempts ultimately proved to be unsuccessful, because the two sides of this dialogue were from the very beginning in unequal positions, with one of them (Soviet authorities) being the leading and determining force, and the other (the Roma elite) dependent.

6. Conclusion

As could be seen from the sources, the attitudes towards the nomadism of the Roma civic elite in CSEEE during the interwar period took different forms, oscillating between two poles. On the one pole, this was the de facto total disregard of the Roma nomads (in most countries in the region), and on the other, the repeated calls for the state to end their nomadic lifestyle and create conditions for sedentarisation. The latter was especially clear in Romania and the USSR where, in the interwar period, a policy of land re-distribution and programs for land allocation were conducted. What unites these options is the presumption that the necessary condition for the realisation of Roma civic emancipation was the cessation of a nomadic lifestyle. This leading vision of the new Roma civic elite has its logical explanation.

The Roma civic movement was born and developed amongst permanently settled Roma. Even in countries in which the majority of Roma were nomads (such as Poland and USSR), their elite was formed of representatives who had already adopted a sedentary way of life. This is perfectly understandable—it is precisely the settled Roma who were able to achieve a higher degree of social integration than those who lead a nomadic way of life, and that is why it was precisely in their midst that ideas for a civic emancipation were born. It was under this background that the nomadic way of life Roma was perceived as an obstacle. The scholars of the time left these ideas mostly unaccounted for. If they were regarded at all they were perceived as curious but short-lived deviations which would not impact future developments. The orientalistic, colonial attitudes towards Roma found their expression in hopes such as these:

> But somehow our faith in the impenetrable destiny of our friends 'out of Egypt' reassures us that the old Romany characteristics will triumph over all such modern veneers in the end, and that things will never become quite so bad as that. (Haley, 1934, p. 186)

Relapses from such exoticization of the Roma, seen as eternal nomads, are not uncommon even nowadays, as the concept of nomadism serves to legitimize discrimination and segregation of Roma in contemporary Europe (cf. Sigona, 2005, pp. 741–756). The major issues in the history of Roma, which create obstacles for its proper comprehension, have thus far been constituted by two predetermined discourses according to which Roma history has been (and continues to be) articulated by researchers: namely, by approaching the Roma as a problem and/or as a victim. In the past, beginning with the first academic interest in the so-called Gypsies (Grellmann, 1783), they have been researched mainly from the point of view of solving the problems they were seen to pose to the modern state. In the aftermath of WWII, 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 discriminated and fostered them. However, both discourses, though radically opposite, are united in their attitude to the Roma whose point of view is de facto absent, which places them into a marginal position of an a-historic population which is fully dependant from the majority societies, and according to which social inclusion looks like "a task for Sisyphus" (Rostas, 2019). The inclusion of 'Roma Voices' (Marushiakova & Popov, in press) from history as a main basis for future research may help in creating a Roma historical narrative which will also enable Roma to reclaim ownership of their history.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

A View of the Disaster and Victory from below: Serbian Roma Soldiers, 1912–1918

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Abstract
The Kingdom of Serbia fought in three consecutive conflicts between 1912 and 1918. These events merged into a devastating experience of an all-out war, completely reshaping all aspects of contemporary life. As the first centenary of these events has recently shown, the memories of wartime still play a very prominent role in the Serbian national narrative. By 1915 around 20% of Serbian combatants belonged to some of the country's minorities. Second class citizens on the social margins of society, the Serbian Roma constitute those whose wartime history is the least known to research and the public. However, the wartime diaries kept by Serbian soldiers are full of causal references to their Roma fellow combatants. This article provides an overview of the duties Roma soldiers played in the war, based on the perspective of Serbs who were fighting alongside them. The article tackles the general image and the position of the Roma population in the Kingdom of Serbia. In addition, the horrific challenges the war created for Serbian society are tackled from the perspective of those who were, already in peace time, in the most disadvantageous situation socially and economically. Overall, despite the unifying experience which the wartime suffering imposed on all citizens of the Kingdom, the old prejudices towards the Roma survived after 1918.

Keywords
minorities; Roma soldiers; Serbia; warfare; World War I

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1. Introduction

In June 2017, pupils of Belgrade's Karadjordje primary school were celebrating the end of the school year. Traditionally, these celebrations included loud music, alcohol but also national symbols. A pupil belonging to the seventh grade was attacked by a group of others from the eighth grade. This was not another case of rising adolescent aggression which have befallen many Serbian schools. Rather, the argument of the attackers was that "one Roma cannot carry the Serbian flag" ("Roma pretukli jer je nosio srpsku zastavu," 2017). As the first centenary of World War I has just ended, it is convenient to address the issue of Serb-Roma relations precisely in terms of the 1914–1918 war. Formerly it is hard to overestimate the importance of World War I for Serbian national self-perception and collective memory. The war has been seen as an immense demographic and material disaster but also as a time of great heroism and ultimate victory. Consequently, were the Roma allowed to carry the Serbian flag then, during one of the most critical periods of Serbia's history, and how were they treated?

This topic does not only provide a chance to tackle inter-ethnic relations in the Kingdom of Serbia, or to shed more light on the Roma's past during this turbulent period. A number of phenomena within the scope of the culture studies of war can be examined as well. Following the conflict's dynamics, with a focus on the families of Roma soldiers, brings new insights into the level of devastation on the Serbian front. During the World War I the Roma were seen as fellow combatants, musicians or simply as bystanders (civilians). The available sources show that it is safe to say that the Roma shared all the experiences—good and bad—with Serbian soldiers and

civilians. It is also clear that, despite their massive participation in the Serbian war efforts, the war failed to erase the existing pre-war prejudices and animosities. It also turned out that war memory was not used as an agent which could play a transformative role for the social position of the Serbian Roma.

The Serbian Centenary efforts, though massive and diverse, failed to address the issues linked to minority combatants. Dr. Dragoljub Ackovic organized a very successful exhibition focused on the suffering of the Roma during the Great War (Sretenović, 2019). Unfortunately, this was the only event in Serbia dedicated to this question. In contrast to other minorities within the Serbian army, the Roma soldiers can hardly be traced in bureaucratic records of the Serbian army. Consequently, other types of sources need to be looked for. For example, soldiers' diaries provide plenty of opportunities, as these bring casual remarks, comments and impressions about Roma individuals or their entire families. Indeed, diaries as a rule introduce an anecdotal form or information together with high level of subjectivity. It is important to stress that, so far, not a single Roma soldier's notebook has been found. Moreover, there is no surviving correspondence between soldiers and their families. As a result, at this point, it is impossible to say what the Roma soldiers thought about their experiences, struggles, fears or motivation. Therefore, this article draws extensively on diaries left behind by Serbian soldiers and, to a lesser degree, on newspaper sources. Materials left by Austro-Hungarian soldiers or other foreigners who visited Serbia were also consulted. This means that my text deals with the subject almost exclusively from the perspective of the Serbian majority. Such an approach certainly does not provide the conditions for broad-based conclusions. Observations made need further validation, preferably with statistical evidence. However, the article does offer sufficient instructive material for addressing some of the key themes of the Roma's wartime position. These include the military duties of the Roma men, but also the prevailing social attitudes towards this minority in the Kingdom of Serbia. The need to introduce the Serbian Roma into a broader interpretation of the Balkan front becomes even more apparent when we realize that almost nothing has been published on this topic. The work of Danijel Vojak remains a rare example of a study dealing with the Roma in the Balkans within the context of the Great War (Vojak, 2015).

2. Soldiering as Socialization

The Roma as Serbian combatants were mentioned in both of the Serbian uprisings organized in the 19th century (in 1804–1813 and in 1815). For example, the contemporary Vuk Stefanovic Karadžić wrote that "the Gypsies had their own commander during the uprising" (Acković, 2009, p. 91). In addition, the famous Serbian poet, Sima Milutinović Sarajlija, wrote about the heroism of the Roma combatants. The first Serbian uprising brought the Roma civil rights recognition, equality before the courts, freedom of religion, respect for customs and traditions as well as land heritage. However, these measures disappeared with the collapse of the Serbian insurgency. The Roma were offered similar rights after the second Serbian uprising, in 1815. However, it appears that this time the reforms did not bring palpable results. The historian Vladimir Stojančević explained this as the result of a weaker Roma presence in the rebel forces and its leadership than was the case in the previous uprising (Jakšić & Bašić, 2005, pp. 20–21). The Roma reappeared as Serbian fighters during the turbulence of 1848. They were part of the forces sent from the Serbian Principality to Serbs living in Southern Hungary. Atanasije-Tasa Ivanović from the Serbian town of Jagodina, the man responsible for tax collection from the Serbian Roma, was ordered to form an exclusively Roma outfit:

> With 850 skilful Gypsies, along with zurlas and drums, he continued during the freezing cold in December 1848. There were few of the Jagodina Gypsies, up to 300, but others from Kragujevac, Pozarevac joined them along the way, following Tasa's order, which had to be executed unconditionally. Sabac, Smederevo and other places. There were up to 900 of them near Višnjica on the Danube. It was an unusual and very colourful army: One group (from Jagodina) wore the ordinary clothes, with pistols and holsters, curved sabres; others had more beautiful, colourful garbs with a scarf around their heads, with large belts, in which the guns were kept, together with the sharp knives, a whip with a lead top, and with rifles on their shoulders; on their feet they wore cavalry boots with spurs; their banners had various flags. (Cvetić, 1910, pp. 38–43)

Once across the Danube, fierce fighting ensued with the Hungarian army near the town of Arad. It has been recorded that 15 of the Serbian Roma soldiers were killed in this battle (Cvetić, 1910, pp. 38–43).

In 1883, a standing army with compulsory military service was introduced in the Kingdom of Serbia. This was one of many measures aimed at modernizing the state which had gained its independence in 1878. How did the Roma fit into this system, which was based on state bureaucracy and, above all, on the need for accurate addresses and years of birth? At first, the Serbian authorities were tolerant and aware that a number of Roma were clearly beyond the army's reach. For the time being only those Roma with permanent addresses and valid documents were called up. However, the state decided to recruit also the so-called 'wandering Roma.' In October 1891, the Serbian War Ministry made a decision that would significantly affect the way of life of the Roma in Serbia. It was a direct and dramatic interference of the state in the traditional way of life of native Roma:

> Many Gypsy vagrants avoid service in the unit and in the reserve. The reason is that as wanderers they cannot be processed through the census book in any municipality, so they are not recruited as such. In order to stop the waste of such material for the army, I order that all Gypsy vagrants, from 20 to 30 years of age, be recruited every year and sent exclusively to the infantry. Recruiting, reviewing and deploying personnel should be performed on the fifth day, after the other recruits have already been sent to the infantry. During the recruitment, there should be an interview of the Gypsy family in question, regarding the recruit's most frequent residence or place of work. When deployed, the district commanders will report to the battalion commander concerned, for each recruit, where each person will reside after serving. Upon dismissal, the battalion commander will report to the regiment in question about the trained soldiers, who will now be assigned to it as reservists.
>
> As every year the infantry command issues a special call summoning its recruits, the commanders all regiment districts, as soon as they find out that such call has been published, will order to the administrative authorities in their area that on that day…all municipal authorities are obliged to bring to the headquarters all the Gypsy vagrants who are found in their district. Of these, all able-bodied persons who have not yet served in the military and who have not reached the age of 30 should be listed and trained.
>
> The age of each Gypsy will be evaluated by the doctor attached to the district commander in charge—unless other documents are to be presented by the Gypsies themselves. ("Propisi, naredjenja i objašnjenja," 1891)

It is hard to estimate how efficient this measure was. It is reasonable to assume that it definitely increased the numbers within the Serbian army's contingent. It also brought about changes in the lives of many Roma. The long two-year stay in the army acted also as socialization process. Namely, one of the elementary activities in the army was the literacy course. On the other hand, the state was trying to transform all Roma into more permanent residents. It is important to note that the infantry was the only branch of the army reserved for the 'Roma wanderers.' This type of soldiering did not ask for any particular pre-existing skills unlike the artillery or engineering. And unlike the cavalry, no particular property (a horse) was needed.

In 1912 the state summoned its Roma reservists to arms. This was the First Balkan War. Among the hundreds of thousands of Serb soldiers ready to cross the Serb-Ottoman border, there were many Roma. One of them, a soldier named Ahmet Ademović, became part of Serbian military legends. Firstly, his performance at war shows that many Roma men acted in an exemplary manner in Serbian uniform. His biography also speaks a lot about patterns used when depicting Roma heroism, and more broadly, it offers insights into the wider trends in remembering the actions of Serbian troops during the 1912–1918 period. It is not clear who was the first to write down the story of Ahmet Ademović. In 1989 the military enthusiast Tomislav Vlahović published a book dedicated to the soldiers who had earned the highest Serbian military decoration: the Karadjordje Star. Naturally, he mentioned Ademović's story as well. By doing so he secured the preservation of the story for future decades. However, he wrote down two versions of the story which were circulating at the time.

The first version of these was that Ademović had a crucial role in the Kumanovo battle of October 1912. This was the initial and most important clash of the Serbian and the Ottoman troops in the First Balkan War. The battle did not begin well for the Serbs who did not anticipate that they would run into the core of the Ottoman troops so soon after entering Ottoman territory. Vlahović described how, at the most critical moment of the battle, Ademović gave a trumpet signal for the assault instead of the retreat—as he had been previously ordered by his commander. Ademović did so because he estimated, on his own initiative, that the moment was ripe for counter-attack. Ultimately, his decision reversed the battlefield situation. In the second version, Ademović's action was even more audacious. It was claimed that Ademović was decorated because he actually disguised himself before the battle. Wearing Ottoman uniform, he went into the enemy camp where he deceived the enemy by playing a false signal—a trumpet sign for withdrawal (Vlahović, 1989, pp. 85, 421).

Even with all the shortcomings of the Ottoman forces in 1912, something like this seems highly unlikely. Moreover, the idea that a battle involving tens of thousands of soldiers could be decided by a single private reveals a highly romanticised pattern of interpreting past. There is no doubt that Ademović earned his decoration in October 1912, but whatever he did, the post war storytellers transformed his exploits into a powerful myth. Within this myth we see certain roles reserved for the Serbian Roma. Moreover, these roles corresponded to their perceived peacetime characteristics. According to that pattern, the Roma were bold, skilful, cunning and good in deception. In the eyes of the Serbian storytellers it appeared as if the features attributed to the Roma, and which were criminalized in peacetime, suddenly became desirable at times of war as they provided a critical advantage to the Serbian army.

There were other Roma who secured high military decorations. One of them was Rustem Sejdić. Again, like Ademović, he was a unit's trumpeter. The popular story described his deed in similar tone to that of Ademović. Namely, his unit had participated in the famous battle for the Kajmakcalan heights in 1916, where on his own initiative, he gave a signal for the critical attack. He also played false trumpet signals in order to spread confusion

within the Bulgarian units who were about to launch a fresh attack (Dimitrijević, 2015). Again, this is the stuff of legend. One man had shown initiative and had resolved the colossal carnage. As in the previous case, the Roma soldier was depicted as bold, artful but manipulative.

The last known Roma who won the Karadjordje Star was also, like Ademović, from the southern Serbian town of Leskovac. His name was Amet Ametović. In the popular version of events, he was an expert in throwing hand grenades (Ivanović, 2016). However, his case study shows how huge were the differences between facts and popular accounts that spread after the battle. What differentiated Ametović's case from the two previously mentioned biographies was the fact that Ametović gave two interviews to the Yugoslav press, providing a sober account of his fighting days and his accomplishments. Firstly, he provided details lacking in the previous case studies—such as the name of his unit, and his commanders ranging from the regimental down to the unit level. He also explained his specific duties as well the actions which had earned him the decoration.

Explaining his exploit Ametović did not provide any breath-taking story. He was a corporal and was responsible for leading patrols on scouting missions. This happened in Western Serbia in the autumn of 1914, near the border town of Krupanj. Ametović's unit was involved in heavy fighting near one notorious position, the Captain's Fountain (*Kapetanova cesma*) close to the Drina River. He said the following:

> We go at night and then we stumble upon the body of an enemy soldier. I stab him. The stiff human body does not move….I whisper to my men: *Don't be afraid, it's only a corpse*. And that was our job during the days and during the nights….I fought for the King and for the Fatherland. We all fought heroically….However, the commander in June 1915 gathered our company together and read out: *Amet Ametović is decorated with the Karadjordje Star*; he then gave me this decoration. ("Jedini Ciganin nosilac Karadjordjeve zvezde zivi u Leskovcu," 1936; italics added)

He received his decoration during a pause on the Serbian front in summer 1915. His story, without any spectacular actions sounds realistic, underlying war's brutality. As he described it, it was a prosaic and merciless business while the very decoration was the result of continuous activity by the entire squad.

Roma civilians had often been mentioned in the memories of contemporaries but their presence in soldiers' diaries was almost exclusively linked with the darkest sides of the war. Survival for many Roma was extremely difficult even in peacetime, but in wartime it became very precarious. The most vulnerable category of the population saw the battleground as a place where its limited survival resources could be replenished.

Journalists following the operations of the Serbian army near Shkoder recorded the following scene where the Roma 'cleaned up' the battle ground. It took place in February 1913:

> The Serbs had around one thousand dead after their attack on the Brdica positions. They all remained on the field bellow the hill and they were still not able to bury them. Gypsies are usually used for this work, they gladly do so in the hope of booty. Turkish soldiers have already deprived the dead of their weapons, but there are still some left and the Gypsies are back with shoes, belts, caps, handkerchiefs and underwear. In their camp, near the bazaar, they later share the loot. Tonight, four Gypsy women left their camp to wait for their husbands, and when they spotted them, they went to meet them. At that moment, a shrapnel, coming over from Shkoder, burst over their heads killing them all. ("Iz Skadarske epopeje," 1913)

3. As Soldiers in World War I

In 1914, the Roma were called up again. The Swiss criminologist who came to Serbia, Rudolph Archibald Reiss, described a scene he witnessed in the autumn of 1914 which faithfully exemplifies shared patriotism and tragedy. It also however illustrates the naivety with which some Roma approached modern warfare, expecting it to be an extremely brief encounter between two armies after which things would quickly go back to normal. This happened in the town of Valjevo:

> The streets in front of the Sekulić Hotel, which is on the corner, are full of people and wagons. Everywhere, next to the walls, sit the middle-aged peasants who come to report to their units belonging to the third levy. Waiting to come before the control commission, they eat and take a sunbathe. Among them, there are also Gypsies with their bronze faces like Indians. They are surrounded by their family members, women and children, who carry supplies. One very old Gypsy woman, with a pipe in her mouth which is almost solely composed of the tobacco chamber, sits on the doorstep of a house. They tell me she accompanied her son three days ago, he left with his regiment, and she is waiting for him to return. Poor grandmother, you will probably wait in vain! This world is silent, serious, but in the bright eyes of this people I see that they are determined to defend their country's independence and are not afraid to sacrifice their lives for this. (Reiss, 1928/1991, p. 11)

There are numerous mentions of the Roma as part of military music too. The Gypsy band is mentioned as a standard feature in celebrating military victory. Here, by focusing on the Roma minority it is also possible to see various elements of combat culture. One officer, Mladen Zujović, wrote about the atmosphere after the Battle of Kolubara, when in 1914 Austro-Hungarian troops had been expelled from Serbia for the second time. Euphoria

after victory, alcohol but also boredom, characterised the days of Serbian officers in between battles in 1914.

"In the third battalion, which is just next to us, the Gypsies are playing and the loud singing can be heard" (Žujović, 2004, p. 66). The Roma musicians were there too for Zujović and other officers during leisure time: "We often drink with Gypsies, but also without them, as they have often been taken from us by the artillerymen and other senior commanding officers who all now arrange frequent parties" (Žujović, 2004, p. 83). Music was also of great importance for maintaining morale before combat. One Serbian officer, Vojislav Šikoparija, wrote about this in his memoirs, stressing the importance of music while approaching the front zone when soldiers needed to overcome their gut-wrenching feeling:

> There were good singers in the company, and several Gypsies, with their inevitable Gypsy violins, and soon a powerful folk song was heard. Milorad remembered his old practice from the Balkan Wars, so he took out and gave Firga a banknote so that he could "grease his violin a bit." Firga grabbed the banknote hoggishly, opened his mouth from one end to the other, and replied: "Well, Mr. Lieutenant, I will sing and play all the way to Pazar, so Djurdjevdan helped me." Really, tired and crookbacked under the burden of a rifle and other gear, Firga was suddenly full of liveliness, he cheered up and started singing and playing as if he was at a wedding in his native Tamnava village. His fellow brothers approached him, and they played so loudly that the whole regiment could now hear them. It was very pleasant to listen to them and somehow we moved in a more energetic and carefree manner. (Šikoparija, 2014, pp. 194–195)

Shikoparija described another scene which mentioned the Roma. This picture was very familiar to all Serbian soldiers and it again underlined the poverty in which so many Serbian Roma lived. The phenomenon was very similar to the one already noted in the *Ilustrated War Cronicle* of 1913 and its article about the Shkoder front. Namely, after each departure of Shikoparija's unit, from one camp to another, it was customary that Roma civilians were the first ones to come to the abandoned site searching for something useful among the soldiers' rubbish (Šikoparija, 2014, p. 198).

The movement of mass armies in 1914 had exacerbated the sanitary situation. By autumn 1914 the conditions became disastrously unhygienic, and from then until mid-1915 Serbia was hit by a typhus epidemic. Many Serbs easily linked the spread of the disease with their prejudices about the Roma's 'filth and dirt.' For example, in June 1915, at a session of the Belgrade Municipal Committee, the Committee of Physicians—in charge of health care in Belgrade—suggested that "Gypsies should be displaced outside the Belgrade area" ("Protest socijalista," 1915, p. 2). However, socialist deputies protested, saying that such a proposal "sets Gypsies apart from other Belgrade citizens and deprives them of the rights guaranteed to all citizens by the Constitution" ("Protest socijalista," 1915, p. 2). It is unclear how serious this proposal was, and eventually this idea did not materialize.

Links between the Roma and the fear of typhus can also be found in the diary of Natalija Arandjelović. This educated women belonged to the upper class of Belgrade residents. While her husband was fighting at the Salonika front, she stayed in occupied Belgrade taking care of their five small children. Her diary reveals that her family on several occasions was on the verge of starvation.

On 15 February 1918, Natalija Arandjelović wrote about a snowy day, lack of letters and news in general. She also wrote the following:

> This evening a little Gypsy lost his way and came into our alley and he started to beg for money, he was five years old. I wanted to let him in to spend the night but I was afraid that he might carry lice so I reported him to the guard who took him into the station. He wasn't more than 5 years old. (Arandjelović, 2018, p. 339)

During the pause in fighting in 1915 one interesting book was published in Serbia. This was a romanticized divisional history written by its commander. The book was a collection of anecdotes about the war so far. Special emphasis was placed on the fate of the recruits who had come from the so called 'new territories,' meaning the lands Serbia had acquired in the 1912–1913 Balkan Wars.

One anecdote, second to last in the book, was dedicated to a Roma soldier. Entitled *Escaped the Trap*, the story focuses on Gypsy corporal Petar Vujičić. The author introduces Vujičić in the following way: "He is not the Gypsy like all others of his kind. He stands out. This is best illustrated by his corporal stars" (Milenković, 1915, pp. 61–62) Eventually, one day Vujičić is sent to lead a patrol on reconnaissance. He and his men are ambushed. However, instead of surrendering, corporal Vujičić reverses his position by screaming: "Hurrah! Throw your grenades right away!" (Milenković, 1915, pp. 61–62). This confuses the enemy, and Vujičić even manages to capture four of the Habsburg soldiers (Milenković, 1915, pp. 61–62). As in the previously described cases of stories where Roma's heroism and loyalty were promoted, here too the Roma soldier was using his cunningness and duplicity in order to achieve success. In addition, the idea that this soldier "was not a Gypsy like all others of his kind" reveals the strong stereotypes and shows the level of surprise when Serbians witnessed exemplary soldiering by the Roma.

Another interesting episode occurred in 1915. Precisely because of the way many Roma lived in Serbia—often constantly relocating—Austro-Hungarian military intelligence decided to try a very daring operation. A group of spies was sent to Serbia, disguised as Roma. For the sake of authenticity, they were bringing a bear with them. When the spies were discovered after a while

in Čačak, they were found with drawings of several Serb military positions (Vukanović, 1983, p. 193). Again, this episode needs further support from the sources but, regardless of its authenticity, it helps us understand how the two opposing sides on the Serbian front saw the Roma's place in their conflict.

One telling example of daily Serbian-Roma relations in the army can be found in the memoirs of the famous Serbian engineer, Miladin Pećinar. This episode speaks of a distance kept towards the Roma, but also shows how the Roma experienced this war. Pećinar described ascene from October 1915. At the time, he was a newly promoted sergeant, commanding one platoon stationed on the Serbian-Bulgarian border. The two countries were just about to wage war and the Bulgarian attack was imminent. Pećinar's orders were very clear: under threat of the death penalty, Bulgarian soldiers should not be fired upon, even if they began crossing the state border. The idea was that Serbia must not in any way provoke its neighbour.

> I had a dozen Gypsies in my platoon, one of whom was a corporal. His name was Vlajko. They were scattered across the unit. Before the fighting began, they asked me to gather them all into one unit, their own group, and to put Corporal Vlajko as their commander. At first I rejected this proposal as I feared they might shirk their duties. However, soon I granted permission for this, especially when they explained to me what was behind the request. Namely, they said: We are Gypsies, so no one is eager to eat with us. Secondly, in the case of need, we can quickly help one another. After this explanation, I formed a unit, twelve of them, led by Corporal Vlajko. Before the Bulgarian attack, my platoon was located close to the village of Rogljevo on the Timok River. The Gypsy squad held the most forward defensive position. They were dug on a cliff above the Timok. At dawn, the Bulgarians started crossing the Timok without opening fire. However, Corporal Vlajko opened fire, killing several of them, while the others managed to escape in haste. This event alarmed the regimental headquarters. I spent the night tied up by the guards next to the regimental flag. The next day, I was to be sent before a court-martial. The verdict was known in advance. It was my good fortune that the Bulgarians went on a general attack that night along the whole front. The war started, so the earlier order became meaningless, I was not destined to be executed….One can imagine what my first meeting with Corporal Vlajko was like after all this. All bloody, he answered through tears, that he only afterwards realized what he had done, adding: Well, Mr. Sergeant, how can I not shoot when they are crossing the state border?! And indeed he was right. He, as a normal man, a soldier, could not comprehend our stupid order. He became very devoted to me and managed to bring more than half of his Gypsies to Corfu. He later died on Mount Čeganj on the Thessaloniki Front. (Pećinar, 2004, pp. 112–113)

Pećinar also remembered humour as a standard feature of the Roma who served under his command. This is how he described one scene during the frenzy of the battle in autumn 1915:

> While running toward the other pile of hay, one of my soldiers, a Gypsy, was running in front of me. Hit by a bullet somewhere in the bottom, he fell. As he fell, he yelled: Oh King Peter, I curse your mother! I thought that the Gypsy had died and I continued on. After a few days, moving away from Sokobanja to Aleksinac, I saw this Gypsy on horseback. And when I asked him how he was, he said: Behold, I am alive. And what, I said, would that be with King Peter? He answered, laughing: But I didn't say anything. (Pećinar, 2004, p. 114.)

The American socialist and journalist John Reed visited Serbia in 1914. In Macedonia, he too recorded an encounter with the Roma:

> And always and everywhere Gypsies—men with some kind of silk turbans, women with gold coins instead of earrings and pieces and scrap of badges as dresses, barefoot—stamping the roads and carrying their wagons with them, or lying around the shabby vardos of their camps. (Reed, 1975, p. 22)

Later, as he approached the front, he recorded an encounter with Serb soldiers, including Roma:

> Each regiment has two or three Gypsies, who march with units, playing Serbian violin, jingles, or bagpipes, and playing the songs constantly composed by soldiers—love songs, songs dedicated to victories, epic songs. All over Serbia, they are folk musicians, traveling from one rural glory to another, playing for a play and a song….Yet, only Gypsies in Serbia have no right to vote. They have no homes, no villages, no land—only their own queues and shabby carriages with awnings. (Reed, 1975, p. 16)

This remark is interesting. From the strict legal perspective the Serbian 1888 constitution had provided an extremely low property census promoting, practically universal, voting rights (Popov et al., 1983, pp. 91–92). However, whether the Roma practised their rights was a completely different story and still needs further scrutiny. Moreover, Reed's comment might be related to that part of the Roma population who were still without proper permanent addresses and thus unable to participate in the elections despite almost universal suffrage.

Another foreigner also touched upon Serbian-Roma relations among his numerous impressions from Serbia. This was famous journalist, at that time Austro-

Hungarian soldier, Egon Erwin Kisch. On 16 November 1914, he described in his diary the following scene, occurring near the town of Lajkovac:

> We couldn't go further because of the huge columns of returnees from the town of Ub. The villagers stopped by their wagons in order to let us through. In doing so, I noticed a peasant woman moving away from a Gypsy woman. The class difference has not disappeared yet. Even now, when a peasant woman tosses around like a homeless person, like a beggar, she keeps an eye on the distance between herself and the Gypsy. (Kisch, 1983, p. 186)

Evidence of the Serbs' distance to the Roma can also be found in a book written by the famous Serbian Great War veteran, Živojin Lazić. He described a scene which took place during the Serbian breakthrough in 1918 and the liberation of the country. Namely, his commander ordered Lazić to go and find suitable accommodation for his superior:

> I came to the village of Mladenovac. All the people had escaped and brought the cattle with them, so that the Swabians could not seized them. I found at the entrance to the village a house with a nice clean room. I booked it for the commander. I didn't even know it was a Gypsy's house. I found empty stables for horses and mules. (Lazić, 2006)

The next day, Lazić had to endure the commander's grudge: "Can you imagine that lieutenant Lazić found me an apartment in a Gypsy house, and now the whole unit is laughing at me" (Lazić, 2006, p. 97).

Lazić's commander was irritated at being too close to Roma while Lazić himself was puzzled as to how Roma could have such a fine house. There are other examples of such an attitude. One Serbian internee, apparently a member of Serbia's elite, was placed in the Austro-Hungarian Heinrichsgrin camp. He complained to the Serbian Red Cross in October 1916:

> I have been interned here for two months with a group of 400 people or more. They didn't show any consideration for my position. I was imprisoned with Gypsies, gangs and peasants and they were chasing us like cattle. (Pandurovic, 1923/2014, p. 84)

The occupation of Serbia in 1915–1918 was very specific from the perspective of the Roma. The enemy authorities, following their own prejudices, often used the Roma for the dirtiest jobs. The famous Serbian veteran, Stanislav Krakow, wrote about one Roma who acted as an executioner in the Niš Fortress. Krakow wrote that the hangman continued living in Niš during the interwar years (Krakov, 1927).

Similarly, in 1918, the British Admiral Ernest Troubridge wrote that news that about the extent of Bulgarian crimes committed in Serbia was slowly being discovered. The admiral was in contact with the British journalist of the *Daily Mail*, George Ward Price, who investigated Bulgarian crimes in Serbia in detail. Thus, Ward interviewed one of the Roma who was ordered by the Bulgarian authorities to clean up the site where Serbs had been executed by firing squads (Troubridge, 1918).

4. After the War

In 1935, the Belgrade daily *Politika* conveyed the unusual story of a soldier named Memet Abdijević. After 21 years, the soldier had already been 'mourned and forgotten' in his native Žitni Potok near the southern Serbian town of Prokuplje. This Roma had joined the Serbian army in 1913 and "people who knew Memet sa[id] he was a very good and reliable soldier" ("Ratna odiseja jednog Ciganina," 1935). He was twice wounded in 1915. On the Salonika Front, near Voden, he came into conflict with a Greek Army patrol and killed five Greek soldiers. He was soon arrested and sentenced to prison in Greece. After a long time, in 1933, he managed to contact the Yugoslav consulate and was released after their intervention ("Ratna odiseja jednog Ciganina," 1935). The stories of soldiers suddenly appearing in their villages, years after the conflict's end, were not unusual. However, this story had elements of a proper adventure. Whether true or not, it illustrated well the manner in which a good proportion of Serbs imagined the Roma—as eternal wanderers embracing extremely unusual life paths.

There must have been many Roma veterans among Serbia's post-war residents. However, these men were not part of the official Yugoslav commemorations. Yet, somewhere in the margins of society, their commemorations and mourning still took place. This is how one of Serbia's strangest memorials was created. The memorial was built without any knowledge of local or central authorities; there were no plans nor permissions. The origin of the monument was in connection with the commemoration of a non-canonized Orthodox Roma saint, Aunt Bibija. She is a saint who is believed by many Roma in Serbia to have saved Roma children from thecholera or plague epidemics in the 19th century. Aunt Bibija was celebrated in Belgrade's district, Čubura, where Roma had a large community. The monument therefore also embodying local identity.

In 1920, the Serbian press noted that besides the pear tree, which was important for Bibija's cult, there was a monument with the inscription: "Gypsies—Heroes who fell in the war of 1912–1918." Consequently, the monument was built sometime between 1919 and 1920, and the names of 54 Roma were engraved on it. The group which built this monument was called the Serbian Gypsy Youth. The sources also mention a slightly different inscription: "Serbian Gypsy Youth to their Heroes Who Were Killed and Died in 1912–1918" (Bogdanović, 2018, pp. 263–266).

Due to the rapid expansion of Belgrade, the Roma however had to re-locate their monument as well as the place where they celebrated their saint. Thus, in 1927, the Association of Belgrade Gypsies Worshippers of Bibija bought a plot of land in Gospodara Vučića Street 49. There, a small chapel was built and the war monument was placed next to it. The monument still exists though only a handful of people in Belgrade are aware of its existence; it is almost unknown to historians and art historians dealing with monuments from the wars of 1912–1918. Only recently, the historian Branko Bogdanović wrote in detail about the site, mostly relying on the interwar press (Bogdanović, 2018, pp. 263–266). In addition, it is not on the list of Serbia's protected monuments, but procedures for placing it under legal protection were launched in 2019.

5. Conclusion

The presence of the Roma in Serbia's Great War efforts stands astride a very important thematic intersection. It testifies to the status of one of Serbia's minority groups, but also to a community in the most unfavourable position in terms of its social and material readiness for the cataclysm unleashed in August 1914. The story of the 'Roma in uniform' brings one more level of complexity to understanding the Balkan front. The Serbian army of 1914–1918 has usually been understood as a single-nation army—in contrast to multinational imperial troops. However, despite the high level of ethic homogeneity it also had its own internal ethnic dynamics that still need to be studied. The available sources strongly suggest that the Serbian Roma not only carried the Serbian flag in times of war but that they often fought with exemplary valour. The loyalty to their units was confirmed despite the initial prejudices and suspicion of their Serbian superiors. Suspicion, contempt as well as fear were regularly associated with the Roma in the eyes of many among the Serb majority. The army was not much different. Still, after the three consecutive wars their commanders and fellow soldiers saw them as skilled fighters, good in deception, audacious, resilient and adaptable. In addition, they had a critical role in boosting morale while acting as unofficial military marching bands.

Indeed, a question remains about the exact role of pre-war stereotypes in the minds of those who noted down in their diaries some words about the Roma soldiers they met. The war diaries and recollections present specific types of war record which are often random and incomplete. Nevertheless, despite all their imperfections and unanswered questions, they still present a vital source for making the Serbian Roma visible in the history of the World War I. Regardless of the pattern of storytelling, the qualities of the Roma soldiers were palpable as were the high decorations given to several Roma combatants. Yet these virtues were rarely publicly acknowledged. During the interwar years, individual Roma were certainly honoured, but the entire community was left outside the official Serbian narrative of the war. While the Yugoslav context proved to be more favourable for the position of the Serbian Roma, the pre-war prejudices proved to be too strong despite the war's 'fraternizing' impact. In addition, the Roma community did not manage to better its position and find a way to publicize its wartime loyalty and suffering.

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Article

"Improving Our Way of Life Is Largely in Our Own Hands": Inclusion according to the Romani Newspaper of Interwar Yugoslavia

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Abstract
The only Romani newspaper of interwar Yugoslavia, *Romano lil/Ciganske novine* (the latter meaning 'Gypsy newspaper' in Serbian), was published in Belgrade in 1935 comprising only three monthly issues. The most prominent Yugoslav Romani activist of the time, Svetozar Simić, was the editor of the newspaper, giving tribute to his visions of what Roma should do for the prosperity of their own community. In terms of content, the newspaper articles seem to be strategically thought-out with the aim of creating a narrative about the Roma, as people united by common culture and historical memory, equal to the other people of the Yugoslav Kingdom, who needed to be included in all processes of the social and public sphere. This article looks into the essence of some messages that the newspaper conveys regarding Roma's social inclusion, such as (1) education and professional training as a key for a better future, (2) the need for Roma to be more engaged and to self-organise as a community and (3) the fight against majority misconceptions about the Gypsies. The article presents and analyses these three elements of Svetozar Simić's visions for Romani social inclusion as presented in his editorial pieces. The analysis also pays attention to the resemblances between some of the main messages of the Romani activism in the interwar period and the activism for Roma inclusion in later periods, including parallels during the time of Yugoslav Socialism and the period of democratic transition up until today.

Keywords
education; inclusion; interwar Yugoslavia; minorities; newspaper; Romani activism; Romani journalism; *Romano lil/Ciganske novine*; Serbian Gypsies; Svetozar Simić

Issue
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1. Introduction: The Newspaper and Its Editor

Similar to most countries in Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe, in interwar Yugoslavia Romani civil activism has developed. In Belgrade there were established few Roma-led organisations and several other initiatives took place regionally. *Romano lil*/*Ciganske novine* (the latter meaning 'Gypsy newspaper' in Serbian), initiated and edited by Svetozar Simić, was the first and only Roma-led journalistic endeavour in interwar Yugoslavia. According to the editor: "Our newspaper has been set up in order to write about Gypsies, but understandably for Gypsies" (Simić, 1935a, p. 1). The monthly four-page edition had only three issues released between March and May 1935 and, allegedly had a print run of 1,000 copies for the first two issues and 5,000 copies for the third one (Jopson, 1936, p. 87).

Svetozar Simić was the brain behind *Romano lil*/*Ciganske novine* and the editor, manager and main author of the newspaper. Born in 1913 to a Romani family, in a village near Arandjelovac in Central Serbia, he moved to Belgrade after graduation from high school. He continued his studies in the Yugoslav capital, becoming a Law student in 1935 (Acković, 2014, p. 357). In the 1930s, together with Aleksandar Petrović, an employee at the Institute for Hygiene who was researching Gypsies in Serbia and publishing in Serbian and abroad, Simić co-authored three studies on Gypsies (Petrović & Simić, 1934a, 1934b, 1934c). Throughout his lifetime, Simić also worked on Romani grammar and vocabulary,

writing down customs and legends, all unpublished thus far. He was one of the main young figures in the civil activities among the Belgrade Gypsies, and practically the only activist of Romani background who authored and published materials in the public field during the interwar period. Simić was the founder and president of the Educational Club of Yugoslav Gypsy Youth that existed shortly before the start of the Second World War (see Section 2). After 1946 Simić focused mainly on his personal career but continued being active in the field of Romani issues. In the late 1960s he addressed a letter to the authorities proposing inclusion of the term 'Rom' in the National Statistical Institute categories with regards to the forthcoming Yugoslav-wide census of 1971. Thus, he might well have been the first Romani activist to raise the issue publicly in the late 1960s (similar demands were made by Slobodan Berberski, a Romani activist and member of the Communist Party Leadership in Belgrade), or at least his efforts were in the same direction as the Romani activism of the time in Socialist Yugoslavia. Simić also continued writing and maintained his contacts within the network of Romani activists and researchers of Romani culture throughout his life. For instance, he was corresponding with Rade Uhlik, a linguist and one of the few researchers interested in studying the Roma in Yugoslavia throughout the 20th century. In the interwar period, Uhlik actively collected oral traditions and studied the Romani Bosnian dialects, published a Romani language collection of traditional folklore songs (Uhlik, 1937), and translated into Romani The Gospel of Saint Luke (Uhlik, 1938).

According to information published in a review of *Romano lil*/*Ciganske novine* in the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, Aleksandar Petrović is reported as the person who founded and tried to financially maintain the newspaper, despite all obstacles (Jopson, 1936). Petrović was indeed one of the main contributors to the newspaper and, despite the fact that he is not explicitly mentioned in the newspaper administrative records, he might well have been a collaborator in Simić's endeavours, as materials he wrote form a substantial part of the small newspaper. Nothing, however, points to the fact that Aleksandar Petrović was the one who started or tried to maintain the endeavour. In fact, all preserved documents from the bookkeeping and archive of the newspaper—manuscripts, financial records and printed copies—point to the fact that Svetozar Simić was the main figure behind its publishing. Furthermore, a comprehensive article in the genre of a portrait interview with Simić was published in one of the most influential daily newspapers in Yugoslavia, *Vreme*, which elaborates on the short newspaper's history and records Simić's setting up an editorial office in his father's house in one of the Gypsy neighbourhoods of Belgade (Mitrović, 1936). We may speculate why Petrović had misrepresented himself, and had been further misrepresented in the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society* publication, as the editor and main agent behind *Romano lil*/*Ciganske novine*. In a letter dated 12 May 1935 to Scott Macfie, then an editor of *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, Petrović sent two copies of the newspaper. In the accompanying letter he wrote:

> I edit it and publish it together with a Gypsy student. But none of the Gypsies buy 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. (Petrović, 1935)

What strikes one here is that the actual—and well-known to the Belgrade public—editor of the newspaper, Svetozar Simić, is reduced to an anonymous "Gypsy student." Petrović, as author of a series of contributions on Serbian Gypsies in the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society* (Petrović, 1937; see also third series of the journal, volumes 14 through 19) and main correspondent of the leadership of the Gypsy Lore Society in the interwar period, was an authority whose claims were accepted without doubt or call for verification. Also, it seems that Petrović viewed the whole processes as a scientific experiment to contribute to the study of Gypsy psychology which was covered extensively in his publications, quite in unison with the racial discourse of the time. I agree with the opinion of Acković, in a personal communication dated 7 December 2018, that this is a clear case of purposeful falsification. This pattern is linked to the historically affirmed practice of marginalization and underestimation of Roma, who are not to be viewed as active agents in their own history and culture and always needed to be led by non-Roma.

All three issues of *Romano lil*/*Ciganske novine* comprised four pages and followed a similar newspaper structure: an editorial, frontpage article or introductory note by Svetozar Simić (in the second issue this piece is written by Aleksandar Petrović), a large second page devoted to Romani history and culture, shorter pieces reflecting on contemporary issues (e.g., the death of King Alexander I Karadjordjević, health issues, etc.) and the final part with Romani folklore—short tales, recorded texts of songs in the original Romani and translated by Simić and a feuilleton by Simić. The articles were mostly written by latter, with several large pieces by Aleksandar Petrović and M. Milić, an educated Rom who was also co-founder of the newspaper (Simić, 1935b, p. 1).

In his first editorial, Simić states that the newspaper is for Roma and about Roma, and thus directed to both Romani and non-Romani audiences, positioning itself as a counterpoint to the image of the Roma spread in other mainstream media:

> A newspaper such as ours could be edited in two ways: It could be written *about* Gypsies and in it could be written *for* Gypsies. If we were to write only about Gypsies, we would have to take a bit into account the

> various tastes of our *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*. (Simić, 1935b, p. 1; italics in the original)

Due to financial unsustainability and lack of funds, the newspaper had only three issues. The memory about it, however, was kept among Belgrade Romani activists as an inspiring example of both activism and journalism, and the need to revive it was raised in the decades to follow (Berberski, 1969, p. 51). As a matter of fact, Simić was not directly involved in the formal networks of Romani activism after the interwar period, although he continued to follow Romani movement developments and worked on a collection of essays reflecting on his juridical practice, including as lawyer of Romani people.

In terms of content, the newspaper articles seem to be strategically thought-out, with the aim of creating a narrative of the Gypsies as people united by common culture and historical memory, thus equal to the other people of the Yugoslav Kingdom, who needed to be included in all processes of the social and public sphere. Particular attention is due to Simić's editorials, especially those of the first and third issue. These pieces can be called visionary programmes, shedding light on both problems and their solutions for a desired future of the Roma.

The current article looks into the essence of several of the most important messages that the *Romano lil*/*Ciganske novine* conveys on Roma's social inclusion, outlining three main aspects: (1) education and professional training as a key for a better future, (2) the need for Roma to be more engaged and self-organise as a community and (3) the fight against majority misconceptions about the Gypsies. The article presents and analyses the way in which Simić's editorials discuss these points, as well as how they outline concrete steps for Romani social inclusion. The article also elaborates on the resemblance between some of the messages of the Romani activism in the interwar period and of the activism for Roma inclusion in later periods, including parallels with the time of Yugoslav Socialism and the period of democratic transition up until the present.

2. The Yugoslav Context: General Developments and Romani Activism

There were dynamic processes in terms of ethno-cultural and political development in interwar Yugoslavia. The review of the Yugoslav archives of the time and the already published scholarship (Banac, 1988; Dimić, 1996) show that the state efforts in the fields of culture, civil organisation and religious activities, both centrally and locally, were focused on strengthening a Yugoslav identity, especially among the youth, counteracting centrifugal activities labelled as nationalist and anti-Yugoslav, and activities related to ethnic communities with nation states outside of Yugoslav borders (German, Romanian, Czechoslovakian, etc.). There were two population censuses in the interwar period, 1921 and 1931, but none of them collected data that could be directly related to Roma. The main national categories were related to the three entities in the Kingdom—Serbs, Croats, Slovenes. There are researchers who quote various numbers of the Yugoslav Roma population of the time, based mainly on ethnographic data and observations. According to Tatomir Vukanović (1983, p. 121) the number of Gypsies in the Serbian territories of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1921 was 34,919. Rajko Đurić (1987, p. 67) estimates that Roma, in interwar Yugoslavia, numbered 250,000.

The Romani cultural, political and civil initiatives were not an object of interest to the state and there were no political measurements in these fields that referred to the Roma. This, however, does not mean that there were no such initiatives. As Acković (2000) has argued, there were such activities and they were all based on grass-root initiatives and self-organising efforts of Roma, formal (in accordance with the general legislative regulations) and informal. There were accomplishments led by Roma, e.g., a couple of organisations and the newspaper enterprise that is the main study object of this article. Among them were the First Serbian-Gypsy Association for mutual support in sickness and death (*Prva Srpsko-Ciganska zadruga za uzajmno pomaganje u bolesti i smrti*), active in the 1920s and 1930s, that most probably was based on an earlier form of community organisation, whose goals were to provide its members with help and support on various occasions. The second known organisation is the so-called Club of the Belgrade Serbian Gypsies (*Klub beogradskih srpskih Cigana*), and information about its activities reported in media points to the fact that the Club claimed rights for political representation and participation in the decision-making bodies at the local and national level. More is known about the third one, the Association of Belgrade Gypsies Worshippers of "Bibija" (*Udruženje beogradskih Cigana svečara "Bibije"*), established in 1935. According to this association's statute, its 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 study of crafts (Marushiakova & Popov, in press).

The fourth organisation, the Educational Club of the Yugoslav Gypsy Youth (*Prosvetni klub jugoslovenske ciganske omladine*), active in the late 1930s, was presided by Svetozar Simić (Nikolić, 1939, p. 10). The club was modelled similarly to other Yugoslav-wide youth organisations, so its primary goal was gathering Romani youth for further education and enlightenment. There were several types of activities characteristic of youth organisations (Žutić, 1991) that were developing in Yugoslavia as part of the Kingdom's politics of identity—sport activities, cultural activities, including amateur arts,

and the so-called analphabetic streams that were supposed to fight illiteracy among large groups by basic literacy lessons and public lectures on topics such as health, hygiene, history.

It should be noted however, that these organisations were not the only examples of Romani community initiatives of civil nature in interwar Yugoslavia. There also were Romani initiatives active in the cultural, social or religious life at the local level. Such examples are, the initiative for the building of so-called 'Gypsy Church' after the First World War in Privlaci (today in Eastern Croatia) with donations from the Rom Čedomir Nikolić, where in 1938, in front of Romani audience from the Vukovar-Srijem region, the newly translated Gospel of Luke (Uhlik, 1938) was read (Acković, 2014, pp. 205–208). In Niš, Southern Serbia, in 1928, the Gypsy Singing Society Sloga was established, and in 1932 the football club Gajret, that according to local community memory was entirely comprised of Roma, although it was not officially stated that it had an ethnic character, was founded (Jašić, 2001, p. 25).

Similar processes related to Romani activism and community self-mobilisation took place in the social and political context of all nation states in the region of Southeastern Europe (Achim, 2004, pp. 153–159; Marushiakova & Popov, 2005, pp. 445–447). Although the developments in Yugoslavia seem to be more limited and informal in comparison with neighbouring countries like Romania and Bulgaria, there was one very important common feature. Similar to the other countries in the region, the roots of Yugoslav Romani activism were not in top-down but in grass-root initiatives, driven by Roma activists and organisations, aiming to mobilise the community using civic engagement mechanisms characteristic of the respective period and nation-state. In the Yugoslavian context, these organisations often continued, intertwined with and based on traditional practices of community gatherings that were appropriated into new forms of civil organisations to unite and claim common interest of the Roma, and were thus comparable to other Yugoslav organisations of the same period. Most of them were led by Belgrade Roma and took place in Belgrade. It is of course natural that Belgrade Roma, being based in the Kingdom's capital, i.e., and at the forefront of the socio-political arena where policies were coined, positioned themselves as elite that should represent all Gypsies in the state and come up with leadership ideas and strategies for the development of the whole community within Yugoslavia. The presence of these ideas in the public space and on the level of formal and informal organisations' programming showed that leadership groups of Yugoslav citizens of Romani background were actively working for the advancement and social inclusion of the Roma as people within the Yugoslav national or/and local context. The Yugoslav multi-ethnic and multi-confessional context proved to be a stimulating environment for the development of the Romani social and political organisations. The activism of Svetozar Simić should be interpreted in light of these developments.

3. Education

The analysis of the preserved materials about the abovementioned organisations' activities, especially the ones of the 1930s, shows clearly the emphasis on work for both the education of the Romani youth and Romani community's self-mobilisation. The overall strategy was cultural and educational development of all generations of Roma. A great deal of the first editorial article by Svetozar Simić was devoted exactly to his visions about literacy and education, in a broad sense, of the community at large:

> Life is a desperate battle, the winner is the one who is stronger and better skilled. In order for a person to be able to earn a slice of bread for himself and his children, he should fulfil at least two conditions: to be literate and to have a permanent occupation in his hands….And we think that the only remedy for this evil and shame is that every one of our children is attending a school, and after the end of the school [the child] starts immediately to learn some craft or some skill. A man who starts working since childhood, gets used to it, and can never sit without work afterwards….That's why we have launched our newspaper. With it we want to open our brothers' eyes and show them that it is our first and foremost task to send our children to school, in order to become literate, and to let them learn some craft or skill right after graduation. Whoever could afford and wishes more, let them give the children to learn trade or to attend schools. And let our children learn there, with good masters and teachers, how to fairly earn a piece of bread. (Simić, 1935a, p. 1)

Reading the quoted parts of Simić's first editorial as a visionary programme, several points are worth elaborating upon. In the first place, he prioritised education as the only path to success in profession and in life. Yugoslavia's population, during the interwar period, had a great percentage of illiteracy. Increased literacy and access to education was a priority of the Kingdom during this time. In addition, a common Yugoslav identity was to be created, namely through education. Although Roma were not specifically targeted or mentioned in these policies, it is clear that the vision of Simić as a leader, and as a rare example of an educated Rom himself, was to include Romani community's development in the general tendencies of the time. He obviously planned and hoped for the young Romani generations to be enrolled in school as their peers. The stress on professional training in crafts and trades was also not coincidental: The modernisation of the Yugoslav state after the First World War included transformations in which the traditional crafts were to be upgraded into more modern forms, in order to be included in the general economy of the dynamically developed urban and manufacturing environment, particularly in Belgrade. The proposed plan for professional

training of the Roma, i.e., in schools and other institutions, was also in unison with the idea that Roma had to catch up with all processes of their contemporaries.

Another aspect that is only hinted at here was present on the pages of *Romano lil*/*Ciganske novine*, and was later implemented into activities by Simić as President of the Educational Club of the Yugoslav Gypsy Youth in the late 1930s. This was the need to educate the illiterate older generation through activities in so-called analphabetic stream, that was largely developing in Yugoslavia at the time. The aim of all these activities, was cultural elevation (Nikolić, 1939) and the development of lifelong working habits. If we interpret these strategies in the phrases of the contemporary Romani activism, Simić was pleading for inclusion in the educational system in order to achieve inclusion in the labour market and society. Note that these requests were not directed towards institutions, but towards the Roma themselves, and particularly towards the families responsible for Romani kids.

With the renaming of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes into the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929, certain policies in the field of education and culture were designed in order to reinforce a Yugoslav identity as one of the responses to centrifugal and nationalistic tendencies of the Kingdom's territories (Dimić, 1996; Gligorijević, 1986). The period of the 1930s in Yugoslavia was related to a general discourse and policies for building a Kingdom-wide network of youth clubs related to various sports, cultural and educational activities, and was connected to a general strategy of building a Yugoslav identity among the new generations (Žutić, 1991). Elevation of the general educational status was one of the strategies presented in Yugoslav public discourse, and also in the activities of various nation-wide clubs of youth and community organisations. The special stress on educating the youth and the future generations in the programme articles of Simić shows that the Belgrade community activist was shaping policies in the spirit of the Yugoslav time and context, and at the same time planning an educated Roma leadership for the future.

As a matter of fact, the essence of this discourse has not significantly changed for almost a century, although there have been shifts in the aim and justification of the need for education. Looking at the time of Socialist Yugoslavia, Roma activists have stressed the importance of education of Roma so that they had better labour opportunities, as shown from the speeches delivered by Slobodan Berberski and many other Roma at the founding assembly of the Rom Association (*Društvo Rom*) in Belgrade in 1969 (Berberski, 1969, pp. 49–50). Roma education has been one of the priority areas in the discourse of all post-socialist transition societies, including those of former Yugoslavia. The largest share of the budget of the Serbian Roma National Council, for instance, has been devoted to projects in the field of education. There are, however, several shifts in the focus of Romani educational policies in the discourse of Romani activism and civil sector in the post-socialist period. The stress during the interwar period was, in the spirit of the time, for mass basic education of large numbers of illiterate citizens, on obtaining basic education in formal educational institutions or informal courses and building up working habits of the newly educated. The focus during the period of Socialism was to secure basic education and inclusion in the labour market. Finally, the stress in the post-Socialism period was on educational competences that went beyond basic education and were implemented through investments in programmes securing quality education at all levels, stressing the importance of preparation and enrolment of Romani students in universities. The strategy for increasing the number of such students and Roma with university education was articulated in the policy documents of the Roma Education Fund, an international organisation founded in 2005, with regards to general developments (Roma Education Fund, 2010a, p. 19), as well as to certain countries (Roma Education Fund, 2010b, pp. 39, 93).

4. Civil Participation and Community Self-Mobilisation

What is interesting to point out is the fact that these visions for a desired development for Roma in the field of education and culture, to subsequently lead to their social integration, were not related to demands from the state, political or government measures. They were connected to demands towards the Roma themselves or as Simić writes in his third (and last) editorial:

> An interesting attempt was made in that direction by another member of our editorial team, Mr. Milić. He collected in his backyard a group of 15 to 20 men and women of different ages and read to them the newspaper from the beginning to the end. After every article he read, he explained to them in his own words in *Romane* (in Gypsy language) what he had read to them. Then started the questions that developed into entire discussions. If we could find more people like Mr. Milić, we could get an even greater interest in our newspaper among our people. We should not forget that our newspaper has to fulfil a cultural first-order mission. From the interest in certain poems and stories printed on a language spoken by them, our people are turning to more serious things, to our life in general. The question of improving our way of life is largely in our own hands. A little more economy in the house, higher order and cleanliness: a little less visit to the *kafana*, less card-playing, less drunkenness; and most of all, more literacy, paying more attention to our children and their preparation for the future lives, we will live better and better. The future will show, if we would be able to convince our brothers and sisters, how important it is for each of our children to complete elementary school and learn some crafts. (Simić, 1935b, p. 1; italics in the original)

This could be seen as meaning that the state had already secured the Roma as citizens with access to education and professional realisation, as well as with means for cultural elevation. According to this narrative, it is thus a question of Romani's own agency, initiative and self-organisation to achieve their better future through using the already existing mechanism in their environment. In the lines above we also see a vision and direction towards a common identity building among the Roma under the leadership of more educated and literature individuals, a well-known pattern for the ethnonational states in Eastern and Central Europe region, developed in 19th and beginning of the 20th century, after the Herderian model for national emancipation: namely, through the collection and publishing of materials representing the folkloristic and linguistic heritage of the respective peoples on behalf of the educated elite that works for the 'folk spirit,' the large mass of community will identify with the published material (in this case in the newspaper) and will recognise its leadership role.

Drawing a vision for Roma and their opportunities for a better future, and in relation to the need for a Romani agency in achieving prosperity for the Roma as a collective, some parts of Simić's articles also engage with a critique from within the community and disapproving some actions, views and habits among the Roma that were seen as preventing them—to use the words of the newspaper—from "elevation to another cultural level" (Simić, 1935b, p. 1). There are two common themes in this respect that appear in more than one issue of the newspaper. The main critique, observed in the editorial articles by Simić and interrelated to the already discussed topic of Romani education, is towards the community itself for not paying enough attention to the schooling and professional skills of their children. Another critique is about the lack of interest in Romani civic activism among the educated and successful Roma towards whom Simić is particularly critical, as they are the ones who are supposed to take an active engagement concerning their own community: "And then why, sweet brothers, our richer brothers are ashamed of their own brothers, their name, their blood?" (Simić, 1935a, p. 1). In "Our intelligentsia and aristocracy," signed by Milić, but clearly influenced by Simić editorial style, we read:

> Among us, however, they are lords. But the only problem is that they are ashamed, even though they were also born to a Gypsy woman and breastfed with her milk. But they can do a lot for us. Can't they be more engaged with this, until literacy spreads among our people? Can't they create one association that would assist us in a case of sickness and death. They can help us create reading rooms and courses for our illiterate adults. They could help us a lot so that every child of ours learns a craft and profession and honestly earns his bread.
>
> Unfortunately, they do not do anything of this sort. Just the opposite, those who call themselves 'Gypsy intelligentsia' and 'Gypsy aristocracy' doctors and other state servants are openly against our newspaper. They spread the word among our illiterate brothers, especially among women, that our newspaper only disgraces the Gypsies, that the owner of our newspaper is against Gypsies, and that the Gypsies should not read and support the newspaper. (Milić, 1935, p. 2)

This critique from within, on the pages of the third issue of *Romano lil*/*Ciganske novine,* actually accuses Roma of a lack of civil engagement and activities for the benefit of the Romani community as a collective. The main critique addresses primarily those who are literate and educated, as they are the elite, the ones who are supposed to engage in an active position towards their own community, to establish leadership roles in solidarity and prosperity, and to lead the community mobilisation in various fields. The author portrays them, however, as either passive and uninterested toward topics discussed in the *Romano lil*/*Ciganske novine*, or as people with negative opinions towards the Gypsy newspaper mainly because of the criticism addressed to the Romani community.

The key role of the Romani leadership for community prosperity and self-organisation continued to be an essential element in Romani movement discourse, bearing the sign of each period. The socialist Yugoslavia Rom Association leadership spoke about producing cadres "who can shorten the way for affirmation and constitution of a Roma nationality" (Berberski, 1969, p. 51) and help Roma become equal Yugoslav citizens. Berberski, the most prominent Romani activist leader of the Yugoslav time in the 1970s, was directly pleading for Roma social inclusion through work of Roma but also for work by the social institutions for Romani inclusion (Berberski, 1973, p. 4). In the transition period, there has been a plurality of leadership forms, for instance Romani non-governmental organisations, working on Roma issues by advocacy and equal rights' claims, political participation of Roma representatives in national and local level of government. While the critique towards factors that are external to the community was predominant, strategical papers of Romani activists still recognised that certain questions had to be raised within the community itself in order to tackle existing problems (Gheorghe, 2013). Another point presented in *Romano lil*/*Ciganske novine* articles—that the successful individuals are not engaged in community work and are afraid to publicly come out as Roma—has also been present in private and public statements by Roma activists (Djurić, 2009).

5. Fight against Misconceptions about Roma

The fact that the main issues discussed by the newspaper articles were related to a critique towards the Romani community internally, does not mean that the image of the non-Roma was completely absent or that a critique

towards the majority community was not present. The most frequently used term to name the non-Roma, in the Serbian language articles of the *Romano lil*/*Ciganske novine*, is the Romani word, namely *gadje*, provided in its Romani original followed by a Serbian translation. In this way the newspaper legitimised its positioning as a tribute that represented the Romani point of view and also introduced the Romani concept to the non-Romani audiences. Rarely in use was the word non-Gypsies (*necigani*). Serbs, being the non-Roma population with which the Roma from Belgrade and in the region were in contact, were also present and named in tales and oral folklore narratives, published in the newspaper, but also when referring to the non-Roma audience in general.

Simić also engaged in a critique of the macro-society and mainly its mistaken beliefs about the Roma prevalent in public discourse. He addressed in his articles two of the most common and widespread misconceptions about the Gypsies (present in all historical periods and geographical areas), namely those concerning Gypsy criminality and Gypsy begging. In his first editorial Simić challenges the wrong perception of begging as a Gypsy cultural practice by providing an explanation related to the social circumstances in which every person, regardless of ethnicity, could find himself in. Indirectly, he hints towards the fact that if the social infrastructure of a state cannot provide for its citizens finding themselves in a difficult situation, then begging is just a survival strategy. Furthermore, Simić criticised begging as a practice misused as an occupation replacing proper forms of work. He ended with a clear message that begging as an occupation was unacceptable the collective:

> But if we are not blamed for what the newspapers write, we must think carefully about another misfortune that bursts upon our neck. Many *gadje* (non-Gypsy) think that a Gypsy and a beggar are the same thing. However, this is not the case. There are two types of begging. The first is: When a man loses his job, he is hungry, his children are hungry. If the state or the municipality does not help him as a citizen of this country, then only two exits are left to such a man if he does not want to die of starvation: either ask for a piece of bread or steal it. Asking for a piece of bread is forbidden neither by religion nor by law. Only the one who steals from others is punished. The second one is the kind of begging when a person, instead of working, goes around and in various ways, lures money from honest and pious people for bread. We, all the Gypsies, whatever number we are, are against such kind of begging. We are fighting and will be fighting against it. (Simić, 1935a, p. 1; italics in the original)

Additionally, from the position of a Romani run newspaper, addressing a wide reading audience, Simić in the first place discusses and challenges narratives that were characteristic for the mainstream media reporting criminals and criminal activities, not by naming the perpetrator, but by pointing out on the first place the fact that this is a Gypsy, suggesting equalisation of criminality and being Gypsy in general. Indeed, a look into the media of the time, shows that most of the newspaper materials are related to reporting illegal and criminal activities by Gypsies. Simić, a law student at that time, also disputes the legal absurdity of attributing collective guilt to an individual's criminal acts:

> All Gypsies are not and cannot be guilty if one of them breaks the law, and the newspaper instead of saying: this and that, by name and surname, did this and that, they report in large bulky letters: Gypsies have stolen…Gypsies have cheated…Gypsies have killed…Gypsies have been mutilated…have blinded…Gypsies…Gypsies…Gypsies. As if there is not a single criminal act in the world in which a Gypsy guy has not been involved. In human history, there has not yet been such a case in which the act that an individual belonging to a given people may have done something but it is attributed to all the people. And all Gypsies could never answer for the deeds and idleness of individual Gypsies. (Simić, 1935a, p. 1)

As a matter of fact, both non-Roma narratives (about equalisation of Gypsy with criminality and with beggary) challenged by Simić are still present in the public discourse and continue to be addressed by Romani activists in both (post)Yugoslav space and across the world, often interpreted in the framework of anti-discrimination and anti-Gypsyism. Still today, many Roma activists from Yugoslav countries in their public interviews insist on the fight against prejudices and their consequences (Djurić, 2009).

Also, similarly to Simić's statement against any begging practice among Roma that substitutes for a job, there are activists, such as Nicolae Gheorghe who state that Romani intellectuals and activists have to tackle begging as a practice as leaders of their community (Gheorghe, 2013). At the same time, little has changed regarding the majority of society's ideas about begging. Looking at this discourse globally, there are cases of localities where, despite the existing ban on begging, Romani begging was tolerated because of the dominating discourse of this as a Roma cultural practice or occupation (Marushiakova, & Popov, 2016, p. 238). To the famous case of Italy, where despite the clear statements of Roma activists that begging is not part of Roma culture or traditions, the Italian Supreme Court in 2008 declared begging a traditional way of life deeply rooted in the Romani culture, a recent one from Sweden can be added. Again, Romani activists raise voices and point out that begging is not a Romani cultural practice, and demand that the Swedish state should create better living and working conditions for the Romanian Roma who currently beg and live on the streets. Since 2016 there have been constant attempts to manage and institutionalise locally or nationally by issuing permits to beggars or by introduc-

ing a fee on begging, considering it as a street occupation practice ("Swedish town becomes first in country to introduce licence fees for beggars," 2019). As a reaction to this, Hans Caldaras, a Swedish Romani artist and activist, publicly spoke against such regulations, pointing out that, if setting up a fee, the authorities should be able to justify such actions against the poorest Roma coming to Sweden.

Similar to Simić's rhetoric, Caldaras points to the fact that Romani people who beg have no other options for survival and are at the bottom of existence. In the Swedish Romani activists' discourse, however, in contrast with writings of Simić and Gheorghe, there is no critique of begging and other practices, such as crime and early marriages, that according to activists as Nicolae Gheorghe, have to be tackled by the Romani movement in order to mobilise and change their own community.

6. Conclusion

The interwar period saw the birth of Romani civil activism and the emergence of the first Roma-initiated publications in the public space in most of the countries of Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe. The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (Kingdom of Yugoslavia since 1929) was not an exception. The Yugoslavian capital was the place where most of these activities took place—the few Romani organisations from that time established and developed activities there, the only Roma-led newspaper *Romano lil*/*Ciganske novine* published there and the first Yugoslav-wide organisation (Educational Club of the Yugoslav Gypsy Youth) set up there for only a couple of months before the Second World War. The most prominent Yugoslav Romani activist of the time, Svetozar Simić, started *Romano lil*/*Ciganske novine*, giving tribute to his own visions about the need for social inclusion of the Roma and the paths to achieve it.

The three major areas for action outlined in *Romano lil*/*Ciganske novine* articles and discussed here—education for ensuring professional realisation and a better life, self-organising within the community under the leadership of successful and educated Roma and the fight against the predominant stereotypical mainstream narratives about the Gypsies as criminals and beggars—were all related to the vision that the Romani community as a collective should mobilise itself and take actions in the framework of the existing social structures and be part of the up-to-date social processes. These three strategic areas expressed in the newspaper fit fully into the discourse and known programmes of the existing Roma civil organisations of the interwar period in Yugoslavia and the region of South Eastern and Central Europe (Marushiakova & Popov, in press) and, similar to them, sought for Romani community advancement. On the other hand, they were also in unison with some of the major Yugoslav social development discourses of the time, for modernisation (upgrading and professionalisation of crafts), strategies for increasing literacy, and the educational advancement of the population, and community participation and representation through organisations set up and led by the educated elite. What is interesting to point out here is the fact that these pleas were directed towards the Roma themselves, who had to awaken and self-organise for the sake of their own community. Without underestimating the fact that the lack of critique might be explained with the general atmosphere of the Yugoslav regime of the mid 1930s (that was far from welcoming to critique of the authorities at any level), we should also stress the fact that analysing the *Romano lil*/*Ciganske novine* articles, it is clear that, according to their discourse, the social inclusion of interwar Yugoslavia was "in Roma's own hands" (Simić, 1935b, p. 1). According to the writings of Simić on the pages of *Romano lil*/*Ciganske novine,* community changes were a question of Romani's own agency, initiative and self-organisation. The writings outlined a path for achieving a better future through using the already existing mechanisms of the nation-state's social and political environment. The critique towards negative developments in the social environment was not lacking, and *Romano lil*/*Ciganske novine* also engaged in a critique towards generalising negative presentations of the Gypsies.

All three 'programme' areas for social inclusion appear to be comparable with the ideas of the Yugoslav activism of later periods, both in the time of Yugoslav Socialism and in the transition period. The emphasis on Romani education has persistently been present in the social inclusion discourse throughout all historical periods. However, the overall strategic aims and justification of the need for it have transformed and shifted–while the interwar period visions were focused, in the spirit of the time, on the cultural elevation and working habits, the discourse of socialist and post-socialist periods has stressed the need for primary and secondary education in order to access and be competitive in the labour market, and, in the decades after 2000, on increasing the number of Romani students enrolled in universities. On the other hand, the discourse on the need for self-organisation and the critique of the society have developed into new nuances, dimensions and phraseology. Looking at this resemblance with some of the messages of nowadays Romani activisms, one is astonished and tends to think how little has changed despite the fact that a century has passed.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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Article

Images of Roma through the Language of Bulgarian State Archives

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Abstract
This research has been carried out as part of the RomaInterbellum Project which studies the Roma civic emancipation between World War I and World War II. Trawling through the Bulgarian archival documents on Roma in this time period, a reader cannot help but begin to form a certain image about the *Tsigani*, the term with which Roma have been popularly referred to in the archives. Unsurprisingly, this image does not seem to differ much from the one of today—that of the uneducated, dirty, foreign, and that pose a threat not only to the prosperity and well-being of the Bulgarian population and culture at large but also to the state and the economy. The research is based on archived files, letters of complaints from Bulgarian citizens and other documents sourced from Bulgarian state archives. The article analyses the words and language employed in the archived documents, the connotations they bear and the images they build. It also tries to show how, in the interwar period, this dominant language was utilised by Roma individuals and leaders in order to react, counter and protect their image and future. More importantly, they sought ways to build a better integrated Roma society through the establishment of own organisations and associations. Understanding this historical narrative from the interwar period is essential in advancing knowledge of many major issues surrounding the Roma today, such as housing, health and their social inclusion.

Keywords
Bulgaria; emancipation; Gypsy; inclusion; language; Roma; state archives

Issue
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1. Introduction

With the end of World War I, newly formed European states began to re-structure, re-organise and revisit their own visions for state and society. The interwar period marked the end of major empires, such as the Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian and the Russian and the redrawing of European borders. With that, all new states included in their borders substantial ethnic minorities including Roma, or *Tsigani*—as they have been popularly referred to at the time in Bulgaria—a term commonly translated as Gypsies.

What ought to be highlighted in the outset of this work is the geographical context and the history of the new Bulgarian state and its historical link to the Ottoman Empire. As Barany (2002) argues, imperial states would normally seek to be moderate and restrained towards their marginal groups. The Ottoman Empire would thus grant several rights to its various ethnic minorities such as to preserve their cultures, languages and religions. However, the Empire would be reluctant to give them political rights as its major concerns were to maintain political stability, keep or extend its territory, and collect taxes. For that reason, it is correct to assume that the treatment of Romani people in the Ottoman Empire has been characterised with relative negligence and tolerance which gave them freedom to preserve their culture and language and exercise their professions. This could be in opposition to other regimes which soughed to rid themselves, in various ways, of their Gypsies, or to assimilate them (Barany, 2002; Macfie, 1943; Margalit, 1999; Yates, 1966). In the Ottoman Empire, Gypsies enjoyed considerably better lives compared to other European regions. Nevertheless, Roma were relegated to the lowest level of the social scale together with those who could not have been identified as having a profession. In fact, the

Romani people in the Ottoman Empire appear to have been treated and taxed as a distinct ethnic group, regardless of their religious affiliations—a practice which has been atypical for the Ottoman rulers (Marushiakova & Popov, 2001). The dislike of Gypsies in the Ottoman Empire has also been based on their view as less reliable and trustworthy than other peoples, with the wandering lifestyle of part of the Gypsies to appear troublesome. Other images that have been popular in the Ottoman Empire included those of the Gypsy as useless parasites and, towards the end of 17th century, as pimps and prostitutes which, in return, has resulted in increasing of the collected taxes (Malcolm, 1996; Todorova, 2009). As Bulgaria gained independence in 1878 from Ottoman rule, the social position of Gypsies declined further. This could be partly because most of them were followers of Islam which now became associated with the former oppressors and in opposition to Orthodox Christianity. After the end of World War I, Roma began to pursue a better future through a mixture of independence and adaptation to societies they lived with (Marushiakova & Popov, 1993). That option included the adoption of the new religious (Protestant) identities and churches, and the foundation of associations, organisations and their own press (Marinov, 2019; Marushiakova & Popov, 2015; Slavkova, 2007).

This article seeks to show that the civil emancipation of the Roma is rooted in a critical interplay between the predominant narrative of the state and its institutions and the Roma themselves who sought to balance that portrayal with their own narratives. It will show that despite the largely negative portrayal of Roma by the Bulgarian state, they managed to establish their own organisations and associations based on their own visions for their place in the society, furthering and protecting their own interests and seeking to secure a better future in Bulgaria. This article is composed of two parts: First, we will present the 'master narrative' of the Bulgarian state from the interwar period; second, we will deal with the ideas, imagery, narratives and proposals from Roma themselves based on the Bulgarian archival records from the interwar period.

2. Seeing and Learning about Roma through the Eyes of Bulgarian State Archives

The access to archival documents offers the potential of verifying already existing information but also the discovery of a new previously undiscovered information. This allows to certify the veracity of widely cited archival materials and re-analyse these same materials through the interpretation of the researchers themselves. Sadly, Romani studies has been viewed as a field where scholars would repeat previous information ad infinitum without verifying it and thus perpetuating erroneous knowledge (Clark, 2004; Hancock, 2004; K. Lee, 2004). While studying the archival documents of the Bulgarian state archives dealing with Roma in the interwar period, it was the language and descriptions of the Gypsies which made the greatest impression on the author and, as a result of that, the images that were formed by reading these records. For the purposes of this work, the author defines the term 'image' as the written descriptions of Roma in the Bulgarian state archives. Even though the state offers some photographic images of Roma from the interwar period, this work chose to analyse only the written documents and the stories they present. Thus, these stories—predominantly official state documents, memos, notes, petitions, internal communications—have been referred to here as 'master narratives' so much so that they have been sourced by the official Bulgarian state. If for a second we imagine the reader had no prior knowledge or information about the Gypsies, and reading these archival documents were their sole point of departure, they would have most certainly been able to form a complete image of who the Gypsies in Bulgaria were—thanks to the presentation and the portrayal found in the documents. That image is so complete, as argued by this work, that it does not differ much from the mainstream image of the Roma in the present day and age. For contemporary images see the works of Ivasiuc (2019) and van Baar, Ivasiuc, and Kreide (2019). This article should be considered as a snapshot as it focuses on the presentation of a specific, yet important, timeframe in the history of Bulgaria and the civic and social emancipation of their Roma.

This research supports the argument of certain scholars such as Lucassen and Willems (2003), Lucassen, Willems, and Cottaar (1998), and Willems (1998) that the identity of Gypsies is a social construct. The scholars have come to their conclusion based on their research in Prussia, the German state after its unification in 1871, and the Netherlands. In their work, the authors found that vagrants, vagabonds, travellers, Gypsies and other unwanted 'social ills' were all seen as equally bad and threatening to the 'well-ordered societies' of the West. As they have put it, the concept of a "well-ordered society" is largely a Western one (Lucassen & Willems, 2003, p. 307). The Gypsies, (poor) travellers and vagrants have been threatening to the state because of their lack of permanent residences, the inability to be monitored, and ultimately with their posing need to be supported by the state.

In the context of Bulgaria, at least as the Bulgarian state archives have demonstrated, nothing suggests that the term 'Gypsy' is being conflated with other groups and there is no doubt who is a *Tsiganin* (a Gypsy) and who is not. This research also reinforces the statement of Marushiakova and Popov (2017) who have argued that in Eastern Europe there is no doubt about who the Gypsies are and who exactly belongs to that group. The documents are able to discern those Roma who are sedentary, nomadic, those who come from abroad, and even those who may have preferred to hide their true Romani identities. Even though the ethnic aspect of the Roma is only slightly touched upon in the archival sources, i.e., that 'Gypsies' are a people with distinct

language, culture and origins, there seems to be no reference to the 'dubious' character of 'the Gypsies,' nor to the complex identities of the Roma. Some authors, such as David Mayall (2004), have managed to show that the identity of the Gypsy is laden with complexities and that often non-Roma "outsiders" would disagree on many of their socially constructed identities (p. 278). Without giving credibility to any of their contested identities, Mayall (2004) shows that knowledge, information and common beliefs about Gypsies have become historically accepted as 'credible.' In fact, the gathered Bulgarian documents appear to have a quite rigid perception of a certain group of people called *Tsigani* whose portrayal is of 'invaders' and 'infesters' who do not belong nor fit adequately in the Bulgarian society, prosperity and future. Somehow similar to this is the work of Susan Williams (2007) who examined the period between 1918–1934 and the disparity between the visions of non-Roma, largely western Gypsylorists (who wanted to see and experience the 'true' Gypsy of Eastern Europe, who were perceived as unaffected by the nascent modernity of the time), and Romanian Roma intelligentsia themselves (who furthered their visions as good and loyal Romanians, Orthodox in religion, and forming trade unions, organisations, and associations who tried to promote a new Roma identity opposed to the 'backward' nomadic Roma groups and lifestyle).

Probably, the sole image of Gypsies which resonates universally nowadays in the East and the West is that of the travellers. Lucassen and Willems (2003) distinguish between nomadic groups who travel alone or in small groups in order to exercise their professions and offer their services to the settled population, and those who travel with their families. Even though both sets of groups are stigmatised equally, based on their research on reports and journals of criminologists in Germany, itinerant professionals, such as show-people, musicians, jugglers, bear leaders, coppersmiths and peddlers who travel with their families are more likely to be labelled with the more stigmatic term 'Gypsies.' Furthermore, the authors manage to show that the two sets of groups have been popularly confused with one another and that there is no clear way to distinguish between the two as both groups have been equally distrusted and stigmatised. In fact, the authors noticed an increase of the use of the term 'Gypsies' in the German police journals after 1830s onwards, suggesting that the term has been used as a category to be applied more generously to any rogue, poor, alien and travelling person.

The collected Bulgarian archival records are not criminological per se even though there are documents which are communications by police inspectorates who too appear to treat Gypsy nomadism as undesired, linking it with illegality and criminality. The records appear to be quite certain about who Gypsies are, but at the same time they are ambiguous and inclusive in their description regarding who they include in the term 'Gypsy.' The Bulgarian state, like the ones in the West, seems to be equally threatened and appalled by the movement of Gypsies. For example, the *Draft Bill for the Abolition of the Wandering of Gypsy Nomads*, first proposed 1937 and changed in the next couple of years, clearly suggests that the travels of nomad-Gypsies in Bulgarian lands must be legally outlawed. Gypsy nomads in Bulgaria are described in Article 1 of the bill as:

> All Tsigani with unsettled address, who wander around the Kingdom and live in camps or in the open air, regardless of what kind of occupations they practice. ("Draft bill," 1937)

A quite informative part of this draft bill is another supplementary document entitled *Rationale for the Bill for the Abolition of the Wandering of Gypsy Nomads*. Here, the great number of Gypsies roaming the Bulgarian Kingdom is stressed from the outset. The document does not vow to cite an exact figure and only says "tens of thousands." Gypsy nomads are described as having:

> The most diverse professions—whittlers, spindle-makers, comb-makers, bear-leaders, monkey-leaders etc. ("Rationale for the bill," 1941)

These professions, however, are seen just as disguise of their real professions which are cited as:

> Theft and begging which are skilfully concealed with the dancing of monkeys, bears and with all kinds of exorcism and fortune-telling. ("Rationale for the bill," 1941, p. 48)

Also, the nomad-Gypsies are characterised as criminals stealing animals and children and as "bearers of the most-dangerous and contagious diseases, both among people and among domesticated animals" ("Rationale for the bill," 1941, p. 48). Here, because of their mobile lifestyle, Gypsies' perceived criminal activities are reported as hard to discover and difficult to persecute. Like the older existing records about the Gypsies, in Bulgaria too, the nomad-Gypsies are popularly perceived to be a 'great social ill' because of their spread of diseases, immorality and prostitution, corrupting the upstanding morals of the good Bulgarian citizens.

There are also a few archival documents that precisely deal with the perceived threat of nomad-Gypsies in Bulgaria. A complaint from 1938—written on behalf of the local residents in Sofia and by the Sofia's Neighbourhood Cultural-Charitable Association Ivan Krastitel—alerts the police and the Department of Health about the presence of Gypsy nomads occupying the area around the Vladaya River and Dobrotich Street in Sofia. The presence of the Gypsies is characterised in the letter as the cause of rubbish, misery, disease, bad behaviour and negative influence for the younger Bulgarian generation. The letter asks these Gypsies to be confined in the outskirts of the city or isolated in the

Gypsy neighbourhood Fakulteta, where it would be well-fitting for this negative and undesired behaviour. This, for example, essentially conveys that it is not only nomad-Gypsies that are undesired and threatening to the cultured Bulgarian population but Gypsies in general. The indication that the Gypsy newcomers shall fit well in the settled neighbourhood of Fakulteta, in the outskirts of the city, indicated the marginalisation of the two groups. In its rationale, the complaint letter conveys the common knowledge about the Gypsies in general:

> You [Chief of police] must be aware, that the Gypsies are a people/nation [*narod*], which does not bend under any culture and education, neither it must be expected the performance from them of any discipline, hygiene, order, under which the mass, collective way of life is characterised with. That is why, for a long time they are being eliminated by the other citizens and are being settled in the outskirts of the towns, they are being isolated. ("A request letter," 1938, p. 1)

Similarly, Picker (2017) has argued in his work that there is a link between racialised urban segregation and racialised representations, policies and control. He demonstrated how the symbolic, spatial, marginalisation of Roma situates them into harmful socio-economic conditions and health, and how such state policies are informed and justified by a certain prejudice or racist understanding. Interestingly, today the largest Romani neighbourhood in Sofia is Fakulteta—a neighbourhood which is not considered to be in the outskirts of the capital in today's standards. It also continues to be a spatial entity which hosts many Roma from Bulgaria's provinces who seek to settle down and work in the capital.

Reading through the archives, it becomes apparent that Gypsies in general, regardless of their lifestyle, are the problematic 'other.' A letter sent in 1941, from the Sliven Economic Association in the town of Sliven, addressed to the Minister of Internal Affairs and National Health of Bulgaria writes:

> Populated since time immemorial, occupying the most hygienic part of the town's surrounding area, scattered about in hovels and huts rotting in dirt and in stench—the Gypsies, with their ill-breeding and lack of feeling even about the tiniest of responsibilities—already pose one huge threat in all kinds of respects to the rest of the population of the town. ("A letter from the Sliven Economic Association," 1941, p. 2)

The document further cites the perceived dangers of the Gypsies, such as the spreading of diseases, begging, stealing of jobs in the textile factories from ethnic Bulgarians, not contributing to the Bulgarian economy with taxes, spreading of amoral behaviour, and their criminality. The image of Gypsies as bearers and disseminators of contagious diseases is well-documented in the archives and some documents even suggest that to be known as common sense. Their perceived image as 'dirty' could thus further explain the tone of the letter and its request for Gypsies to be displaced away of the town or from Sliven. Indicative and more detailed, for example, is the complaint letter by the Neighbourhood Cultural-Charitable Association Ivan Krastitel, from 1938, which refers to the damages done to the Bulgarian residents by the presence of Gypsy occupants in their neighbourhood:

> It is enough these couple of Gypsy families—to transform [the whole neighbourhood], and it is already transformed, into a Gypsy *mahala* [neighbourhood]—streets, water taps, public places, water—are polluted, which all create the full conditions for the emergence of some serious epidemic disease, which eventually may kill many and reach the centre of the city. Regarding their morale and the examples that our children would receive from their children—we should not speak: the most vulgar swearing, fights, drunkenness, debauchery—everything [which is from] the worst. ("A request letter," 1938, p. 1)

These lines above and the story they present of Roma as posing serious threats to the society at large resonate quite strongly at the time of writing this article. More than 80 years since the appearance of these archival documents, this narrative remains unchanged. At the time of writing this article and at the outset of the Covid-19 disease as observed in Eastern Europe, Roma have received special attention. On the one hand, there is the presumption that, generally, Gypsies have poor hygiene, and on the other hand that they are not well-informed and educated. These two aspects combine to form an image of the Roma as a group which requires policing, to be controlled, feared and ridiculed. Roma have received special media and political attention at the time when government measures have been taken towards the containment of the new highly contagious virus. It seems that just as there is the need to contain the virus, Roma had to be contained too. For instance, in Bulgaria there have been televised interviews with members of the Romani neighbourhoods, of various ages, who were being asked whether they know what coronavirus is and what they do so that they do not contract it. At the same time, Bulgarian authorities have put special measures to police the Romani neighbourhoods around the country in order to keep their residents within the borders of their neighbourhoods with the fears that they will spread the coronavirus. Even though at the time of the writing of the article there have been no officially reported cases of Roma who have contracted the virus, Roma communities in Bulgaria received stricter measures of vigilance and security while the nationalist party Bulgarian National Movement, which is part of the ruling coalition Government, has called Roma communities throughout the country to be quarantined and isolated due to their lack of discipline (Nikolov, 2020). Nine Roma musi-

cians who have tried to return to their home in North Macedonia have also received special treatment at the outbreak of the pandemic. They are seen as the first people to be quarantined at the North Macedonian border and the only ones amongst the group of 200 people returning from Italy and Austria. Even though the Roma musicians have not shown any symptoms of having contracted the virus and have signed declarations to self-isolate in their homes, a posted video shows that they have been the only ones held and quarantined (J. Lee, 2020). Notable also has been the response of the Norwegian authorities who have arranged a special flight and have honoured the request of 140 homeless Roma to return to their Romanian homes at the outbreak of the recent global pandemic ("Oslo charters," 2020). The suggestion here is, in my interpretation, that these Roma, who have become a feature of the streets of Norway since 2007, could transmit the highly contagious virus and pose a further burden to the Norwegian state. There thus may be observed a persistent and general link between the (perceived mobile) lifestyles of Roma and the dangers or threats they pose to the society at large.

Finally, there are several documents showing that the Gypsies are considered to be poor and uneducated. There are documents exchanged between Bulgarian state departments trying to figure out how to keep Roma pupils enrolled at school. For example, in 1930, at the instance of the missing of 90 Roma pupils from the primary school, in the *Dolna* (Lower) Gypsy neighbourhood of the town of Kyustendil, the Head Teacher of the School, At. Shopov, has tried everything to keep the Roma pupils at school: This included seeking the help of the police and bringing pupils back with the help of police, issuing fines to their parents, and personal visits to their places of residence—all these efforts proved be in vain. It appears that the pupils were absent as they have been helping their parents to earn a living by being shoe polishers, porters, and begging, including in the cold winter months. The few Roma pupils, on the other hand, who were attending school are reported to be without shoes and with torn clothes, even in the harsh winter while literally starving. As a result, just to show the incompetence of the Bulgarian government to deal with the issue, the Bulgarian authorities ultimately decided to simply issue a fine to the primary school itself and cite its negligence of a Bulgarian Law for National Education ("Report from Dr. Slavchev," 1930). Section 2 could clearly be linked with many of the issues surrounding Roma today. The areas which are often identified as needing attention are their housing, health and education. It appears, however, that these issues are not new at all and coming up with well-drafted legislature may be not enough in addressing what seems to be a complex structural issue.

3. Roma-Led Narrative and Activism

The section above shows how Bulgarian Roma have been largely described as foreign, invaders with threatening traits, bearers of diseases both in humans and animals, with low, or no culture, which burdens and threatens, including financially, the Bulgarian society at large. While conducting archival research on the Roma civic emancipation between the two World Wars in Bulgaria, we were able to find another narrative, even though less vocal, which comes from the Roma themselves. It appears that the Gypsies of the time had a narrative of their own, and that they sought to exercise their rights and pursued their interests both individually and collectively.

On the individual level there have been initiatives undertaken by Roma which sought to settle down and get a workspace. The *Protocol Book* from the Meetings of Town Council of the town of Orhanie (nowadays Botevgrad), for example, tells about a request in 1924 by the Gypsy shepherd Miko Banov who asked for a plot of land to be used for living. The Council granted his wish because he lived with his brother in one room hosting 16 people. Banov thus received 200 square meters in the local Gypsy neighbourhood in order to prevent the emergence of diseases while living in a crammed space with his brother's family and also because "Miko Bonev is one good community shepherd" ("Protocol book," 1924, p. 94). In the same document, we read the request by a Gypsy, Miko Ramkov, living in the town Orhanie who asks the town Council for a plot of land for which he would pay. He asks for about 200 square meters in the Gypsy neighbourhood but separate from the remaining homes in order to avoid fires while being used as his smith workplace. Ramkov's wish has been granted. There is another request, this time by the Gypsy-nomad Duro Tsokov, asking for a plot of land in the Gypsy neighbourhood in order to settle down. On the grounds that he has not been a resident of Orhanie and due to the concerns that if the Council granted his wish this would become a precedent and "there would be many applications for plots from the Gypsies from the neighbouring villages," the Council of Orhanie refused Tsokov's application ("Protocol book," 1924, pp. 95–96).

On the collective level, we can witness the establishment, or at least the endeavours, of Roma organisations and professional associations which bore their own visions and sought to pursue their interests. Furthermore, there are examples where Roma tried to contest some of their portrayed images and to eradicate false rumours. The Statute of the Egyptian Nationality in the town of Vidin from 1910 included all Gypsies from the district and did not distinguish between religious affiliation of its members. It envisaged a leader to be appointed via the casting of a ballot among nine persons who were town leaders. Among the planned duties of the leader are:

> To represent the [Gypsy] group to the country's authorities, all public organisations, other associations and third parties;…to preserve the common moral and material interests of its compatriots, to support them and to advocate for their legal protection;…to inspire civil consciousness among his people;…to work

> toward finding work for the poor people and when needed to provide first aid;…to keep an eye for the good intellectual, healthy and civil up-bringing of the non-old. ("Statute of the Egyptian nationality," 1910, pp. 6–7)

The idea of the leader should not be considered as new or unique. Rather, it is a continuation of an old practice which traces back to the Bulgarian Roma in the Ottoman Empire, where leaders would be chosen by the inhabitants of the Roma neighbourhood and recognised by the official authorities. That practice has been implemented so that the Romani communities could be controlled by the official authorities and it is notable that it continued to exist in the new and independent Bulgarian state. Seemingly, the idea of the Roma civic emancipation, according to the Association of the Egyptian Nationality in the town of Vidin, resulted in the need to continue in the old spirit and traditions and elect their leader, who would have a special role in dealing with the Romani community and the Bulgarian state. In that regard, there were several records found in the archives in the town of Montana, at the time called Ferdinand, which mention the appointment and the removal of posts of leaders in the Gypsy neighbourhoods. We also learnt that the *Statute of Common Charitable Association for the Building of a Public Home and the Help of Poor Families of the Baptised Gypsies "Father Paisii"* in the village Vasilovtsi, Lom district, has been approved on 22 August 1939. The Common Charitable Association sought to help the poor families of baptised Gypsies in the village of Vasilovtsi, Lom district, to organise them socially and serve for their moral and mental upbringing, and to offer financial assistance to its members. It sought also to establish a Gypsy charity which would serve for the moral and mental upbringing of the youth, to get a property for its headquarters, to share knowledge, and to give advice and settle disputes between its members ("Statute of the Common Charitable Association," 1938). Unfortunately, apart from its statute and official papers for approval, we do not know whether any of its plans and visions came to fruition.

Also, we can see the application of the Branch Tinsmith Craftsmanship Association Balkan, from the town Veliko Tarnovo, sent to the Minister of Internal Affairs and National Health in 1938. The letter asks the Minister to approve and acknowledge the existence of their association. We learn that the constitutive meeting of the association has taken place on 7 May 1935 in Veliko Tarnovo in the café of Ali Mahmudov Mutev. Its temporary chairman was Mustafa Mustafov, while the secretary was Ibrahim Z. Hyusmenov ("Application from the managing body," 1938). The Pleven Regional Directorate, in a letter to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and National Health, expressed the opinion that its statute should be approved as the persons from its management were deemed as "trustworthy and honest" ("A letter from the Pleven Regional Directorate," 1938, p. 21).

Another example of the collective endeavours of Roma pursuing their interests is a document written on behalf of eighty Roma families, tobacco workers in the town Gorna Dzhumaya. The petition was a reaction to a recent decree from the Bulgarian Minister of Labour which gave rights to the Inspectorate of Labour to lay off the Gypsy tobacco workers from Gorna Dzhumaya. The letter is addressed to a number of ministries in Sofia and states that the laying off of the Gypsy workers is ungrounded and unfair especially as the Gypsy families have been removed from work without any prior notice, just before the outset of the winter season, and because the Roma tobacco workers have proven to be reliable, experienced, and long-term workers who have no obligations to the country. The decree is deemed by the Roma as unfair as they claim that they do not have savings or any other means to earn a living and feed their families ("Statement from the families," 1941).

The passages above show a counter-narrative presented by the Roma themselves who, on the one hand, demonstrate civil consciousness and on the other an image which portrays them as honest, hard-working, and willing to work. Another informative initiative which has endeavoured to clear some of their images, refute false claims, and also further the interests of the Gypsies from Sofia, has been the Common Muslim Cultural-Educational Organisation Istikbal (Future). For instance, on 6 March 1930, it reacted to published articles of two Bulgarian newspapers—*Naroden Priyatel* (People's Friend) and *Utro* (Morning) published in February and March of the same year. According to the statement of Istikbal, the real purpose of the articles has been to further a negative image about the "Muslim residents," i.e., Roma, so that they would be evicted while their land plots (that they legally owned) would be taken away. The letter sternly rejects the claims that the capital's Gypsy neighbourhood is a nest of various diseases and points out that in the hospitals of Sofia there are no registered Gypsy patients with any contagious diseases who are residents of the neighbourhood. Morally, too, the organisation describes the residents—the written piece equates the designation "Gypsies" with "pariah"—as humble and poor Muslims with strict values and it points out that in the Police Department of Morality in Sofia, there is not a single Gypsy woman registered ("Moods and truths," 1930, p. 1).

Later, in 1938, according to an article in the newspaper *Dnevnik* (Diary) the disease Typhus has appeared among the Gypsies in Sofia. Istikbal again reacted and emphasised that as far as the Roma neighbourhood, Konyovitsa, in Sofia is concerned, there has been only one registered patient, who in fact was a resident from the village of Vrabnitsa, near the town of Pernik. All other Gypsy residents in the neighbourhood have been inspected by the sanitary authorities which has not found any other patients. Istikbal's letter sought to eradicate and counter the spread of false rumours so that Gypsy working professionals from Sofia were not unjustly

affected—workers such as porters, shoeblacks, basket-makers, florists, etc. The reaction letter maintains that the claims of newspaper *Dnevnik*'s article are groundless news which bear a deeper meaning—it seeks to get rid of the residents of the neighbourhood in Konyovitsa, and is part of a number of attempts that can be traced back ten year earlier. In its letter, Istikbal explains that in 1929 a committee formed in this neighbourhood began to fight against the Gypsies so that they are put out of their houses. In 1938, a similar committee also existed, called Podem (Boom/Revival) which had the same objectives. According to Istikbal's letter, all these endeavours must be eradicated and are utterly unnecessary because they stir the passions of all Bulgarian citizens and create embitterment which are not necessary to anybody ("A clarification," 1938).

4. Conclusion

The Bulgarian archives from the interwar period show that the images of Roma are not much different to those universally observed in Eastern and Western Europe. Their old and universal images seem to have remained largely unchallenged—a group of people who poses many threats to the good and social order of the societies at large. Bulgarian state archives describe them as criminals and parasites who need to be contained and isolated, especially as they are perceived as poorly educated and misers responsible for disseminating contagious diseases. Thus, Roma in the past and today have been often portrayed as threatening and incompatible with the values and culture of Bulgarians. The article argued that in the interwar period these general narratives were in fact challenged by other archival records which showed that Roma sought to settle down, earn an honest living, and in fact have been considered by some official authorities as reliable and trustworthy. Roma in the interwar period offered an alternative image as they managed to establish organisations and associations with which sought to further their own interests and a better standing in the Bulgarian society. At the same time, they sought to counter and refute false rumours and narratives while presenting an alternative story and image about themselves. This reading of history points directly to a few relevant issues surrounding the issue Roma inclusion today. National European strategies too have identified housing, education, and health as key areas that need attention. Contemporary social perception, too, continues to view Roma as threating not only with their perceived low hygiene but also their low culture which is contrary to and polluting the morale and health of the society at large.

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Conflict of Interests

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Article

Between Nationalism and Pragmatism: The Roma Movement in Interwar Romania

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Abstract
In the interwar period, for the first time in their history, Romanian Roma managed to organise themselves on a modern basis, by forming Roma associations and unions, and issuing their own newspapers and programmes. In an effort to define themselves, they became politically active, claiming and negotiating rights. In my article I analyse the context of the interwar Roma movement, how Roma leaders of the time saw themselves and their movement, what programme(s) they had, and how they tried to achieve their goals. This was a serious challenge: As they were not self-sufficient, they heavily depended on support from Romanian institutions, and hence they had to act with caution in order to avoid any hostile reactions from the Romanian majority. Overall, the discourse of Roma elites in interwar Romania ranged between: 1) a national approach directed inwardly, toward the Roma, for ethnic mobilisation purposes, including calls to unite in order to acquire their rights, efforts to combat ethnic stigmatisation, discussions on ethnonyms (Gypsy vs. Roma) or on the importance of Roma in Romania and worldwide, the beginning of a national/ethnic mythology (past, origin, enslavement, heroization vs. victimization, etc.); and 2) a pragmatic approach directed outwardly, toward Romanian authorities and public opinion; rather than a national minority, Roma leaders presented the Roma as a social category with specific needs, due to their historical legacy. Of these two, throughout the interwar period, pragmatism prevailed. Special emphasis was placed on the issue of social inclusion, and on identifying specific problems and solutions (i.e., better access to education, settlement, deconstruction of prejudices, etc.).

Keywords
Catholic Church; ethnicity; Orthodox Church; Roma; Romania

Issue
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1. Introduction

For the first time in their history, Romanian Roma managed to organise themselves on a modern basis during the interwar period, when they formed Roma associations and unions, developed various programmes, established their own newspapers, became politically active, and started to claim and negotiate their rights with various relevant actors.

However, the context in which this development occurred has long been unknown. There are several reasons for this situation. First, the Roma movement in Romania did not enjoy organisational continuity. Established in the 1930s, the last Roma association dating from this period was dismantled in January 1949. According to the Soviet model, the Roma were not acknowledged as an ethnic minority in communist Romania but seen rather as a social category. Consequently, until 1989, they did not enjoy educational, cultural, or political rights, and could not formally organise themselves, let alone establish links to the interwar movement.

Second, against this restrictive domestic background, the first mentions of the interwar Roma movement in Romania started to be made abroad a few decades later. In the new context created by the emergence in the 1970s of the International Roma Union and the organisation of the first three World Roma Congresses in London

(1971), Geneva (1978), and Göttingen (1981), some international Roma activists, in need of an illustrious precedent for their own movement, did not shy away from inventing it. For this purpose, they chose the movement in interwar Romania. A good example in this regard is an article written by Grattan Puxon, a prominent Roma activist and organiser of the London Congress of April 1971. According to Puxon, delegates from nine countries had gathered in Bucharest at an international congress with the motto 'The United Gypsies of Europe,' where they allegedly decided to set up Roma organisations in each country. In order to achieve an efficient coordination of the Roma from different states, they made the decision to set up a permanent commission composed of 30 members (including international delegates) to prepare a second congress, in Paris or elsewhere (Puxon, 1979, pp. 291–292). However, these references had little in common with the actual congress. Starting from a real but relatively modest Roma Congress that took place in October 1933 (and definitely without the international guests and meaning mentioned above), Puxon came to describe his own project concerning the international Roma movement in the 1970s, which he projected onto the past. The real event merely served as a pretext, and the context of the interwar Romanian movement was completely ignored.

Third, another reason for not properly dealing with the Roma movement was the conflicting attitude toward Jews. While many Roma activists are nowadays searching the past for similarities with the Jews (explainable by the discriminatory and genocidal treatment endured by members of both groups during the Second World War), these cannot be easily found in interwar Romania. The Roma were not a matter of concern for the nationalist parties, otherwise fiercely anti-Semitic. There were even agreements and collaboration occurring under certain conditions between Roma organisations and those parties, such as the fascist Iron Guard, whose leader, Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, promised help for organising the first Roma congress in October 1933, and the National Christian Party in 1937. Moreover, some Roma activists expressed anti-Semitic ideas in the 1930s (Matei, 2011, pp. 31–35). Practically, instead of a narrative easily suitable for current needs, there is also an uncomfortable truth that needs to be confronted. On the other hand, recent research explored the interwar Roma movements (Klimova, 2002, 2005; Marushiakova & Vesselin, 2017). Despite containing meritorious references, they do not focus however on the Romanian Roma movement. Neither did the few academic studies dealing so far with the interwar Roma movement in Romania exceed the limitations of a rather descriptive approach. For example, more attention was paid to the personal features of the Roma leaders, or to 'juicy' episodes such as the partnership with the anti-Semitic National Christian Party in 1937 (Achim, 2010, pp. 93–97), and less to the context that made possible this distinctive evolution.

One should resist the temptation to oversimplify or to project current expectations onto the past. Compared to the present-day situation, the opportunities available to the interwar Roma activists were much scantier and hence their movements depended heavily on circumstances relating to different national contexts. There were interesting commonalities between them, but also differences that should not be neglected. As the Roma movement risks being easily misunderstood if taken out of its original context (Marushiakova & Vesselin, 2000, 2017), the present article tries to address this situation in Romania and contribute to a better knowledge of the circumstances that made possible this interwar movement. Moreover, as it offers terms for comparison, these can also help to better contextualise and understand how the Roma movement in Romania evolved in the last century, and the extent to which it differed from other interwar Roma movements. These differences and similarities lie however beyond the scope of this article.

The main sources used for this article are relevant archival documents and the interwar press. With regard to the archival sources, we distinguish between 1) published collections of documents about the Roma assemblies in Transylvania in 1919 (Matei, 2013) and the Roma organisations between 1919 and 1944 (Nastasă & Varga, 2001) and 2) unpublished documents (from different archival holdings available at the Central National Historical Archives in Bucharest) produced especially by the Romanian Ministry of Interior and other law enforcement agencies. As for the interwar press we distinguish between 1) the Roma newspapers published between 1933–1941 (*Timpul*, *O Rom*, *Neamul Țigănesc, Glasul Romilor*, *Foaia Poporului Romesc*, *Țara Noastră: Ediție specială săptămânală pentru Romii din România*) and 2) non-Roma newspapers covering the Roma movement. As these different sources offer valuable insights into the Roma movement and how it was perceived by different actors, they were analysed in a comparative manner, both diachronically and synchronically.

In an effort to analyse the context of the interwar Roma movement, the present article is divided as follows: First, we briefly present the most important Roma organisations and the factors that contributed to the emergence of the interwar Roma movement. Special attention will be dedicated to the larger room for manoeuvre available to Roma after the First World War, when their movement was actually encouraged by different Romanian actors (various authorities, political parties, or churches). These actors had their own goals, primarily to consolidate their own ethnic and confessional positions, especially in the provinces recently acquired by Romania after 1918. These had significant ethnic minorities that were perceived as competitors against which the Romanian state-builders tried to play off the Roma movement. Second, we analyse interwar Roma discourses in Romania, seeking to answer the following questions: How did Roma activists see themselves and their movement? What was the nature of the problems

their movement wanted to address and what solutions did they envisage? What was their strategy and how did their discourses evolve in the 1930s?

2. Interwar Roma Organisations: An Outline

In this section, following a brief description of the main Roma organisations that were active on a national level, we present the factors that contributed to the emergence of this movement. During the interwar period, several types of Roma organisations coexisted: 1) traditional organisations specific to a small segment of nomadic Roma; 2) relatively modern organisations (be they mutual aid societies for burials, associations of Roma musicians, or small town societies such as Înfrățirea Neorustică (New Peasant Brotherhood), that were initially uncoordinated and spatially and professionally limited; and 3) modern organisations aspiring to represent all the Roma in Romania (starting in 1933). The idea of uniting all Roma in a single ethnic organisation exceeded the limited character of the previous organisations to promote the interests of certain categories of Roma. After 1933, in Romania, there were several such central organisations that competed against one another.

The first nationwide Roma organisation was the General Association of the Gypsies in Romania, created in April 1933 at the initiative of the Orthodox Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu. The latter came in contact with the committee of the older Junimea Muzicală (Musical Youth; a musicians' association in Bucharest) and formed a provisional committee. However, in September 1933, almost right from the start, the General Association of the Gypsies in Romania was sabotaged by its former Secretary General, G.A. Lăzurică, who accused Șerboianu of intending to convert the Roma to Catholicism. Concerned about this prospect, the Romanian Orthodox Church encouraged Lăzurică to establish an Orthodox alternative (the General Union of Roma in Romania). After just a few months, in May 1934, Lăzurică was also forced to resign from the position of President of the General Union of Roma in Romania by Gheorghe Niculescu, who replaced him. Subsequently, a fight for legitimacy ensued between these leaders. There were even cases when local Roma from the same town were divided into branches of rival organisations. Lăzurică's and Șerboianu's activities diminished until the summer of 1937, when they benefited from an electoral agreement with the National Christian Party. In March 1937, the police noted that the Roma in Romania were grouped into three major organisations: the General Association of the Gypsies in Romania (Șerboianu), the Roma Citizens Organisation (Lăzurică), and the General Union of Roma in Romania Association, led by Gheorghe Niculescu (Nastasă & Varga, 2001, p. 117). However, the most important interwar Roma organisation remained the General Union of Roma in Romania Association, which, between 1934 and 1941, had its own newspaper, *Glasul Romilor*, and organised branches in numerous towns and villages, holding meetings and congresses. In addition to its missionary activity, it set up a litigation that provided free services to the Roma, dispensary and maternity wards, interceded with the authorities to obtain authorisations for the nomads to freely practice their trades, etc. (Achim, 1998, p. 130).

Three factors contributed to the emergence of the interwar Roma movement. First, the *gradual inadequacy of the traditional Gypsy trades* in the context of modernisation and industrialisation. The Roma crafts, formerly so necessary to traditional Romanian society, were increasingly less in demand (Achim, 1998, pp. 123–124). These transformations led to efforts to find solutions, such as putting together various forms of self-help. These grew from strictly socio-professional into larger ethnic organisations claiming to represent all Roma.

Second, *increased social mobility* caused by better literacy, economic progress, land received through the agrarian reform enacted after the First World War, etc. While until the interwar period the rule was that successful Roma assimilated into mainstream society, starting from the 1920s some of them became interested in representing the Roma and tried to improve their situation by creating Roma organisations.

Third, *enlarged room for manoeuvre after the First World War*, whereby better opportunities to collaborate with different entities appeared (political parties, law enforcement agencies, the Orthodox Church, or simply Romanians, who competed against other ethnic groups, especially in disputed areas such as Transylvania, and needed any support, including that of Roma). The new Roma leaders became aware of these possibilities and learned to use them. In the following section, special attention is dedicated to this factor, the larger room for manoeuvre available to the Roma movement, which was encouraged by the Romanian establishment for its own purposes.

2.1. The Roma Movement and Other Minorities

Unlike pre-war Romania, which was smaller in terms of both surface and population (138,000 km^2 and 7,900,000 inhabitants), but was ethnically and confessionally homogeneous, interwar Romania had doubled its surface (295,000 km^2) and population, but lost its ethnic and denominational homogeneity. According to the 1930 census, it had a population of 18,000,000, of which the Romanians represented 71.9%, with the remaining nearly 30% consisting of ethnic minorities (Hungarians 7.9%, Germans 4.1%, Jews 4%, etc.). The Roma were only in the eighth place, with 262,501 people (Scurtu & Dordea, 1996, p. 468). Some minorities (especially the Hungarians, Germans, and Jews) were more urbanised and better educated and economically positioned than the Romanians, a predominantly rural population. Therefore, state resources were used to consolidate the ethnic Romanians against what were perceived as competing minorities. This ethnic rivalry, es-

pecially in Transylvania (between Romanians, Germans, and Hungarians), contributed to the mobilisation of the Roma, as the latter was seen as more of a solution than a problem. Already before the First World War, there had been a closer relationship between Roma and Romanians in Transylvania. Both groups lived predominantly in rural areas, so the Roma, when assimilated, were prone to become Orthodox or Greek Catholic, both seen as 'Romanian' confessions. After 1918, this turned into a valuable asset which could serve as a starting point for the ethnic mobilisation of the Roma. The newly installed Romanian authorities started to show interest in the Roma's potential to help in places where the Romanians' positions were rather precarious, and consequently tried to play off the Roma movement against other minorities. The Roma leaders were aware of these concerns and tried to use them to their own advantage, as they could count on an encouraging reaction from the Romanians and their administration (Matei, 2011). Already on the occasion of the Roma assemblies in Transylvania in April 1919, the participants proved to be pragmatic and demanded social and ethnic rights in exchange for recognising Transylvania as part of Romania, and declared themselves loyal to the new state while practically condemning the so-called "Hungarian barbarians" that Romania was fighting in 1919 (Matei, 2013, p. 448). After 1933, when Roma established their national organisations, this cooperation became stronger. For example, an article published in *Glasul Romilor* in 1938 stated:

> Most of the Magyarized Roma understood us. Now they say they are also of Romanian citizenship and nationality. Their children are no longer attending minority schools….Romanian brothers, if you love us, we will know how to carry out the work we are going to do from now on in the service of the Romanianization of the Magyarized Roma. (Stan, 1938, p. 4)

A similar policy was followed also regarding the local *saşi* (German-speaking Saxons). In September 1942, at the time of the Roma deportation to Transnistria, there were cases when the Transylvanian Romanian population condemned these deportations on the grounds that they weakened the Romanians' position against the *saşi*:

> The Romanians, strengthened by the number of Gypsies, were able to secure most votes during the last elections and thus get leadership positions vis-à-vis other minorities. The measure taken recently alienated the Gypsies from their loyalty to the Romanian element. (Achim, 2004, p. 214)

2.2. The Roma and the Orthodox Church

A similar pattern was encountered in the Roma's relationship with the Romanian Orthodox Church. After 1918, Romania was no longer religiously homogeneous, and the Romanian Orthodox Church, formerly dominant in the Old Kingdom, was confronted with numerous other denominations. In this context, the Romanian Orthodox Church showed a strong interest in the Roma movement, as it was concerned about their potential conversion to Catholicism.

In his initiative of organising the Roma in 1933 and in his public statements, Șerboianu appeared as a Roma Orthodox prelate. In fact, he was an ethnic Romanian very familiar with the Roma language and customs, about which he had written a book in which he ascribed to them features such as lying, theft, begging, child kidnapping, and even cannibalism (Șerboianu, 1930, pp. 60–74). In 1933, when questioned by the police, Șerboianu admitted he was not a Roma but had claimed this origin to gain their trust, so that he could organise them (Nastasă & Varga, 2001, p. 102).

What troubled the Romanian Orthodox Church even more was that Șerboianu had recently converted to Catholicism. The Romanian Orthodox Church suspected Șerboianu could use the movement he had just established in order to also convert the Roma (by then largely Orthodox), and reacted accordingly. Thus, the Patriarchate decided to support an Orthodox movement (led by Lăzurică; Matei, 2010). According to a police report dating from 30 September 1933, Lăzurică was helped by the Orthodox Church:

> To counterbalance the action of the General Association of Gypsies from Romania under the leadership of Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu, who seeks to convert Roma (Gypsies) from Orthodoxy to the Uniate Church….Support of the Patriarchate consists in the fact that the Patriarch himself, seeing with good eyes the action of Lăzurică, urged him to fight further for the creation of the Roma Union. (Nastasă & Varga, 2001, p. 101)

Not only did the Orthodox Church finance the Roma congress on 8 October 1933, printed the Roma manifestoes and statutes, and rented the venues, but it also interceded with different authorities on behalf of Lăzurică, making sure he would get the necessary approvals for the congress, while simultaneously trying to obstruct Șerboianu's organisation (Nastasă & Varga, 2001, pp. 104–105). Another police note of 7 October 1933 showed that the debut of the General Union of Roma in Romania was quite promising, as the Union was:

> Under the protection of His Holiness, the Patriarch of Romania, who gave and promised to Lăzurică all his support for the congress, telling him that he would allocate also a monthly grant of 10,000 lei for the development of the Gypsy association. (Nastasă & Varga, 2001, p. 107)

This was, in fact, the so-called International Congress of the Roma in Bucharest referred to by Grattan

Puxon, and we can see it differed considerably from Puxon's description.

The Patriarch reiterated his support for the General Union of Roma in Romania also after the Roma congress of 8 October 1933. In the following months, Lăzurică made efforts to strengthen the General Union of Roma in Romania even among the Roma from Transylvania. As he did not have the necessary financial resources to allow him such freedom of action, Lăzurică tried to persuade the Orthodox Church to help. In February 1934, at Lăzurică's request, the Patriarchate issued a missionary card to Lăzurică, allowing him to perform Orthodox missionary work among Roma throughout the country:

> As we consider it in the public interest to remove the influence the papist agents have upon Roma…we approve the request of Mr. Gh. A. Lăzărescu (Lăzurică) to be given this document as an Orthodox missionary so that he could go to his confreres, members of the General Union of Roma from all over the country. This assignment of Orthodox missionarism among the Roma is brought to the notice of the other Holy Hierarchs in our Romanian Orthodox Church. (Lăzurică, 1937a, p. 3)

This document legitimised Lăzurică to the relevant authorities and allowed him to enjoy the benevolent help of the priests in the parishes with a significant number of Roma. Moreover, the Orthodox Church also offered Lăzurică a sum of money, which, although modest, was intended to finance his travels aimed at converting Roma to Orthodoxy. Interestingly enough, in Transylvania, where he organised several meetings and set up the General Union of Roma in Romania branches, Lăzurică started to realise that the Orthodox Church was not as useful as it was in Bucharest or the Old Kingdom, where most inhabitants were Orthodox. Far from being a cohesive element offering legitimacy and resources for Roma mobilisation, as he had hoped, Orthodox missionarism could, on the contrary, alienate both the local Roma and non-Roma (Romanians included) who belonged to other denominations:

> Many Roma from Transylvania were making remarks to me that, although they appreciated me and agreed with the cultural, social, and moral program of the Union, they cannot accept to convert to Orthodoxy, when they are Catholic or Uniate [Greek-Catholic]. In other words, I was losing the Roma sympathies and adhesions to my Union because of my Orthodox missionarism….In Transylvania I was rejected by all the Catholic and Uniate priests, by all the politicians who were part of these cults, when I could have enjoyed their support if I had not been an Orthodox missionary. (Lăzurică, 1937a, pp. 3–4)

In the spring of 1934, Lăzurică was forced to resign in favour of Gheorghe Niculescu, former Vice-President of the General Union of Roma in Romania and a well-to-do flower merchant in Bucharest. Throughout the summer of 1934, there was a relative balance between Lăzurică and Niculescu, but in the end Niculescu prevailed and the Romanian Orthodox Church reoriented itself to the more efficient organisation he presided over (the General Union of Roma in Romania Association).

Generally, this was a win-win situation for both the Roma movement and the Church. With the Romanian Orthodox Church's help, the Roma movement obtained a certain moral legitimacy, being offered a pretext to organise the Roma from different communities, while benefitting from the support of local or central officials who participated in the events sponsored by the Church. Religious guests (priests, bishops, metropolitans, even the Patriarch Miron Cristea) and laity (mayors, prefects, parliamentarians, even ministers) came to such events, thus contributing to the consolidation of the General Union of Roma in Romania Association. As for the benefits to the Romanian Orthodox Church, this cooperation not only put an end to the potential conversion to Catholicism of the Roma, but also allowed it to go on the offensive, converting non-Orthodox Roma to Orthodoxy. Such actions were carried out not only in Transylvania, but also in southern Romania where, in the 1930s, there were collective baptisms of some groups of Muslim Roma (Copoiu, 1996, pp. 7–9).

2.3. The Roma and Political Parties

Another factor that favoured the emergence of the Roma movement was the electoral law of 1918, which gave the Roma the right to vote. This became an important stimulus for the future organisation, as political parties became interested in their votes. However, the beginning was difficult and the initial impact on Roma was low. As a term of comparison, we use the letter that the mother of the future statistician and demographer Sabin Manuilă, then in the USA as a Rockefeller scholar, sent to her son in February 1926. Writing to him about the local elections, she reproduced the words of the maid:

> Madam, big surprise in our Gypsy neighbourhood. Some gents came to us last evening and told our Gypsies to vote for them, 'cause they would buy them drinks for 1,000 lei but we refused to go for a drink and we all spread, 'cause they were liberals and we did not want to. ("Scrisoare," 1926)

Buying votes with beverages, food, firewood, money, etc., was a frequent practice during elections. However, things tended to change after 1933, which was a turning point not only in the way Roma organised, but also in the way they were seen by the political parties. The latter could finally negotiate directly with some Roma leaders, who gradually learned that they were believed to be capable of guiding the Roma voters. Consequently, in an effort to capitalise on this interest from the politi-

cal parties, Roma leaders started to claim that they could really mobilise the hundreds of thousands of Roma voters. This situation provided the Roma organisations and leaders with a certain clout. In order to get votes, one had to offer something in return. Although uneven, a partnership emerged. Consequently, the peak moments of the interwar Roma movement in Romania were actually represented by the electoral campaigns of 1933 and 1937, when the Roma organisations were being courted by politicians.

The Roma organisations were pragmatic and collaborated relatively well with the political parties. For example, the General Union of Roma in Romania Association, the longest-standing organisation (1934–1941, 1946–1948), although apolitical according to its own statute, cultivated, in fact, close ties with the ruling parties: between 1934 and 1937 with the National Liberal Party, between 1938 and 1940 with the National Renaissance Front, and, after the war, with the Romanian Workers' Party.

Several articles written in 1937 by G. A. Lăzurică offer important insights into the political parties' interest in Roma votes and its impact. Lăzurică wrote bitterly about his own political experiences with the National Liberal Party:

> We have struggled for five years to realise our programme, appealing to all the competent forums and all the representatives of the political parties, without being listened to. The political parties we addressed asked first for our votes and promised us they would fulfil the Roma wishes only after Roma voted for them. In the interest of the cause, I launched manifestoes in the middle of the elections for the Chamber and the Senate, urging the Roma to give their votes to the National-Liberal Party, which governs the country today. But after the votes were given, this party closed its doors and ostracised us. (Lăzurică & Șerboianu, 1937, p. 1)

Disappointed with the National Liberal Party, Lăzurică and Șerboianu signed a political agreement with the far-right National Christian Party in 1937. They promised to mobilise the votes of the Roma (which they exaggerated to 125,000) in exchange for the promise that the Roma would have representatives on the National Christian Party lists in elections for county, communal, and labour council chambers. In addition, the National Christian Party made available to them the newspaper *Țara Noastră*, which issued a weekly edition for Roma. The arrangement gave hope to the two leaders that many of the Roma issues would be resolved:

> Since the Roma will have their representatives in county and communal councils, as well as in the chambers for labour, they will no longer be ostracised. Your fair complaints will be resolved. We will have a centre, kindergartens, recreational camps at the seaside and in the mountains, schools for Roma musicians, libraries, athenaeums; the entire program announced by us will be implemented. We will not compete with foreigners in our trades as masons, builders, blacksmiths, musicians, porters, etc. (Lăzurică, 1937b, p. 6)

Thus, the collaboration of Roma organisations with various parties (the anti-Semitic National Christian Party included) was more complex and should not be viewed simplistically outside its proper context and reduced to this anti-Semitic episode.

Shortly thereafter, in 1938, political parties were dissolved following the establishment of the dictatorship of King Carol II. A police report from July 1940 stated that the organisations of both Niculescu and Lăzurică had been supported by political parties, the first by the National Liberal Party and the second by the National Christian Party:

> In 1933 a movement for organising the Roma began, encouraged by different political parties for electoral purposes….With the abolition of political parties and the disappearance of the electoral interest of those who supported and subsidised them, the activity of these associations stagnated. (Nastasă & Varga, 2001, pp. 255–256)

The interests of political parties in getting (Roma) votes boosted the Roma movement in a manner similar to the mutually advantageous relationship established with the Orthodox Church.

3. Interwar Roma Discourse: Problems and Solutions

In the following pages we outline the main features of the discourse of interwar Roma elites, trying to answer questions such as how the Roma leaders of the time saw themselves and their movement, what programme they had, and how they tried to achieve their goals.

The Roma activists declared the nature of their problems to be mostly social: 'state of backwardness,' chronic poverty, illiteracy, culminating with the contempt they experienced from the majority population. The 1933 programme of the General Association of the Gypsies in Romania (maintained by the other Roma organisations) took its cues from the inferior status of the Roma and had two components: cultural (with an emphasis on education, from kindergarten through vocational schools, material support for poor students, and evening courses for adults to a popular university, national museum, a newspaper, etc.) and social (legal assistance, free medical assistance for Roma, land for Roma to build their houses on, payable in instalments, settling down the nomads, mutual aid organisations, etc.; Nastasă & Varga, 2001, pp. 94–99).

However, to understand the Roma discourse, one must consider the specific context of the interwar period, when the Roma movement depended exclusively on the

Romanian authorities for resources, legitimacy, and approval. Roma tried to identify and exploit opportunities and niches. Thus, it was vital to get along well with the authorities that agreed to help, but only under certain conditions. Only those Roma organisations that were credible to the Romanian establishment had chances of success. As such, the Roma elites resorted to a discourse meant not to antagonise the Romanian authorities, but to convince that the Roma movement deserved to be tolerated and supported due to its usefulness. Therefore, the Roma leaders showed loyalty to the Romanians, the Church, and the monarch, and they were willing to help convert the Roma to Orthodoxy, assimilate the Roma in multi-ethnic areas to the Romanian majority and mobilise them in electoral contexts. In addition, they tended to present themselves as a group whose problems were social rather than ethnic and their movement as a means to solve their own (social) problems, rather than to create additional (ethnic) difficulties for Romanians.

Overall, the interwar Roma elites' discourse varied according to the targeted recipients: the Romanian establishment, which they hoped to sensitise and make aware of the Roma's plight, and Roma masses that they sought to mobilise.

The Roma leaders insisted on their loyalty to the Romanians and made constant efforts to avoid being perceived as another minority. They described themselves as good Romanians, assimilation into mainstream society was apparently encouraged, and they argued they had the same 'Romanian faith' (as Orthodox or Greek-Catholics), that they were keepers of the Romanian customs and songs, faithful to the Dynasty and the (Orthodox) Church, lived for centuries among Romanians and throughout this long history no example of a Roma traitor was found, etc. All these arguments were used to reduce any risk of being suspected of hostility toward Romanians. The text of a Roma leader from Oltenia writing in January 1934 is illustrative:

> They should not be considered as a minority. They did not pursue, either in the past or today, a minority policy. They do not form a political or religious minority. They are in a special situation and with tendencies of voluntarily assimilating into the great mass of the dominant people. What their leaders demand, and what the Roma in Romania also want, is only having their citizenship rights respected, that they are eligible to as perfectly loyal citizens of the Romanian state, as well as a deeper and wiser understanding of the right to a better life, to get out of the deplorable situation in which they are. (Nicolăescu, 1934, pp. 1–2)

Sometimes they were even more explicit and used the Romanian nationalist rhetoric against other minorities. They proceeded this way precisely in order to gain a positive image, as they insisted on being different from the disloyal Transylvanian Hungarians, the "snaky Jews" (with their *Alliance Israélite Universelle*), the Bulgarian *comitagii* (insurgents) from southern Dobruja, etc. ("Un milion," 1934, p. 1). According to this argumentation, despite their allegedly treacherous behaviour, those minorities continued to unjustly receive better treatment from the Romanian authorities, which should have instead paid more attention to their loyal Roma fellow citizens. Roma could but hope for a change of the state's attitude toward them. While this strategy is difficult to understand if judged by today's standards, such opportunism appears understandable in its proper historical context.

In addition to the Romanians, the other target group of the Roma elites' discourse were the Roma themselves. Here, the discourse's role was to create a sense of belonging, to modernise the Roma, and to create an alternative to assimilation. However, this Roma nationalism was generally subordinated to pragmatism and tempered by the fear of provoking the hostility of the majority, on whose good will the Roma movement depended. Efforts were made to combat the ethnic stigma and instil pride in being Roma by different means, such as by promoting the ethnonym 'Roma' (Matei, 2012), invoking their resilience, the illustrious Indian origin, slavery, manumission, the sacrifices made for Romania which entitled them to a better treatment, etc. While the positive arguments were supposed to create a sense of belonging (by talking about the achievements, qualities, and especially about the potential of the respective ethnic group), the negative ones channelled frustration by explaining the current plight through their horrific past.

Some Roma leaders started already in the 1930s to create a Roma national mythology, talking about a distant past with courageous and glorious Indian ancestors. Consequently, the Roma were presented as a people full of vitality, whose past suggested a better future:

> We, the Roma, are of the Aryan (Indo-German) race. We lived freely, possessing a rich and large land. We had brave rulers under whom we fought victorious battles with countless people….We, the Roma, speak the Sanskrit language, one of the oldest and richest languages, from which the Slavic, German, Latin, and Greek languages derive, as the philologists have shown. (Lăzurică, 1938, p. 2)

However, unlike today, the efforts to disseminate this information about their Indian origin were relatively few, and their impact was reduced. The emphasis at the time was not placed on the distant Indian origin, but on more pressing and recent elements, capable of explaining the precarious status of the Roma: 1) slavery, 2) the state's lack of interest in the social plight of Roma after manumission, and 3) the ethnic stigma and its consequences, particularly the assimilation of modern Roma elites, thus depriving the Roma of potential leaders.

The slavery argument can be seen as part of a larger discourse, centred around the victimization-guilt tandem. It was aimed at strengthening the sense of iden-

tity by finding explanations and solutions for marginalisation. However, there are significant differences between how the Roma ethnic entrepreneurs in the 1930s and contemporary Roma activists perceive(d) slavery. This can be explained by the very different contexts in which they acted. In contrast to the present-day situation, when there are better opportunities for an ethnic Roma project, thanks to the existence of better-prepared, more influential elites, but also to the larger space of manoeuvre (within the European Union), interwar Roma leaders were vulnerable and could not afford to ignore the Romanian nationalist susceptibilities. Consequently, there was a certain degree of self-censorship in Roma discourse. Thus, while their current plight was explained to a certain extent also by their experience of slavery, interestingly enough, the interwar Roma discourse, unlike the one today, presented a lighter version of this slavery. While talking about Roma slaves, they hesitated to name the enslavers. Thus, the interwar slavery discourse was not as demanding and radical as the one today. For example, when talking in 1935 about their enslavement, one Roma activist considered it as a rather harmless, common social reality of the past:

> In Romania they came around the 14th century…they were welcomed in Romania, where they remained in peace as slaves on the estates of the Romanian boyars….No one should be surprised that the Roma became slaves in Romania, because back then neither the Romanians nor other people in Europe enjoyed a better fate. (Genicol, 1935, p. 4)

Similarly, only certain categories were considered responsible for this enslavement, and guilt was externalised (placed on Greek monks or boyars, or Greek Phanariotes, very rarely on the Orthodox Church and never on the Romanian people as a whole; "Desrobirea," 1939, p. 2).

Two other, more recent factors were emphasised in the interwar Roma discourse: the Romanian state's neglect since manumission and the assimilation of its elites. First, the Roma leaders considered that since manumission no one had thought about the fate of the Roma, who had been completely neglected. Already in 1930, Șerboianu wrote the following: "Although liberated, poverty imposed new servitude on them, making them, with very few and small exceptions, veritable pariah that everyone exploits or forces to resort to every possible means to lead a better life" (Șerboianu, 1930, p. 57). The manumission, although appreciated, was not considered a panacea (Lenghescu-Cley, 1934, p. 1). It should have been followed by guidance from the state, but this did not happen: "This great deed also had its shortcomings; they [Roma] were given the freedom without offering them the necessary means to make use of it. The people remained the same: devoid of culture" (Ionescu, 1935, p. 3). In short, it was argued that the situation of the Roma had not radically improved after their 19th century manumission, as poverty, lack of education, and marginalisation constituted a metaphorical new form of bondage ("Întrunirea," 1933, p. 5).

Another problem was the assimilation into mainstream society that deprived the Roma of their potential elites. One hoped that by reversing the phenomenon these promising Roma would have promoted Roma emancipation and subsequently the Roma, organised in a modern movement, could have finally enjoyed the support of the state. The discourse concerning these assimilated individuals was ambivalent. On the one hand, they were invoked to encourage others (serving as living proof of the Roma's innate potential). On the other hand, they were criticised for leaving their Roma community behind:

> After manumission, with all the lack of guidance and with all the needs that they had to deal with, the past generations of our people managed to offer important personalities, but the majority remained backward, lacking moral and material guidance. Another reason why our people could not prosper is that many sons of our nation who managed to reach higher levels of social status forgot their origin, quite often denying it tenaciously. (Anghel, 1939, p. 2)

However, this criticism was seldom overt. Roma activists could not afford to be too vehement. Otherwise, the contradiction in their discourse would have become visible. It would have been strange to accuse some Roma of assimilating, given that the Roma movement, dependent on Romanian support, insisted on not representing an ethnic minority: "Could we shout at them: 'Renegades, you are claiming to be pure Romanians while you are clearly Gypsies?!' It would mean to dismantle our own argument, that we are Romanians, not a minority" ("Renegații," 1937, p. 5).

The negative discursive elements (slavery, neglect from the state, assimilation of potential elites) were not meant to discourage but rather to exorcise, by identifying the causes for their contemporary difficult situation. The suffering endured throughout their history was invoked for current identity needs. This victimization was not a phenomenon specific to the Roma, but a relatively effective way, to which many others had resorted before, to explain and channel certain frustrations. However, this discourse lacked both coherence and practical ways of delivering it to the majority of Roma, who were mostly illiterate and thus difficult to mobilise.

The following section addresses the main solutions envisaged by the same Roma activists. These were: 1) the Roma movement; 2) schooling; and 3) representation of the Roma in the local administration, especially where they formed a significant part of the population. The Roma movement was seen as a response to Roma problems, which could be solved only through solidarity and self-organising. Gheorghe Niculescu, an important Roma leader, wrote in August 1935: "If we research the his-

tory of each nation, we will find that a better status could be achieved only by union of all….Only one thing is requested: union, union, and again union" (Niculescu, 1935, p. 3). Marin Simion, leader of the Roma in Oltenia, was even more explicit: neglected and derided so far, the Roma had to unite within the General Union of Roma in Romania Association:

> Everyone's duty is to help create this beginning of a conscience, which can manifest itself only as a new power in our state, and not as a minority….Through their union, an organism would be created which could not be ignored anymore and their claims will not remain just a piece of paper. (Simion, 1934, p. 1)

The interwar activists considered illiteracy to be one of the most serious problems affecting Roma. As the traditional trades of the Roma were increasingly fading, schooling was seen as a solution. Moreover, it was considered that the precarious state of instruction affected not only individual Roma, but also the Roma as a group. In the fall of 1933, one activist stated: "The Gypsy nation is surrounded by the heavy chains of lack of culture. We need a key to open the locks that hold these chains. This situation has to stop" ("Întrunirea," 1933, p. 5).

The Roma organisations often called for this situation to be remedied by encouraging Roma pupils to attend school and asking the state for certain facilities. For example, in February 1934, Lazăr Naftanailă from Făgăraș asked the nomadic Roma to settle down and send their children to school and urged the sedentary Roma to "try to send their children to higher schools so that we can prove that the Gypsy people are reliable and that their best children are not at all inferior to the children of other peoples" (Naftanailă, 1934, p. 1). Sending their children to school was one of the main recommendations that the organisations frequently made in their own newspapers. In such an article, we find the following: "To send their children to school….To respect the church and school representatives, taking part in all the cultural events that these representatives undertake in villages and cities" ("Ce trebuie să facă un rom," 1934, p. 2). At the same time, the state was asked to help remedy this situation. It was considered that Roma's lack of instruction was also due to the school system, which neglected them. Once at school:

> Roma children were, for the most part, merely the object of amusement of their colleagues and thus alienated from the place that was supposed to enlighten them. Hence, deprived of spiritual education, it is natural that they are at this level. (Niculescu, 1937, p. 1)

In a more detailed article from 1938, where the disappearance of the old trades, which could no longer compete with factory products, was lamented, it was argued that the only solution for the new generations was schooling:

> Our youth shall be guided to school. Thus we will fight against illiteracy, asking those in charge to give us all their support….The only reason we are asking for this help is to combat illiteracy and thus give the chance to the better ones to attend secondary and university courses, and to those with an application for trades, industrial high school courses or arts and crafts schools. Thus, also from the ranks of our Roma children, civil servants, lawyers, doctors etc. will rise. (Pantazescu, 1938, p. 3)

4. Conclusion

The interwar Roma movement was confronted with serious difficulties. As they were not self-sufficient, they depended on support from Romanian institutions for resources, legitimacy, and approval, and hence they had to act cautiously in order to avoid any hostile reactions from the Romanian majority. Good collaboration with the Romanians authorities was vital and proved mutually advantageous, as the Romanian authorities themselves considered using the Roma movement in order to solve other problems. However, the partnership was highly asymmetrical. Unable to imperatively claim ethnic rights, the Roma focused instead on sensitising the Romanians, through the repeated invocation of their loyalty. Overall, the discourse of interwar Roma elites ranged between a national approach directed inwardly, toward the Roma, for ethnic mobilisation purposes, and a pragmatic approach aimed outwardly, toward Romanian authorities and public opinion.

However, throughout the interwar period, pragmatism prevailed. Special emphasis was placed on the issue of social inclusion. Interwar Roma activists stood little chance of disseminating a convincing identity narrative to the Roma masses. Neither the context nor the necessary means existed at the time. Even now, despite much better opportunities, one cannot yet talk about a homogenous Roma identity discourse.

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Conflict of Interests

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Article

Faith Church: Roma Baptists Challenging Religious Barriers in Interwar Romania

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Abstract
In interwar Romania, the numbers of Baptists grew exponentially among the ethnic majority population in the border regions of Transylvania, Banat, and Bessarabia. In the competition over souls and for cultural space in the newly formed Greater Romania, the Roma became an important minority to win over. In 1930, Petar Mincov visited Chișinău and spurred outreach to the Roma among Romanian Baptists as he had in Bulgaria. It was here and in the cities of Arad and Alba-Iulia that some of the first Romanian Roma converted to the Baptist denomination. The first Roma Baptist (and first Roma neo-Protestant) Church, *called Biserica Credința* (Faith Church), was founded in Arad city around 1931. Confessional newspapers in English, Romanian, and Russian from the interwar period reveal the initiative taken by members of the local Roma community to convert and to start their own church. The article analyses the role of Romanian Baptist leadership in supporting Roma churches and the development of these new faith communities in the borderland regions. Unlike outsider attempts to foster a Roma Baptist community in Bucharest, the Faith Church survived World War II and communist governments, and provides insight into the workings and agency of a marginalized double minority. The article also looks at the current situation of Roma evangelicals in Arad city and how the change in religious affiliation has helped or hindered attempts at inclusion and policy change.

Keywords
assimilation; Baptist; Faith Church; minorities; religion; Roma; Romania

Issue
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1. Introduction

The interwar has become an important period for understanding Roma emancipation efforts, particularly in Romania, as seen through the works of scholars such as Viorel Achim, Petre Matei, and Ion Duminica, among others (Achim, 2010; Duminica, 2019; Marushiakova & Popov, 2017; Matei, 2010). For example, the first Romanian Roma organizations, such as the General Association of the Gypsies in Romania, the General Union of the Roma in Romania, and the Association of the General Union of Roma in Romania, were set up between 1933 and 1934 (Matei, 2010, pp. 159–173). Recent anthropological studies have focused on current religious aspects and the international significant increase of Roma converting to Pentecostalism in the last decades (Biţis, 2017; Roman, 2017; Thurfjell & Marsh, 2014). However, no studies have brought the two together to show the appeal and early development of so-called neo-Protestant churches for interwar Roma in Romania. The present article fills this gap through the study of Baptist-affiliated Faith Church (*Biserica Credința*) in the city of Arad, Romania, and of other churches with Roma members in the 1930s.

The historical context of Romania in the 1920s and 1930s was one of escalating political and religious tensions among groups seeking to influence consolidation policies of the newly formed Greater Romania (the result of territories added to the Kingdom of Romania after World War I, more than doubling its size and population; Livezeanu, 1995). The government sought to bring cohesion between the different administrative

systems in the newly joined territories, previously under Austrian, Hungarian, or Russian rule, and bring a sense of unity and 'Romanianness' across the regions. Religion was an important factor in achieving this cohesion and national unity, specifically through the dominant Romanian Orthodox Church, representing the majority of ethnic Romanians in the country (Clark, in press). The Romanian Orthodox Church served as a legitimizing tool for Romanian nation-statehood based on ethno-religious/linguistic homogeneity: To ensure the state kept its new territories, Romanian politicians wanted to present a unified Orthodox Romanian people across the annexed regions.

However, the Romanian Orthodox Church's authority was challenged by the Greek Catholic/Uniate Church and by the rapidly growing so-called sectarian groups of evangelicals (or as they came to be known during the communist period: neo-Protestants). The largest of these were the Adventist, Baptist, Brethren, and Pentecostal denominations, and among these Baptists were the most numerous. Although still representing less than one percent of the population, they were growing exponentially among the Romanian peasants, who were leaving the Romanian Orthodox Church (considered their ancestral church), to join these new churches (Ploscariu, 2015). Their new members also included an increasing number of Roma families, traditionally part of the Romanian Orthodox Church, or, in Transylvania, part of the Greek Catholic/Uniate Church. However, the latter two dominant churches did not realize the threat these new denominations would pose to their Roma parishioners.

The number of Roma in the country, though small, was not negligible. The 1930 census claimed 262,501 self-identified Roma. Though officially only 1.5 percent of the population, other figures ran as high as 525,000. Professions for Roma significantly changed in the interwar period but they remained the poorest segment of society. Though many followed traditional professions, such as blacksmith, their crafts were becoming obsolete due to industrialization. The majority were socially and economically marginalized, social/economic vestiges of centuries of enslavement in Romanian territories, which only ended with emancipation in 1855. Following World War I, some sedentary Roma received land during the agrarian reforms which encouraged more assimilation into Romanian culture. Historian Viorel Achim argued that Romanian society and many scholars at the time considered assimilation the inevitable outcome for all Roma (Achim, 1998, pp. 145–161). However, many continued to face some kind of stigma due to their Roma heritage (Bucur, 2002; Drăghia, 2016, pp. 28–29; Matei, 2011, pp. 20–21). The development in the 1930s of Roma-led organisations seeking advancement for Romanian Roma reveals important breakthroughs for emancipation and Roma social action to end their marginalization (Matei, 2010, pp. 159–173). This was done initially with the support of the Romanian Orthodox Church and ecclesiastical authorities, but soon also apart from them.

Despite their relatively small numbers, the Romanian Orthodox Church and the Greek Catholic/Uniate Church considered the Roma an important group to win over in their fight for religious space. In Transylvania, the Greek Catholic/Uniate Church was dominant among Romanians, seen as the preserver of Romanian culture during the years of Hungarian rule as part of the Austro-Hungarian empire. With the annexation of Transylvania by Romania after World War I, both the Romanian Orthodox Church and the Greek Catholic/Uniate Church saw themselves as the dominant religion, as the protector of the Romanian people and of 'Romanianness' (language, culture, traditions, etc.; Banac & Verdery, 1995; Boia, 2001; Hitchins, 1977, 1979; Mitu, 2001). However, the Romanian Orthodox Church maintained predominance because of its specific Romanian leadership (the Greek Catholic/Uniate Church had the Pope as the head of their church while for the Romanian Orthodox Church it was the Romanian Patriarch) and the majority of Romanians across the newly formed Greater Romania ascribed to the Orthodox faith.

In the competition for souls in interwar Romania, the Romanian Orthodox Church hierarchy was concerned about the number of Roma converting to the Greek Catholic/Uniate Church faith. The Roma in Romania were traditionally and mostly Orthodox Christian, with some Catholics in Transylvania. They historically adopted the religion of the majority populations where they lived. The first Roma organization (one which encompassed all Roma) was linked to the Romanian Orthodox Church, founded by Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Șerboianu and led by Gheorghe A. Lăzurică. The Romanian Orthodox Church appointed Lăzurică as missionary to the Roma. He described his job as that of a special missionary tasked with making 'Orthodox propaganda' among the Roma across Romania. He held conferences and sermons on the Orthodox Christian religion, entering into polemical debates in Transylvania and in the north-eastern region of Bucovina with Roman Catholic or with Greek Catholic/Uniate Church priests, Calvinists, and other Protestants (Matei, 2010, p. 166). However, as Petre Matei reveals, Șerboianu converted to Catholicism, as did Lăzurică later. This made the Romanian Orthodox Church afraid of losing ground among the Roma; the Romanian Orthodox Church leaders did not want to relinquish any more of their social influence to the Greek Catholics as evidenced by police reports from the time ("Fond DGP, Direcția Generala a Politiei," 1936, pp. 5–8).

Interestingly, though the Romanian Orthodox Church feared Greek Catholic/Uniate Church influence among the Roma and evangelical proselytism among Romanian peasants, they seemed unaware of or not concerned with the spread of evangelical or neo-Protestant faiths among the Roma. In 1931, the first Roma Baptist church was established in Arad city, in Transylvania, western Romania, seemingly the first Roma-led Protestant Church in Romania. This opened the way for later evangelical movements among the Roma, such as

Pentecostalism, though not until after World War II (Thurfjell & Marsh, 2014). The comparatively slow early growth may account for the Romanian Orthodox Church negligence in this regard.

Prior to World War I, such developments were already occurring across the border in Bulgaria. Jacob Klundt from Lom baptized Petar Punchev, the first Roma convert, in 1910 and started the first Roma Baptist church in Europe in Golintsi Village, what is today the Mladenovo district of Lom, Bulgaria. They became an independent church from the one in Lom in 1921 and Punchev was ordained as pastor in October 1923. After Punchev's death, the church was led by Petar Mincov, an ethnic Bulgarian, and later by Georgi Stefanov, a local Roma (Füllbrandt, 1931, p. 6; Marushiakova & Popov, 2015, p. 27; Wardin, 1991, p. 151). Though the Romanian Roma Baptists had a later start, their numbers grew encouraged by the work they heard was developing in Bulgaria.

Taking the tense religious and political situation in Romania during the 1920s and 1930s, the present study draws out the hitherto unstudied double minority of the Baptist Roma through the establishment of the first Roma evangelical/neo-Protestant Church in Romania: Faith Church. It presents a different dimension of Roma self-awareness and agency—their association with a religious group that was itself marginalized. The openness of the Baptists' theology, their diverse multi-ethnic, multilingual services, and their lack of anti-Roma history drew Roma to leave the Romanian Orthodox Church and become Baptists.

The research relies on archival material and on church records in three languages (English, Romanian, and Russian). These include police reports from the Romanian National Archives in Bucharest and Baptist newsletters from the 1930s. A rare article written by a Roma member of Faith Church, including a family photo, makes this study an important contribution to European Roma history. Due to a limited number of published works on interwar Roma, the study relies mostly on non-Roma authors, but that are analysed together with Roma authors and scholars from both the 1930s and nowadays. The limited number of secondary sources published point to the need of the present study and its value for historians and lay people alike. Roma Baptists in Transylvania whom the author talked to during the course of research either did not know about the first Roma protestant church in Romania or only know it existed and nothing more. This case study will provide these communities with an almost forgotten part of their history as well as help scholars in a better understanding of Roma interwar agency.

2. The Baptists and the Roma in Arad

Some of the first Roma evangelicals in Greater Romania, were converted at the Baptist church in the Șega suburb of Arad City, in the region of Transylvania. The work among Roma in the area began around 1930 in the Checheci district within the Șega suburb, led by Baptist pastor Ioan Cocuț (editor of the Baptist newspaper *Farul Creștin*, 1933–1939, and secretary of the Romanian Baptist Union, 1937–1939) and lay member Emil Jiva (Demşea, 2015; Popovici, 2007, p. 467). For a religious community, such as the Baptists, based on each member being able to read and interpret the Bible for themselves, they remarked that the major obstacle to working in the Roma community was illiteracy. Therefore, the American Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, which supported Romanian Baptists both financially and in spiritual matters, hired Cocuț's wife to hold a three-month literacy course for the Roma in Checheci (Cocuț, 1936, p. 20).

In 1931, two Roma members at the larger majority Romanian Baptist church in Arad-Șega decided to start a prayer house for Roma in one of their homes, with just three to four members attending. They soon rented a larger house and founded Faith Church, also in the Arad suburb of Șega. They remained at this same location until 1942. The initial members were Ilie Roman, Pavel Lugas, Iosif Bogovici, Petru Ghiura, and Anton Lingurar. Baptist historian Ioan Bunaciu claims they were baptized in 1932 in the larger Arad-Șega Romanian Baptist Church along with 15 other Roma, but if the Roma church was formed in 1931, it is likely some of them were already (baptized) members at the previously mentioned larger church (Bunaciu, 2006, p. 33). For example, Dumitru Lingurar (Figure 2), Anton's son, was part of the Sunday school at the Arad-Șega Romanian Baptist Church and was baptised in 1930 by Ioan Cocuț, the pastor of the church ("Early life of Dumitru Lingurar," n.d., p. 1).

American missionaries Walter and Hazel Craighead described a visit to Faith Church, likely in the summer of 1932, as already composed of 20 members and just as many waiting to receive baptism (see Figure 1). The church's Sunday school, choir, and part of a brass band impressed them. Craighead wrote:

> As we passed through the Gypsy section of the city, the Gypsies followed us to the meeting hall, so many that we had to arrange the meeting outside. There we saw and heard from the leader a literal fulfilment of Isaiah 35. (Craighead, 1932, p. 4)

Isaiah 35 deals with the theme of the wilderness transformed into a place of abundance and of the joy of those who recognized God's rescue/redemption. Verses 9 and 10 of Isaiah 35 state:

> But only the redeemed will walk there, and those the Lord has rescued will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

Craighead saw and perhaps heard in the sermon how this rescue and joy was taking place among the Roma of Arad.

Figure 1. Faith Church members in 1932. Source: Craighead (1932, p. 1). Notes: (1) Ioan Cocut, (2) Dumitru Vrânceanu, and (4, below Dumitru Vrânceanu, on the left) Walter Craighead. The Roma lay leader (3, upper line, second from the left) is perhaps Anton Lingurar.

A rather uncommon scripture for a sermon, the passage selected and Craighead's description reveals the Roma leader's advanced Bible knowledge and some level of theological training. Within a few years the Baptist influence provided avenues by which Roma could break barriers and social stigma, one of which was theological training of Roma leaders. Cocuț claimed he often saw Roma believers preaching in the streets of Arad with the New Testament in their hands (Cocuț, 1936, p. 20), revealing a rupture in local illiteracy but also Roma agency in initiating outreach. These were again factors provoked from interaction with the local Baptists.

In October 1930, the Craigheads had previously been in Arad for the Baptist Regional Conference and did not mention a Roma church in the city at that time (Craighead, 1931, p. 8). The talk given at the conference by the Bulgarian pastor of the Lom Roma, Petar Mincov, may have spurred Roma Baptists to start their own church on hearing of the Roma church in Golintsi. The transnational element of Baptist and other evangelical churches, perceived as dangerous by the Romanian Orthodox Church and state authorities, proved to be a source of empowerment and impetus for Arad's Roma.

In the following years, Faith Church had two baptisms, with at least 30 members. The majority of new members were students from the Sunday school, led in 1932 by Emil Jiva, with around 35 local Roma children attending (there were more children than adults). By 1934 there were between 8 and 10 groups of students whose teachers were themselves former students. On 25 June 1933, Jiva and Ioan Cocuț held an evangelization meeting, which included examinations for the Sunday school children and youth. After a sermon and the song "Cu blândețe și drag Isus ne chiamă" (Softly and tenderly, Jesus is calling), approximately 30 students and other young people responded to the altar call and gave a confession of adopting a new faith. Dumitru Lingurar (1913–2003) whose father Anton was among the founding members, became the first Roma student at the Baptist seminary in Bucharest in 1934. However, due to the premature death of Anton Lingurar, Dumitru, as the oldest son in the family, gave up seminary studies and was employed by the Romanian Railroad Company to support his mother (Corneliu Lingurar, personal communication, 19 May 2019; "Early life of Dumitru Lingurar," n.d., p. 1).

He published an article on the short history of Faith Church in the Russian language newsletter *Svetilnik* of the Bessarabian Baptists in which he described that many parents of the Roma children attending the Sunday school soon followed their children to the Baptist church and were baptised (Lingurar, 1934, pp. 2–3; "Țiganii și Isus," 1933, p. 12). He reveals the role of younger generations of Roma being drawn to the inclusiveness of the Baptists and subsequently drawing their parents as well. This article is the only Roma-authored Romanian Baptist

publication found thus far from the period. Interestingly, the Bessarabian Baptist periodical showed more interest in Roma believers than their co-religionists in Bucharest, in whose publications no similar article has been found, despite the fact that Lingurar was a student at the seminary. This was perhaps due to the more ethnically diverse churches in Bessarabia and especially in its capital of Chișinău, analysed further in the next section (Averbuch, 1931, pp. 25–26).

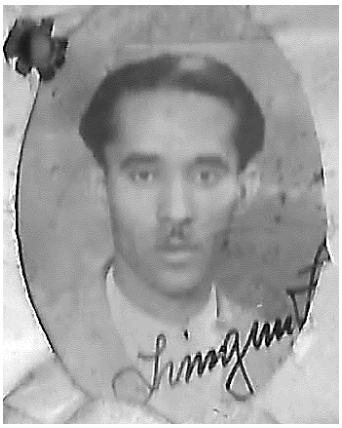

Figure 2. Dumitru Lingurar, 1948. Source: Corneliu Lingurar.

In his article, Lingurar identified the Baptist faith with a superior moral and spiritual status. He mentioned a turn away from "sin, immorality, cursing, and violence" among the Roma in Arad-Șega. This, he argued, was a result of their exposure to the teachings in the Bible: the good news of God's rescue plan for humanity through Jesus and the equality of all humans before God (Lingurar, 1934, p. 12). He did not identify negative characteristics specifically to Roma, but pointed to the role of Bible teaching in prompting change and providing the Roma community, and its young people in particular, with avenues to advance socially through education.

It seems that due to the limited resources of the Roma lay leaders, and to prevent difficulties with local authorities regarding authorization to meet, Faith Church remained under the auspices of the Baptist church in the Pârneava suburb of Arad, whose pastor was also the official pastor of Faith Church. These official pastors included Ioan Cocuț, David Dumitraşcu, and Alexa Popovici between 1931 and 1942 (Popovici, 2007, p. 481). However, Faith Church had its own Roma lay pastors leading the congregation.

Unfortunately, very little information is available on the history and development of this first Roma church and this marginalized double minority: Roma and 'sectarian.' No mention of it has yet been discovered in the police files, gendarmerie reports, or in reports from the Ministry of Religious Denominations at the Romanian National Archives. Documents that include very detailed accounts of Baptist, Adventist, and Nazarene buildings and property requisitioned by the state after the ban on religious associations in 1943, do not mention a Roma church (Achim, 2013, pp. 625–634, 836–841). State or ecclesiastical authorities may have just grouped it with the other 'sectarians,' but the lack of any reference to Faith Church by police further reveals their marginalization. There are however traces of Faith Church activity in denominational newsletters.

In 1936, Faith Church members requested a small harmonium for their meetings. They mentioned poverty and lack of regular employment as a reason for members being unable to procure it themselves ("O Rugăminte," 1936, p. 7). In December 1937, the church held a burial service officiated by Nicolae Oncu, treasurer of the Romanian Baptist Union (1935–1937), for Sister I. Topor, a member at Faith Church ("Din lumea religioasă," 1938a, p. 7; Popovici, 2007, p. 928). The Baptist Union newsletter published an appeal in November 1938 to help the members obtain their own building since the rent was very high. The group of 30 regular attendees was paying the equivalent of five dollars a month. Donations were sent to Oncu at 4 Blanduziei Street, Arad (Cocuț, 1936, p. 20; "Din lumea religioasă," November 1938b, p. 7). However, due to limited finances, increasingly restrictive legislation, and local resentment of religious associations such as Baptists whom the Romanian Orthodox Church and state authorities viewed as dangerous sectarians, they did not succeed in purchasing their own land until 1945. The land and subsequent prayer house built on it was situated at 24 Aprodul Purice street in Arad, where the church remains today (Figure 3).

By 1942, and in the midst of repressive legislation, Faith Church recorded over 100 members (Popovici, 2007, p. 481). In 1945, they held one of their largest baptismal services with 25 candidates and in 1946 they formed a choir lead by Nicolae Moț from the Șega Baptist church. Faith Church grew to include two smaller church plants. They were all described as vibrant and active churches, although the location and fate of these sister churches is still unclear. However, out of about 5,000 Roma in the city, 3,000 have in some way interacted with the evangelicals/neo-Protestants in Arad. Faith Church was involved in outreach to the local Roma through the NGO *Organizația Misionară Izvorul de Viață* (River of Life Missionary Organization; Ardelean, 2016). Fănică Bârniș, Roma pastor of Faith Church, before passing away in April 2018, also pastored the Roma church in Sadova and produced a translation of the New Testament into the local Roma dialect after 1990 (Emanuel Jurcoi, personal communication, 19 February 2018). Due to internal disputes, some members likely joining the growing Pentecostal churches, as well as to emigration, the figures fell to 46 members in 2006 (Bunaciu, 2006, p. 33). However, its continued existence is remarkable. A look at the situation of other Roma evangelical believers (specifically Baptist) across Romania at the time will show the uniqueness of Faith Church, and perhaps why it went under the radar of the Romanian Orthodox Church and state authorities' surveillance schemes.

Figure 3. Faith Church in Arad-Sega in 2014. Source: Google (n.d.).

3. Roma in Other Churches

It seems that 1930 was the break through decade for Romanian Roma organizations, growing Roma self-awareness and social action, as well as a greater attentiveness to Roma in general, if not to Roma evangelicals, by political and religious groups. However, there are several other mentions of Roma joining evangelical/neo-Protestant churches across the country during this time. Their association with Baptist churches in the regions of the Banat and Transylvania in particular is in stark contrast to the more distant and outsider missionary scene occurring in Bucharest. This was a result of more assimilated Roma in the western parts of the country, regions historically more accepting of ethnic diversity, who though assimilated were still more likely to identify as Roma. While in Wallachia, the southern and eastern region of Romania, assimilated Roma were less likely to retain their Roma heritage. Baptists in Bucharest (Wallachia) were therefore working among very poor Roma communities. Roma in the western regions of the country, despite aggressive assimilationist policies of the Hapsburg Empire, included families that fared better economically and still associated themselves with the Roma community (Achim, 1998, pp. 141–161; Drăghia, 2016, p. 32). The heightened sense of opportunity among them accounts, in part, for the more self-identifying Roma neo-Protestants in these regions.

In Dognecea village, Caraș County, in the Banat region, another majority Roma Baptist church was established, separate from Faith Church in Arad. Villagers sold limestone in the Almaș Valley in exchange for grains, and on one trip in 1918 local Roma Todor Corolan met Baptist pastor Dumitru Drăgilă from Prilipeț village. Corolan invited Drăgilă to Dognecea and the latter began to hold meetings in Corolan's home, and later in the home of Ioan Moise between 1918 and 1920. In 1920, Drăgilă baptised the founding members of what would become the Baptist church in Dognecea at 'Lacul Mare' (the Big Lake): Todor Corolan, Lazar Dobre, Ioan Moise, and Matei Tismănaru. Baptist historian Alexa Popovici identifies Lazar Dobre as an ethnic Roma, converted while serving as a soldier in World War I (Popovici, 2007, pp. 467, 481). Dobre also attended the Baptist seminary in Bucharest, like Lingurar, but not until after World War II (from 1947 to 1951). After seminary, he served as pastor of the Dognecea Baptist Church until authorities revoked his authorization, the date of which is unknown, in an attempt to curtail neo-Protestant activity (Bâtea, 2018, courtesy of Ovidiu Copăceanu).

In September 2018, the Dognecea Baptist Church celebrated its 100th anniversary, which would make it older than Faith Church. However, the mix of Roma and Romanians differentiated it from the latter, leaving Faith Church as the 'first Roma Baptist Church' in the collective memory of Romanian Baptists. Many Dognecea Roma Baptists later joined the churches in the nearby city of Reșița and the town of Bocșa (Bâtea, 2018). The Dognecea Church jubilee brochure made no mention of their Roma heritage, though Bunaciu claimed that in 2006 it held the highest percentage of ethnic Roma from any church within the Romanian Baptist Union (Bunaciu, 2006, p. 729). Unfortunately, Bunaciu's account must be taken with a grain of salt as much of his research cannot be corroborated. It is unclear why Faith Church did not hold the highest percentage of ethnic Roma within the Baptist Union considering it is specifically a Roma church. Bunaciu's statement nevertheless points to the overwhelming association of Dognecea Baptists with the local Roma.

In Alba-Iulia city, Transylvania, two Roma families joined the Baptist Church pastored by Pavel Boșorogan in 1930/1931 (Boșorogan, 1931, pp. 1–2). Unfortunately, more information on these two families is not available.

Another church in Lăpuşnicul Mare, one of the largest churches in the Almaș Valley (today in Caraș-Severin County in the Banat), was recorded as having Roma members and being financially disadvantaged. They nonetheless contributed over 30,000 Lei, a vast sum both then and now (equivalent to $220 in 1936 and about $4,000 today), to various activities in the Baptist Union (Hera, 1937, p. 6).

In Cuvin village, Arad County, the members' registry from 1951 lists Florița Tigan as born in 1899 in Covasint village, with the date of baptism unlisted but believed to be before World War II (Vereș, 2007). Covasint and similar towns and villages in Arad County, such as Șiria, had large Roma villages, but no mention is made of Roma members in the denominational histories, either because there were none (which is unlikely) or because they chose not to record the ethnicity of members to avoid the associated stigma, or in an attempt to overcome ethnic barriers (Ban, 2004; Emanuel Jurcoi, personal communication, 19 February 2018).

By the mid-1930s, there is also mention of Roma in the Baptist churches in Bucharest. The London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews reported a group of converted Roma in an unnamed town, likely near Bucharest, who formed a choir and sang in a local evangelical church in 1933. Jewish Christians visiting the town joined the church service and remarked how their opinion of Roma as thieves and vagabonds was challenged after the service (London Society for Promoting Christianity, 1934, p. 56). Lingurar and other Roma members keyed into the vital role of these new churches in challenging such widespread prejudices. It is puzzling that in Bucharest neither the police nor the Romanian Orthodox Church authorities seem to have documentation on the evangelical mission of Roma. However, a young seminary student was arrested while preaching at a Roma evangelization meeting in Bucharest in 1937 and spent five days in jail (Muirhead, 1937, p. 7). The reason for the arrest was likely that he did not possess proper preaching authorization and the account is only found in an American missionary newsletter.

Roma often appear in descriptions of church musical events. An orchestra composed of Roma musicians played at a service of 45 baptismal candidates on 10 September 1939 in Slobozia village, Cetatea Albă County, in the easternmost region of Bessarabia ("Biserica din Slobozia," 1939, p. 5). Roma believers also joined Lev Averbuch's Jewish Christian congregation in Chișinău, the capital of Bessarabia, during a Christmas gathering in 1934. Averbuch reported that they sang a song in Romani during the service, adding to the already rich multi-lingual service (Averbuch, 1935, pp. 21–22). Again, an image of inclusiveness pervades these early churches, which greatly influenced Roma conversion.

Apart from these, no other cities or villages reported Roma evangelical believers. This does not mean there were none. The Roma were not on the Romanian evangelical radar until 1930, otherwise more attention would have been given to the development in Dognecea with Lazar Dobre in the 1920s. The ethnic Romanian evangelical churches were themselves very young and still developing in the first decade after World War I. This accounts for outreach efforts emerging only in the 1930s and concentrated in the more diverse border regions of Transylvania and Bessarabia.

The Bessarabian Baptists occasionally published articles on the Roma in their newsletter *Svetilnik*. These included stereotypical claims about Roma beliefs and traditions ("Tsiganah," 1934, pp. 17–18); however, as mentioned previously, *Svetilnik* was the only publication in Romania at the time that included an article written by a Roma Baptist. The article, published in 1934, is thus far also the only contemporary account of the first Roma Baptist Church in Romania from the perspective of one of its Roma members: Dumitru Lingurar (Lingurar, 1934, pp. 2–3). Lingurar studied at the Baptist seminary in Bucharest, received a law degree after World War II, and served as a judge in Sannicoleaul Mare, a district in the Banat region in western Romania. Brother Lingurar, as he identified himself at the end of the article, linked the improvement of the Roma community in Romania, and in Arad in particular, with the growing evangelical religious movements across the country.

Though the editors of *Svetilnik* continued to refer to Roma as *țigani* (gypsies), one article acknowledged that they called themselves *Rom*(*i*) (in Romanian) derived from *om* or 'human/individual.' The negative association of the label *țigan* with 'unclean' or 'untouchable' was indeed present in Roma publications of the time (Nastasă & Varga, 2001, p. 222). Editors of *Svetilnik* called on readers to recognize their shared status as humans whom God loves and for whom He died through his sacrifice on the cross: "Dumnezeu ii iubește și sa jertfit și pentru ei" ("God loves them and sacrificed himself for them as well;" "Nyekotoriya Svyedyeneeya o Tsiganah," 1934, p. 13). Articles by or about British Roma evangelist Rodney 'Gipsy' Smith (1860–1947) also began to appear in the 1930s Bucharest-based Baptist publication *Farul Creștin* ("Știri Diverse," 1934a, p. 5, 1934b, p. 7). There was a clear initiative by these groups to engage with the Roma in their churches and across the country. It is unclear, however, why no separate Roma churches developed in Bessarabia during this time with such interest among the Baptists of the region for Roma missionary endeavours. An explanation could be the lack of Roma leaders to take initiative or the influence from Bessarabian Baptists discouraging a separate ethnic church (especially as tensions ran high in the early 1930s with separate Jewish evangelical congregations forming across the region; see BWA Minute Books, 1931).

In Bucharest, the Baptist Women's Missionary Association spearheaded the Roma Mission in 1934, led by Earl Hester, director of the women's seminary James Memorial Training School (1930 to 1937). Hester visited Faith Church on 27–30 June 1933 and gave, what could essentially be called, a sermon on the topic "If Jesus

had never come" ("Țiganii și Isus," 1933, p. 12). This trip may have influenced her to begin work with the Roma in Bucharest, on the other side of the country, where little was being done. The fact that she, as a woman, was invited to speak in a Baptist church and to a majority Roma congregation—whose culture is also very patriarchal—reveals a more modern view of women's role in the church at the time than previously thought. The fact that she was American, however, may explain the leniency not afforded to other women. However, the work in Bucharest among the Roma during the interwar period did not see the flourishing that occurred in Arad. It was barely mentioned in Baptist newsletters after 1936 and donations significantly decreased by 1938 (Truța, 1939, p. 7). The Romanian Baptists in Bucharest lacked a leader to help support local Roma Baptists similar to Mincov and Georgi Stefanov in Golintsi, Bulgaria, or Lingurar in Arad.

4. Reasons for Conversion and Reactions

Unfortunately, there is very little from the Roma themselves on why they joined these churches and on how they were treated by other Roma once they did so. Recent anthropological studies analyse Roma conversion to evangelical groups after the fall of communism in Romania; their observations can help shed light on how interwar Roma may have seen their conversion. Using both past and present studies, we see that overwhelmingly, social inclusion/advancement, the mix of ethnicities, and a lack of history of Roma prejudice in these new churches drew Roma to become evangelical. They were offered something new that the Romanian Orthodox Church or the Greek Catholic/Uniate Church had not offered them. As analysed above, Dumitru Lingurar conveyed social advancement and an appealing new moral outlook as reasons for Roma joining the Baptists. Pavel Boșorogan's article from 1931 allows further insight regarding the equality these churches and their theology seemed to offer, as similarly argued by Jewish converts in Romanian evangelical churches at the time. Concerning the Roma in his Alba-Iulia congregation, Boșorogan wrote: "They are joyous that a place has been found for them also in the arms and on the shoulders of the Good Shepherd," and they believed that Jesus loved them the same as he did the king (Boșorogan, 1931, pp. 1–2).

Stefan Lipan's recent study of current migrant evangelical Romanian Roma in Belgium identifies today as well this principle of an inclusive theology through the words of one of the Roma pastors: "God has chosen the entire Gypsy people from all around the globe. God has found his pleasure in us, the Gypsies, and that means the lowest stratum" (Lipan, 2017, p. 64). The theme of equality with surrounding people groups and within society comes up frequently in recent publications on Roma evangelicals. Johannes Ries's study of a contemporary largely Roma Pentecostal congregation in Transylvania draws this out through a quote from the church's Saxon pastor:

> We are all very different. Here in this hall are sitting different races, different nations and different cultures. Brothers and sisters, we are all very different. One of us might be a musician, another a mathematician or a doctor. Here are sitting poor and rich, strong and weak, thick and thin….We are all very different. But what connects us? There is something in us, which is common to all of us and which unites us: the desire to be with the Lord. And this desire makes us all equal. (Ries, 2011, p. 274)

Equality in the spiritual realm was linked to equality in the physical/social realm. Belief in access to the Bible for all and the required ritual of individual reading and study of the Bible resulted in increased literacy among Roma evangelicals and more opportunities for social integration (Lőrinczi, 2013, p. 213). Sînziana Preda identified this focus on Bible study as a "guiding principle for inter-ethnic and interconfessional relations" (Preda, 2018, p. 293). For some Roma these mixed 'transethnic' congregations offered important spaces for social inclusion (Ries, 2011, p. 278). However, the persistence of separate Roma churches reveals the limits of conversion as an avenue of social integration (Dejeu, 2015). Ries identifies how more traditional Roma groups use the development of separate Roma churches to express ethnic exclusiveness (Ries, 2011, p. 278). The case of Faith Church complicates this approach as members both sought social inclusion, and saw the Baptists as an avenue to achieve it, yet opted for an ethnic exclusive church for missionizing purposes.

Today, the evangelical or neo-Protestant churches are considered some of the main institutions for generating inclusion (Fleck & Rughiniș, 2008, pp. 43–45). However, to avoid painting too idyllic a picture, it is important to note that Roma may face prejudice from individuals even in some evangelical churches as Sînziana Preda's recent interviews show (Preda, 2017, p. 90). In Arad, the county plans for Roma integration include antisegregation policies in schools and intentional desegregation resulting in an increase of Roma students enrolled in 2018 (Morar, 2018, p. 8). However, the Checheci area in the Șega district, where Faith Church is located, is still considered one of the most disadvantaged areas of Arad, with a population of about 3,000 Roma. A lack of property and identification papers, absence of basic utilities, and few paved roads are issues still faced by residents. They are also fighting a high level of illiteracy and high dependency on social welfare benefits. However, city officials remark the continued active presence of evangelical/neo-Protestant churches organizing religious, cultural, and humanitarian activities among Roma in the area (Morar, 2018, pp. 11, 14). The legacy of Faith Church remains, though further study is needed on the present involvement of church members in Roma outreach and activism.

5. Conclusion

Although the surge of European Roma Protestant and especially Pentecostal churches occurred with the religious revival movement among Roma spread from France in the 1950s, this research on Faith Church and other churches that included Roma points to early conversion of Roma to non-Romanian Orthodox or Greek Catholic/Uniate Churches in Romania prior to World War II. It is evidence of a new stage in Roma identity formation through engagement with a minority religious group that lacked a history of Roma prejudice as was present in the Orthodox Church.

The political and religious tensions of the interwar period doubly affected Roma as Baptists. They were targeted in social, political, and economic ways for being Roma and for being Baptists. Keeping Roma within the Romanian Orthodox Church as they traditionally had been, was of value to the state and Romanian nation-building projects. Their conversion to neo-Protestant groups would be an obstacle and a threat, just as state and the Romanian Orthodox Church authorities viewed Romanian peasants turning to these so-called sectarian groups. Yet, the authorities failed to catch on to the specifically Roma Baptist conversions, mostly because of their concern over Greek Catholic/Uniate Church competition. There was no way to predict just how big a threat to their Roma members these new churches would pose after World War II. Their concern with rapidly growing sectarian churches among the Romanian peasants may have kept the Romanian Orthodox Church and police attention away from the Roma converts.

The study reveals the initiative and agency of Roma in Arad to start their own Protestant church, named Faith Church. Ioan Cocuț, secretary of the Romanian Baptist Union, and lay member Emil Jiva took an active part in the development of the Faith Church as mentioned by Roma member Dumitru Lingurar. However, the teachers of the Sunday school and the church founders were clearly from the Roma community. This spurred Romanian outreach and mission among the Roma in Alba-Iulia, Bucharest, and Chișinău, among other places, as mentioned previously. However, in these latter cities, there was no Roma leadership and no lasting Roma church was founded as in Arad until after World War II and increasingly after 1989, with the fall of the communist dictatorship. The continued existence of Faith Church, this small Roma-founded-Roma-led church, is remarkable and a telling legacy of interwar Roma agency. Although these evangelical churches were an important means toward Roma social inclusion and equality, Romanian society still has a long way to go, as evidenced by the current situation of the Roma in Checheci, Arad, and by Sînziana Preda's recent interviews, in achieving the advancement and equality hoped for by the founding members of Faith Church.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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Article

Hungarian Gypsy Musician's National Association: Battles Faced by Gypsy Musicians in Hungary during the Interwar Years

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Abstract
The governments of the Horthy era did not formulate a central Gypsy policy and, consequently, the so-called 'Gypsy issue' fell fully into the hands of the assigned ministries and local authorities. The public authorities acted at their own discretion: Largely, they acted according to their basic tasks and understanding, or simply ignored the issue. As a result, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Welfare and Labour were the decisive authorities in this issue. Mainly law enforcement dealt with travelling Gypsies—a small portion of the estimated one hundred thousand Gypsies living in Hungary—the majority of whom lived in 'colonies' and were dealt with as an issue of public health. Regarding Gypsies, the same era is frequently judged by the legal action affecting these travellers and the often criticised measures regulating public security and health. The foundation of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association, which intended to represent the interests of nearly ten thousand Gypsy musicians, somewhat changed the picture that had developed, since the organisation enjoyed the full support of the heads of the Ministry of the Interior and the city of Budapest. Regulations were enacted to protect their interests and initiatives. Behind the patronage, one might note, was that after the Treaty of Trianon Gypsy music became part of irredentist ideology and the revisionist movement, and therefore the interests and claims of the Gypsy musicians fully fitted the age. The topic is very important for social inclusion today because Gypsy music continues to be considered part of Hungarian cultural heritage and thus gives Gypsies work and integration opportunities.

Keywords
cultural heritage; Gypsy association; Gypsy musicians; Hungarian Gypsies; Hungary; interwar period; jazz musicians

Issue
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1. Introduction

During the Horthy period those in political power did not formulate a national Gypsy policy and, thus, the so-called 'Gypsy question' was relegated to the competent ministries and into the hands of local authorities. State organs acted as they saw fit, usually acting as per their fundamental mandates and pre-defined legal purview, or by ignoring the question. This situation resulted in the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry for Welfare and Labour becoming the decisive actors in this question (Hajnáczky, 2017, pp. 225–228). The Gypsy population of Hungary was estimated to be one hundred thousand individuals (Cserti Csapó, 2015, p. 444), and among these those characterised as 'wandering Gypsies' were an insignificant number. They were dealt with as a question of public order and security. Most Gypsies lived in Gypsy settlements and were viewed most often as an issue of public health (Hajnáczky, 2018; Karsai, 1992; Miklós, 2017, 2018). In the same period, Gypsies were often judged according to measures that directly concerned them, and as public opinion learned of the (often controversial) decisions made regarding the Gypsies. Their image is somewhat tempered by the creation of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association, re-established in 1935 as the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Federation following its dissolution in 1933. The organisation was created to represent the interest of almost ten thousand Gypsy musicians and enjoyed the full support of the directorate of the Ministry of the

Interior and the city of Budapest, where decrees were promulgated in their favour and helped further their initiatives. Behind this gallant support may have lain the fact that Gypsy music became part of irredentist ideology and revisionist action following the peace treaty of Trianon, and thus the interests of the Gypsy musicians were completely compatible with the spirit of the age (Zipernovszky, 2017). The Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association explicitly took on this patriotic role, as illustrated through its joining the Revisionist League ("Újabb csatlakozások a Revíziós Ligához," 1929, p. 5), declaring its admiration for Mussolini ("Zeneiskolánk," 1929, p. 14) and Lord Rothermere and its statements of unity with the Hungarian nation ("Felhívás," 1929, p. 17). Until recently there has only been fragmented data concerning the workings of this organisation, its effect on the situation of Gypsy musicians and its relationship with the authorities. The reason for this may have been that the focus was on the previously mentioned decrees issued in their favour and that no real records of this national organisation are to be found in the archives. However, the numerous press sources do provide an insight into the history of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association (Hajnáczky, 2019, pp. 9–12).

2. A Gypsy Musician Can Only Be a Musician Who is a Gypsy: The Establishment of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association and the Modification of Statutes

Gypsy musicians moved from the Hungarian Folk Musicians' National Association (Sárosi, 2012, p. 15), disbanded in 1918, into the National Hungarian Musicians' Federation as a faculty of folk musicians. They soon left this organisation in order to establish their own, which they named the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association ("Huszonöt év története," 1926, p. 9; "A magyar nóta a leghatalmasabb irredenta fegyver," 1926, p. 9). In its early years, the newly founded association was unable to achieve any significant goals, though it did protest on account of the tragic financial situation of the Gypsy musicians ("A Cigányzenészek a jazz band-ek ellen," 1922, p. 12). It would take a few more years before they were able to bring about effective change.

The first fateful general meeting and official election was in March 1923 and took place amid an air of tension and discord, as the members of the association had broken into two factions. The factions had spent the weeks before the meeting conferring long into the night among themselves as to what was to be done, all the while spying on the other faction's tactical moves and planning. One of the groups reassured the leadership of their unwavering support, while the other faction voiced their great dissatisfaction and criticised Gypsy musicians' financial situation and their inability to improve it. The president at the time acknowledged these criticisms; nonetheless, he most assertively pointed out that this disorganisation was a factor that prevented any unified representation of interests when negotiating with hotel and coffee house proprietors ("Viharba fúlt a cigányok elnökválasztó közgyűlése," 1923, p. 2; "Viharosnak ígérkezik a cigányzenészek mai közgyűlése," 1923, p. 4). Despite the discontent, the existing leadership was able to remain in power, which may be due, in large part, to their following declaration:

> According to the speaker, people with other occupations, former actors, stand at the head of orchestras and thus take away the Gypsies bread winnings. These gentlemen could earn their bread by other means, but the Gypsy only has his violin with which to make a living. It is for this reason that the leadership turns to the chief captaincy that they only grant work permits to those who are members of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association. ("Viharba fúlt a cigányok elnökválasztó közgyűlése," 1923, p. 2)

The association's proposal went as far as the Minister of the Interior, where it received significant support. The association amended its statutes in August and along with other items included the following paragraph: "Only those Hungarian Gypsy musicians may work within the territory of Hungary who are full members of the association" (Nagy, 2011, p. 248). The modified statues were approved by the competent ministry the following month with decree number 147.173/1923 of the Ministry of the Interior (Nagy, 2011, pp. 248–253).

In addition to this important paragraph, the newly published statutes defined the aims, organisation and modes of operation of the Hungarian Gypsy Musician's National Association, as well as the rights and responsibilities of its members. Its dissolution could only be ordered by the Ministry of the Interior, in such cases as when the association were to "abandon its national and Christian foundations," (Nagy, 2011, p. 252) ignore the goals encoded in its statutes, or commit financial improprieties. The language of the association was given as Hungarian and its primary goals were defined as the following:

> The aims of the association: To promote the material, moral and intellectual interests of its members, according to Christian principles, and provide legal protection for these. Through the reciprocal support of the members the attainment of better working conditions and protection of acquired rights, based on national and Christian principles, with the exclusion of political and religious debates. To limit, with the support of the Royal Hungarian Ministry of the Interior, the operation of uninvited musicians and those arriving from foreign lands. (Nagy, 2011, p. 248)

A further step was the establishment of a retirement fund, sometime in the future, for its members, in addition to providing aid in case of injury or illness and care for the funeral expenses of the association's members and their family. It stated as further tasks assisting in

finding employment for its members and publishing an official journal; there were to be celebrations and concerts to help partially finance the previously listed funds (Hajnáczky, 2019, pp. 167–178).

The statutes of the association made it its primary goal to found local groups, to support grass roots initiatives and to help their official registration. These measures were made the responsibility of the Board of Directors. A newly created group could be registered if it had at least thirty members and accepted the statutes and agenda of the association, in addition to agreeing to surrendering 80 percent of their membership fees. The organisational structure of the local groups was to mirror that of the central organisation, though it would be smaller (Nagy, 2011, pp. 248–252).

3. Battling with Foreigners and Amateurs: The Circular Decree of the Ministry of the Interior No. 137.000/1926

The remarks made at the January 1925 general meeting of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association very obviously illustrate that the amendment of the statutes (Nagy, 2011, pp. 248–253) far from solved the burning issues of the significant majority of Gypsy musicians. The atmosphere of the meeting was only further ignited by the motion of the chief secretary that Gypsy musicians' associations accepted members who were not Gypsies and had professions other than in music. In reply to the motion of the chief secretary, the secretary of the Debrecen local group gave an enraged speech, stating that such a move would take work from two-thirds of Gypsy musicians ("Tízezer cigányzenész kenyere veszélyben," 1925, p. 4). The representative from Győr agreed with these words and attacked the admittance of "amateurish musicians" ("Tízezer cigányzenész kenyere veszélyben," 1925, p. 4). The vice president of the Szolnok local group dismissed these as "musical illiterates," ("Tízezer cigányzenész kenyere veszélyben," 1925, p. 4) and stressed that only Gypsies could be allowed membership in the association. The president of the Debrecen local group spoke of the poverty afflicting Gypsy musicians and also reported the "piracy of the peasant wind bands" ("Tízezer cigányzenész kenyere veszélyben," 1925, p. 4). At the end of the meeting, the leaders of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association decided that, together with the presidents of the local groups, they would approach the Minister of the Interior and write a letter to the National Hungarian Musicians' Federation stating that "amateur musicians" were not to be admitted to either of the organisations ("Tízezer cigányzenész kenyere veszélyben," 1925, p. 4).

The prospects of the Gypsy musicians were made even more dismal with the explosion in popularity and spread of jazz music, which pushed them further to the side. Audiences and coffee house customers thirsted for the new music, though columns appeared one after another in national and local newspapers complaining of the neglect of Gypsy musicians in favour of jazz music, calling attention to their subsequent beggarly fate (Sárosi, 2012, pp. 189, 199, 201, 205). The association did not sit idly by: It composed an interpolation to the Minister of the Interior requesting protection of their interests in the face of jazz music arriving from abroad and from Schrammel bands, demanding they be deported from the country ("A cigányzenészek sérelmei," 1925, p. 11; "Ravatalra viszik a magyar nótát," 1924, p. 9).

The interpolation from the Gypsy musicians to the Minister of the Interior did not go unanswered and the following year the Ministry issued circular decree number 137.000/1926 concerning the official work permit for professional musicians, which in effect meant the expulsion of foreign musicians ("A m. kir. belügyminiszter 137.000/1926 számú körrendelete," 1926, p. 1). The decree stated that the primary reason for the measure was "of public safety and general public order" ("A m. kir. belügyminiszter 137.000/1926 számú körrendelete," 1926, p. 1). in order that, in cities with a proper council and cities with legal authority, only those with a legal permit be allowed to perform music. A work permit could only be granted to those who were Hungarian citizens, committed patriots, over eighteen years old and had substantive musical knowledge. The competent police authority granted the permit to nationals, while musicians from abroad could only receive a permit from the Ministry of the Interior, the work permit being included in their residence permit. The decree further stipulated that a work permit could only be granted to members of the National Hungarian Musicians' Federation or the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association. If anyone were to perform without official permission, they could incur up to fifteen days incarceration and a fine up to one million Crowns. The decree did not restrict the work of musicians who had graduated from music academies and orchestras belonging to official bodies, institution or organisation ("A m. kir. belügyminiszter 137.000/1926 számú körrendelete" 1926, p. 1).

4. Battling with Jazz Bands Performing in Hungary: The Support of the Capital City and the Foundation of the Bihari Music School

The Ministry of the Interior circular decree restricting foreign jazz musicians did not lead to the end of complaints from Gypsy musicians, as their earnings hardly increased. This can partially explain their refusal to pay membership dues. In fact, those elements of the press who took up the cause for Gypsy musicians continued to pour forth more and more articles condemning jazz music and in an increasingly vitriolic style ("A cigányzenészeket meg kell védelmezni," 1927, p. 8; "Irtsuk ki a jazz-band-et," 1927, p. 13; "Olyan a jazz-band mint a járvány," 1927, p. 8; Sárosi, 2012, pp. 231–234). One of the daily papers interviewed the honorary president of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association, who gave vent to the seemingly unstoppable growing popularity of jazz music:

> I deeply regret that here, in our Hungary, in the Hungarian capital, this alcoholic music has been able to so spread, it is so full of infectious bacteria. It is like an epidemic, like sickness, we can hardly wait for it to end….We ask the highest forums to take into account today's difficult and sorry state and come to the aid of Gypsy music caught in the vortex of this scourge. ("Olyan a jazz-band mint a járvány," 1927, p. 8)

In September 1927, the association called together several general meetings with other organisations and resolved again to appeal to the Minister of the Interior to forbid jazz bands spreading in Hungary ("A cigányzenészeket meg kell védelmezni," 1927, p. 8; "Cigányok a jazzband ellen," 1927, p. 8). This time though, the interpolation of the Gypsy musicians did not find a favourable reception from the Ministry of the Interior, and their situation became all the more desperate as opportunities for Gypsy musicians aboard narrowed. Austria, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Switzerland completely closed their doors before Hungarian Gypsy musicians. The Gypsy musicians' association was unable to turn to the National Hungarian Music Federation for mediation with its desire to ban jazz, as the latter also represented Hungarian jazz musicians ("Egyórás vitám a cigányok elnökével a dzseszbendről," 1928, p. 8). Therefore, they began to turn to other forums in order to further their cause ("Cigányzene lesz a külföldi magyar borházakban," 1929, p. 10).

In June 1928 the association submitted an interpolation to the Theatre Affairs Committee of Budapest asking that they ban jazz bands from the hospitality venues and institutions they rented from the capital city (such as the Budapest Zoological and Botanical Gardens, or the Gellért Hotel's restaurant) or of which they are the proprietor. The councillor of the capital city told the press, in connection with the proposal of the association, that if the Theatre Affairs Committee were to pass the request the leadership of the city would also agree. He further explained that the contracts in effect could not be modified, however, in future contracts, they would stipulate that the renters only be permitted to employ Gypsy orchestras ("A Petőfi Társaság érdekes beadványa a bizottsághoz," 1928, p. 12; "A Petőfi Társaság síkra szállt a külföldi művész-vendégszereplések ellen," 1928, p. 7). At the meeting of the Theatre Affairs Committee the interpolation of the Gypsy musicians' association was unanimously supported by the legislators ("A főváros intézményeinél tilos lesz a jazz," 1928, p. 5; "Tilos a 'fekete zene' a főváros intézményeinél," 1928, p. 8), and the press reported that the request had been granted for the following reasons:

> One of the city fathers claimed it to be his moral responsibility to defend [the city] against 'black music;' another city father, renowned for his purifying tendencies, was likewise up in arms against the outrage which is [the] morally corrupting negro music. He mentioned prestigious musical authorities who had established that 'jazz is not music but clatter.' The invasion of jazz and negroes is 'musical destruction,' according to him, and a 'result of the world war,' which the 'forces of the entente had left behind in Europe together with other germs. ("Tilos a 'fekete zene' a főváros intézményeinél," 1928, p. 8)

Károly Bura was elected the new president of the Hungarian Gypsy Musician's National Association and in his inaugural speech he spoke of the inadequacies of the training of Gypsy musicians, a field he thought would be a milestone in the battle against the spread of jazz music. He stated:

> We wish to care for the conditions for cultural progress too. To this aim we will soon establish a music school to serve the training of the new generation. We have received a promise that the outstanding talents graduating there will find a path to higher training and the podiums of world success abroad. Only trained Gypsy musicians can regain all that fashionable musical trends have taken from us, and only Gypsy music will be able to conjure up again a renaissance of Hungarian song and Hungarian tunes. (Bura, 1929, p. 1)

The leadership of the association first tried to have the training of Gypsy musicians at the Music Academy, but they were confronted with rejection, the reasons given being lack of space and the aversion of the teachers to such a task. Another possibility was for music schools to cooperate, but this was quickly rejected as they did not agree to talented Gypsy students taking part in general education alien to Gypsy music. The association also sought opportunities where adult Gypsy musicians could continue their musical education, which was not a possibility at music schools because they did not work with older, more experienced musicians.

After several unsuccessful attempts, the association decided that the founding of an independent music school was necessary ("Zeneiskolánk," 1929, pp. 1–2). Thanks mostly in part to the effective organisational work of János Íllovszky, member of the capital city Municipalities' Committee and honorary president of the association, the Bihari music school opened its doors in September 1929. The intercession of such a high ranking Budapest official helped the institution find a location and financial credit. The first year saw one hundred and sixty individuals apply to the music school, with a teaching staff of sixteen, though only one was of Gypsy decent ("Megnyílt a Bihari zeneiskola," 1929, pp. 3–4). The Bihari music school ensured education for both adults and children for one or two hours a week. Courses on music theory and instruments were part of the curriculum and a low tuition was asked from the students ("Felhívás," 1929, p. 1). A few months after teaching began though, difficulties arose, with students falling be-

hind on paying their tuition. Therefore, the school had to dismiss students who owed tuition ("A Bihari zeneiskola," 1930, p. 6). Running the Bihari music school required significant effort from the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association, and the following year the general meeting had to be postponed in order that the amount allocated to it be given to the institution (Hajnáczky, 2019, p. 37). Despite the difficulties, the local group in Pápa organised the celebration of Hungarian song and used the income from the event to found the Bihari Music School II where thirty students enrolled ("A pápai helyi csoport II," 1930, pp. 1–2; "Cigányaink estélye a színházban," 1930, p. 3).

5. Internal Conflict, Divisive Factions, Counter Organisations: The Collapse of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association and Dissolution of the Local Groups

In May 1930, the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association organised the festival of Hungarian song at the Ferencváros Sport Club's sports field with the income going to János Íllovszky's Bihari music school, in addition to a proper grave memorial for former president and Gypsy first violinist Béla Radics. Press reports stated that the most famous Gypsy first violinists were to lead a performance of almost one thousand Gypsy musicians ("A magyar nóta ünnepe," 1930, p. 11; "Ezer cigány—Százegy magyar nóta," 1930, p. 2; "Ezer muzsikus cigány hangversenye Radics Béla síremlékére," 1930, p. 9). There was great interest surrounding the event, twenty-two thousand spectators participated and it was attended by many influential and famous individuals ("Huszonkétezer néző a magyar nótaünnepén," 1930, p. 9).

The audience saw the festival of Hungarian song as a great success, however just as great was the internal division it caused in the background within the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association. The event's chief organiser was the honorary president and founder of the music school, János Ilovszky, who the association's president Károly Bura accused of embezzlement. It later came to light that the reasons for the accusation was Károly Bura's name simply being listed among the rest of the first violinists on the event poster and not in a distinguished place and in bold lettering. This misunderstanding spiralled into a rivalry that became apparent at the next general meeting. The association broke into two factions, the opposition demanding the dismissal of the slandering president Bura, who stopped the meeting and left in a fury, and resigned only to rescind his own resignation the next day ("A magyar nótaünnep," 1930, p. 15; "Bura Károly lemondott," 1930, p. 7). Police presence became necessary at the meetings which, due to the vehemence of the quarrels, had to be adjourned again and again ("Botrányos cigánygyűlés Budapesten," 1930, p. 13; "Bura Károly faképnél hagyta az elnökválasztó cigánygyűlést," 1930, p. 6).

The Ministry of the Interior put an end to the internal conflicts of the association. An extraordinary general meeting was convened in August 1930, presided over by a ministerial secretary and at which the police ensured order. The event was accompanied by great press scrutiny. First to speak was the president of the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association, who repeated his accusation against János Ilovszky and followed this statement by demanding an audit, despite the fact that the matter had been clarified earlier: An accounting of the funds raised by Ilovszky had shown them to have been deposited for months in the account of Károly Bura. The accused János Ilovszky gave the following indignant reply:

> We organised the festival of song…to raise a grave memorial to Radics, to be able to provide help to the Bihari music school, and…he began [this] vehement persecution of me, and then when I wanted to reveal the situation he would not let me speak. Is this what I deserve for my selfless and honest work?...I worked with my shirtsleeves rolled up for a month for the Gypsies and the hands I reached out in charity were battered with mud and stones. On St. Stephen's Day we wanted to organise another festival of song in which all those from abroad could participate. This second festival of song would have been a moral success and, what is more, a serious financial one. ("A cigányzenészek kibuktatták Bura Károlyt az elnöki székből," 1930, p. 56)

After the audience heard this speech, they gave voice to their dissatisfaction against Károlx Bura. They accused him of not standing up for Gypsy interests on several occasions, such as the wrongful dismissal of a lawyer for the association in order to increase his own authority. In light of this, the ministerial secretary presiding over the meeting pushed for a vote of non-confidence. The votes were decidedly in favour of dismissing Károly Bura. The newly elected president then asked János Ilovszky to continue to fill the post of honorary president ("A cigányzenészek kibuktatták Bura Károlyt az elnöki székből," 1930, pp. 56–57).

During this time the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association decided to take numerous measures, amongst which was a plan to solve the question of insurance for sick and unemployable members. They wanted to make it more reliable than other initiatives, as their plan was to include the National Social Security Institute ("Magyari Imre lett a Cigányzenészek Szövetségének elnöke," 1932, p. 11). Furthermore, they wanted to settle contracts between hospitality institutions and Gypsy orchestras for the benefit and interest of both ("A Magyar Cigányzenészek Országos Egyesülete szakmáink tagjaihoz," 1930, p. 3). They were also able to achieve the cancellation of the work permits of those Gypsies who did not pay their membership fees ("Cigányzenészek működési engedélye," 1931,

p. 4). The organisation once again sent emissaries to the Ministry of the Interior to ask that coffee houses and restaurants be made to provide Gypsy performances at least half of the time and that those hospitality institutions employing Gypsy orchestras receive a tax benefit ("Cigányzenészek a cigányzenéért," 1932, p. 7). The Ministry did not accept the proposal, though it did help create better conditions for Gypsy musicians indirectly through the modification of circular decree number 137.000/1926. This was thought necessary due to misunderstandings concerning regional authority. The decree prescribed work permits from the legal authorities in towns with proper councils and in cities. However, Ministry of the Interior circular decree number 118,494/1932 prescribed that in towns with a population exceeding ten thousand, musical performances were permitted by the legal authorities, which provided greater opportunities for professional musicians (Hajnáczky, 2019, pp. 186–187). The restriction of jazz music was again on the agenda and this time an attempt was made to create an alliance with the chief police captaincy ("A Magyar Cigányzenész Szövetség az idegen zenészek ellen," 1932, p. 7; "A pusztuló magyar cigányság a főkapitány segítségét kéri," 1933, p. 5). The Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association made enemies in the radio in the interest of Gypsy musicians, feeling that the honorarium paid for the broadcasts from coffee houses was too little; there were locations where they refused to play in protest, but the radio removed Gypsy music from its broadcasting schedule in response ("A cigányzenészek be akarják szüntetni a kávéházból," 1932, p. 9; "A cigányzenészek és a rádió között kiélesedett a harc," 1932, p. 5)

The Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association had noticeably lost much of its capability to represent Gypsy musicians' interests. Internal conflicts, uncollectible membership fees, the cessation of local groups all meant the end of the organisation. Previous measures taken by the Gypsy musicians were not able to change this and the support of the authorities also dissipated. Officially the Ministry of the Interior proclaimed the dissolution of the association and its local groups with circular decree number 145.799/1933. It stated:

> The local authority called to supervise together with the president of the association do ascertain…that the association has been unable to operate according to its statutes for a longer period of time, it has no offices, the members are scattered and inactive and thus a general meeting is unable to resolve the dissolution of the association. (Pomogyi, 1995, p. 177)

Following the issuing of the decree the various authorities dissolved the local groups, the majority of which had no assets (Hajnáczky, 2019, p. 44; Kereskényiné Cseh, 2008, p. 128) or had not been in operation for several years (Hajnáczky, 2019, p. 44; Pomogyi, 1995, p. 177). Following the dissolution of the association the Ministry of the Interior modified decree number 137.00/1926, which hitherto prescribed that the approval of the association was necessary in order to issue a work permit to a Gypsy musician. Since this modification took place, the same work permit was issued under the following conditions:

> The work permit to be issued to the Gypsy musician does not depend on any proof of associative membership, and his musical knowledge is to be vouched for by the Gypsy first violinist employing him, or the written certification of two Gypsy musicians having work permits. ("A Magyar Cigányzenészek Országos Egyesületének feloszlatásával kapcsolatban," 1934, p. 488)

6. Conclusion

The early twentieth century found the Gypsy musicians struggling with serious existential challenges and drifting towards the fringes of society. In 1918, they founded the Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' National Association in order to further their "material, moral and intellectual" (Nagy, 2011, p. 248) interests with unified strength. During the interwar years, the association was characterised by constant conflict, at first with its competitors for the musical stage, later warping into fights for leadership and then, finally, between members and along the fault lines and layers of Gypsy music society. In these decades the target of attack became more and more the Gypsy musicians themselves, and the organisation served as the root of the conflicts, consumed in itself and unable to fulfil its mandate. The authorities played a decisive role in the battle of the Gypsy musicians, most of the time acting in support of the latter, trying to smooth over the internal tensions of the movement.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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Article

Political Activity of Kwiek 'Dynasty' in the Second Polish Republic in the Years 1935–1939

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Abstract
The coronation of King Janusz Kwiek, which took place in 1937, was meant to integrate the Romani elite in the interwar sociopolitical life of Poland. Unfortunately, the creation of a homogeneous and centralized Romani representation through the royal institution ended in a fiasco. Firstly, the centralized model of power was in conflict with the Romani nomadic system in Poland, which was based on a multitude of leaders, including women whose power resulted from hierarchical dependence. Secondly, it quickly became clear that from the mid-1920s onward, when the presence of Polish Romani in mainstream social life crystallized, there has been no bottom–up social initiatives promoting King Janusz Kwiek's attempts towards sociopolitical reform. Therefore, the Romani population was not prepared for changes and no effective state coercive measures were created to enforce the introduction of the postulated changes. Thus, although the activities of both actors—the Kwieks and the Polish authorities—often had a facade character, consisting in more or less weak 'governance' of the Romani minority, their joint activity favored the political maturation of the Romani elite and its comprehensive development. This was despite of the many shortcomings of the close relationship between the Romani people and the Polish administration, as a result from the dictatorial rule in Poland at the time.

Keywords
Gypsies; integration; minorities; Poland; Roma

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1. Introduction

Current research on the history of the Gypsies and their elite in interwar Poland is quantitatively modest (Ficowski, 1985, pp. 70–92; Gontarek, 2016, 2017a, 2017b; see also Barany, 2002, pp. 102, 257). Gypsy issues, as taken up in the context of historical sciences, have not been very popular, mainly because there is an unspoken belief among Polish historians that there are no sources to study this minority. While this is an erroneous view, it has nevertheless been a view shared, for many years, by most of the historical community, which led to a de facto exclusion of this minority group from historical research. There are three arguments for this exclusion: 1) the oral nature of the Gypsy culture and the nomadic lifestyle, which entails 2) the lack of written sources, and 3) the small percentage of Gypsies living in the Second Polish Republic (1918–1939, about 30,000–40,000). The latter is, however, unclear, due to the lack of official state data.

As a consequence, there has not been any scientific work on the basis of historical sciences that would comprehensively discuss the basic problematics of the Gypsy population in the Second Polish Republic, i.e., 1) the number of its members, 2) its political, social, economic, and cultural life, 3) the Polish state's policy towards the Gypsy population, 4) the Polish–Gypsy relations, and 5) anti-Gypsy attitudes, among others. It can be safely said that the history of Gypsies in the Second Polish Republic has thus far been almost a terra incognita. Therefore, any work on the above topics that presents a specific, well-described problem is valuable in this case.

The issue of the coronation of the Polish Gypsy King is part of the author's research on the Gypsy elite in interwar Poland, and particularly focuses on the analysis of its

political activity. The coronation was the most important act for the central Gypsy power that was taking shape in the 1930s, which had far-reaching effects for the entire community. The main purpose of this work is to answer the question of why such an important event ended in complete failure and what consequences it caused.

It should be clarified that although many separate Gypsy groups lived with their elite in the Polish lands, there is no information in the Polish sources about a different form of Gypsy representation than that created among the Kalderash (subgroup of the Romani people). This is due to the fact that they were numerically dominated by other groups from the second half of the 19th century onward (Ficowski, 1965, pp. 66–71; Gontarek, 2016, pp. 147–148; Kwadrans, 2008, p. 56; Lechowski, 2009, p. 27; about other Gypsy groups in Poland, see Mirga & Mróz, 1994, pp. 107, 119–120). As we will discuss in the article, the kings (part of the Gypsy elite), came from the Kalderash community. They belonged to the Kwiek 'family,' although this belonging should not be understood literally. Many kings had no family connections with the royal Kwiek in spite of adopting the name, treating this procedure as necessary to obtain the respect of Polish Gypsies. For all Gypsies in Poland who recognised the need to have their own king, Kwiek meant almost the same as a king (member of the Kwiek dynasty), who owed proper respect and influence (Gontarek, 2016, p. 149). This royal tradition was derived from the period of the First Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth (15th–18th centuries), and proves that the influx of Kalderash respected the custom of electing a king as guarantee of their power's legitimacy in Poland. It was ridiculed as a relic by the Polish annexationists in the first half of the 19th century (Gontarek, 2018, pp. 254–255; Mróz, 2015).

To better understand the importance of the coronation, it is also necessary to illuminate the general political background of the Second Polish Republic and the attitude of decision-makers towards minorities at the time. The political history of the Second Polish Republic was clearly shaped under the influence of two political currents: the nationalist rule (until 1926) and, after that, the so-called Sanation, which had its roots in the socialist tradition. However, this latter ideological formation underwent a serious and fundamental evolution in the second half of the 1920s: from egalitarianism to authoritarian elitism. The key figure and creator of the Polish version of moderate authoritarianism was the Chief of State and Marshal Józef Piłsudski who, in 1926, successfully organised a coup. After his death in 1935, the Piłsudski basis underwent another ideological transformation—the concept of state consolidation was slowly replaced by the concept of national consolidation, which led, among other things, to a strong discrimination against the Jewish national minority and a strengthening of nationalist tendencies. This ideological turn was confirmed in 1937 (Paruch, 1997; Sioma, 2010, pp. 85–101).

Anti-Gypsy laws were not implemented (as in Germany's Third Reich) during this unfavourable time for minorities, but police authorities, through a vagrancy and begging prohibition act from 1928, initiated an intensified fight against illegal Gypsy encampments, which had not previously been practiced on such a scale. The purpose of police actions was primarily to limit the migratory lifestyle of the Gypsies in Poland. These activities did not carry a racial overtone, but Gypsies began in practice to be discriminated, as a consequence of the increasing police repression (Janicka, 2019, pp. 465–495; Mościcki, 1927, pp. 1285–1288). An expression of these tendencies was, for example, the liquidation operation of illegal camps carried out in the autumn of 1935 throughout the entire Warsaw Province ("Rewizje w obozach cygańskich," 1935, p. 5; see also "Wódź cyganów," 1935, p. 7).

Therefore, the second half of the 1930s in Poland was a period of growth of nationalism, officially promoted by the state organs the Catholic Church, which led, among other things, to the well-studied pogroms against Jews (who constituted about 10% of the total population). This was also due to the fact that hostile nationalist tendencies towards minorities were popular in the Catholic society, which constituted the vast majority, and which succumbed to xenophobic slogans (Chojnowski, 1979; Kijek, Markowski, & Zieliński, 2019). Certainly, in the future, detailed studies are also needed about the impact this situation had on the location of the Gypsy masses residing in Poland, and how Polish–Gypsy relations were then shaped.

Thus, a combination of factors (i.e., political changes towards repression and oppression affecting other groups, such as the Jews or the Polish political opposition, as well as the increase of nationalism and lack of tolerance in Polish society), led to a 'sort out' of the Gypsy cause in the Second Polish Republic, resulting in the coronation of Janusz Kwiek in 1937 as Gypsy king in Poland. It was a top–down and state initiative, consulted with selected, licensed Gypsy representatives, whose goal was to create a uniform and centralised Gypsy authority, subordinate to the government (a reflection of the state's dictatorial practices; Gontarek, 2017a, pp. 72–75).

2. Methodology

This article makes use of the methodology characteristic of historical research. Rejecting the aforementioned arguments of most Polish historians about the lack of sources for studying the history of Gypsies in the Second Polish Republic, it must be admitted, however, that there is a problem with these sources in concerning the interwar period. Firstly, they are scarce compared to sources that provide insight into other minorities. For this study, we prioritize press rather than archival sources, as the former is more available than the latter. Secondly, while some documents about the Gypsy population are represented in the archives, the history of the Gypsy elite is almost exclusively present in press sources, an extremely dispersed material which requires exhaustive and time-consuming queries to find relevant information.

Taking this into consideration, the method of selection in as follows: Firstly, the most important press titles of all political ideologies were reviewed, at the same time diagnosing their method and style of transferring the information about the Gypsies and the Gypsy elite. This allowed an overview of Gypsy narratives at the time. It turned out that government newspapers (especially *Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny* [*IKC*]) not only devoted most of the attention to Gypsy elite, but also set the tone for its discussion, sometimes publishing content about Gypsy representatives. Other non-government newspapers also picked up all this information, rarely creatively developing Gypsy topics. The regional press was also examined, selecting two press titles from each voivodeship (unit of basic territorial division of government administration). The analysis of these materials turned out to be necessary, because the regional press created its relatively autonomous image of the Gypsy representation. This method of selection prevented a selective and exclusionary (and in consequence, untruthful) image of the Gypsy elite. Of course, not all press articles were used—the best press representation was selected.

3. Grassroots Attempts to Build a Central Gypsy Representation: Reunions in Żabie and Rivne

To better understand the circumstances of the formation of the Gypsy representation in Poland in the second half of the 1930s, we should first pay attention to the so-called Eastern Borderlands of the Second Polish Republic, especially their southern part. From the early 1930s, this proved to be the area where the Gypsy cause was internationalised, precisely because several Gypsy communities from the Kalderash group met there—especially in the outskirts of the city of Lviv, where Gypsies coming from the Balkans and Romania made their first stop in Poland (Ślebodziński, 1937, p. 555; see also "Pięciu kandydatów do," 1936, p. 8). They mainly discussed the issue of the emergence of the Gypsy state. A pioneer in discussions was Józef Kwiek, elected king in Katowice in 1934. He was a milkman by profession and, as his daughter, a graduate of a Bucharest junior high school. In Lviv, he managed the Christian Hygienic Dairy ("Król mleczarzem," 1935, p. 6). His adversary to the royal title in the southern Eastern Borderlands was more commonly known as 'Gypsy cresus' from Trutnov (currently Hradec Králové, in Czech Republic). Both of them fought for influence at the Gypsy congress in Żabie (currently Verkhovyna), gathering several thousand Gypsies (Stanisławów voivodeship), which took place in November 1935 ("Cyganie wybierają," 1935, p. 141).

The course of the reunion in Verkhovyna, taking place in an international atmosphere, and the increasing national tendencies among the Gypsies led the Gypsy elite to bring their aspirations and unification projects to an international level. To this end, in 1936, another congress of all world leaders was planned in Rivne (Stanisławów voivodship, nowadays in Ukraine) in order to elect a global Gypsy leader. Organisational matters related to the preparation of the congress were dealt with by Józef Kwiek, president of the Council of Gypsies, and his son Doda. However, it was Basil Kwiek, the former Polish Gypsy king, who was promoted as the leader of Gypsies ("Wódź polskich cyganów konający," 1937, p. 5). The Polish pro-government press emphasised the planned presence of the Brazilian Gypsy representation in the person of Fitulesko Kwiek, as Doda was to marry his daughter—who responded kindly to this initiative. One of the *IKC* columnists, Dr. Stanisław Peterz, also wondered why the Polish Gypsy community chose this city for the congress. Although he could not indicate the reasons behind it, he looked favourably at this Gypsy initiative. Treating this event with due seriousness, almost as the beginning of changes in the Gypsy community, he wrote: "The election of the All-King of Gypsies in Rivne will be the beginning, and Rivne will occupy a prominent place in the history of Gypsies. Will it be bad for Rivne? Certainly not" ("Echa wczorajsze," 1936, p. 2; "Zjazd cygańskich monarchów," 1936, p. 9).

A completely different position on this matter was presented by the administrative authorities (eldership), which probably carried out the political will of the government at which the 'right turn' was taking place at that time, including the strengthening of authoritarianism. Therefore, the eldership's interest was primarily the control of the Gypsy representation and the care of the congress, especially since the venture was accompanied by international interest. It can be assumed that the congress was not at the hand of the Polish political elite, as it was difficult to control the internationalisation process. That is why the governor of Rivne announced that he would allow the congress if it was agreed upon by baron Matejasz Kwiek—Chief of the Gypsies, permanently residing in Warsaw. The latter, however, was unfavourable to the idea, stating that he would not give such consent, which meant that the prospect of the reunion was falling short and the grassroots Gypsy initiative had less chance of success ("Komplikuje się sprawa cyganów w Równem," 1936, p. 8).

The reference to Matejasz indicates that, already at that time, the authorities opted for one, licensed Gypsy leader, and not for many Gypsy leaders as in previous years. This leader was empowered, although informally, to represent all Polish Gypsies. According to authorities, Matejasz was ideal for this function. Implementing settlement projects in the early 1930s, together with the authorities, he took the most loyal position towards the Second Polish Republic among all other Gypsy leaders. He was also an educated person who directly modelled himself after J. Piłsudski and, as a Spaniard, Francisco Franco. Furthermore, he proclaimed himself a commander rather than a Gypsy king, in accordance with the chief tendencies present among Polish political elites (Gontarek, 2017b, p. 17).

In addition to political decisions that blocked the Rivne congress, other events ultimately led to the cancel-

lation of the congress. These included the death of the Brazilian king on his way to Poland. In result, Józef Kwiek announced that, after a month of mourning, from May 1936, he would make efforts to move the entire event to Brest, i.e., to a completely different region, although still in the borderlands of the Second Polish Republic ("Wódź polskich cyganów konający," 1937, p. 5).

Another death also diverted attention from the international Gypsy congress: namely, the death of Matejasz Kwiek who, according to *IKC*, passed away after an unfortunate shooting incident in March 1937. Over 7,000 Gypsy mourners came to his funeral in Warsaw (Ficowski, 1985, p. 100; "O zabójstwo Bazylego Kwieka," 1937, p. 4; "Umarł król Kwiek," 1937, p. 2)

4. The Creation of a Licensed Gypsy Representation: The Coronation of 1937 and a Wave of Criticism

When Matejasz died, an excellent excuse appeared, from the Polish authorities' point of view, for choosing a new Gypsy representative. This was despite the fact that, according to *IKC*, none of his competitors formally recognized Matejasz as having a monopoly over the management of Gypsy affairs in Poland. For this reason, as can be derived from subsequent press releases, it was decided to organise a formal suppression of a Gypsy leader to dispel doubts as to who would be the real leader. Matejasz's death, of course, boosted his competitors. In April 1937, the press reported, for example, about Basil's eagerness to support his candidacy among the Gypsies from Polesie. In Pinsk (now Belarus) he planned to gain their support to the throne. However, his voice was not heard ("Kandydat na króla cyganów," 1937, p. 9). After the death of Matejasz, the circumstances changes, and so did the priorities of the Gypsy leaders. The choice of a new Polish king holding decisive influence on most of the Gypsy community became the key issue, rather than far-reaching goals such constructing the state or the unifying the Gypsies.

Unfortunately, the subsequent course of events concerning the new congress took place under the overwhelming influence of the Warsaw authorities, despite the fact that the idea came, possibly, from the Gypsy elite residing in the capital, which, due to the scale of the venture, had to be in close contact with the administrative authorities. The latter, however, controlled and directed the whole event, preventing spontaneous and democratic actions, and determined in advance the outcome of the election. It was a completely different atmosphere than the one accompanying the preparation for the Rivne Congress, which was an exclusively Gypsy initiative, based on traditional meetings of Gypsies of different citizenship in the Eastern Borderlands. Thus, after some arrangements, in June 1937, *IKC* announced that the Gypsy congress would be held in the capital city, on July 4th. Thanks to a press release just outside the inn, we know who these conversations were with. Unofficially, the newspaper initially stated that Rudolf Kwiek, brother-in-law of the late Matejasz, and Ryszard (Matejasz's son), were serious contenders to the throne. It has also been speculated that this issue had already been decided: Rudolf Kwiek was to receive the crown, and Ryszard the title of Gypsy chief. Another article lists the following candidates from the Kwiek 'family': Basil, Janusz, Michał, Rudolf and Sergius, and indicates that they had the best chance of being representatives of the Polish Gypsies led by Janusz Kwiek ("Kongres cygański," 1937, p. 6; "Kto będzie," 1937," 1937, p. 9).

The election attracted about 9,000 Gypsies from Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary to Warsaw, but it did not occur with the expected seriousness and importance for a Gypsy event. However, on the one hand, it must be noted that the *IKC* called Gypsy leaders "politicians," suggesting that they were responsible for their kinsmen:

> After all, no Balfour has ever acted on the Gypsy issue, as has already happened once on the Jewish question. This is explained by the fact that the Gypsies do not have sufficient authority. To the allegations of a moral nature, Gypsy politicians respond that horse thieves, that is, rustlers and violinists, are the exceptions among the Gypsies, and most deal with decent craftsmanship (cauldron making, blacksmithing, etc.). However, all attempts to stabilize this element have failed….In any case, the Gypsy issue is the most original minority problem in Europe. Will it succeed when this problem is definitely resolved—it's hard to say. ("Kto będzie," 1937, p. 9)

On the other hand, the election result was no secret, thus making it a facade. In fact, Janusz Kwiek was the one who was elected to that position. He also gave an interview, announcing that the royal title would be honorary, while, at the same time, stating that he saw his title as hereditary and intended that, in the future, he would transfer powers to one of his three sons (at the time, his eldest son was 13 years old and the youngest was 4). At the same time, yet completely unnecessary given the circumstances, some Gypsies wanted to use this opportunity and the excitement of the coronation to ask to be allowed the import of bears from Kaunas, Lithuania, which would be used for training. On the one hand, it made the Gypsy elite look like serious partners and, at the other hand, completely incompatible with civilized standards ("Kto będzie," 1937, p. 9; "Po obraniu króla," 1937, p. 12).

At the same time, readers were advised that the entire undertaking would be of a spectacular nature, an entertaining event in the case of the Rivne Congress. Nevertheless, it seems that, along with the decision to move the event to the capital, the discussion about the future of the Gypsy population was trivialised and shallowed, not mentioning the hoax which was the election itself. Emphasizing the entertainment nature of the announced event, *IKC* engaged in the promotion not only of Janusz Kwiek, but of the whole event that was

ticketed. Therefore, it was sometimes too pompous for the viewers to experience the charms of Gypsy folklore. Musical attractions, dance and the coronation itself were announced (the 'ancient royal ceremony'; ("W myśl prastarego," 1937, p. 9), as well as the participation of 27 Gypsy-elector senators and three senators, in addition to the clergy and the Orthodox choir. The choice of Orthodox clergy lays in the Romanian (most likely Orthodox) origin of the Kwiek dynasty (Klimova-Aleksander, 2018, p. 175; see also Kaminski, 1980, pp. 371–372). It was also mentioned that the event would attract the 38,000 Gypsies residing in the Second Polish Republic. The relationship with the ceremony itself was characterised by bordering the ridicule. In the presence of eminent personalities from the governmental sphere, priest Teodorowicz made a speech, ending with the following words:

> We believe that choosing the king will serve to unite Gypsies from around the world and raise social, material, family and moral life to the heights….Be faithful to the Brightest Republic of Poland, which kindly permits the election of the Gypsy King in its capital, thereby showing honour to the entire nation. ("Cyganie wybrali," 1937, p. 8; Ficowski, 1985, pp. 101–102; "Janusz Kwiek został," 1937, p. 6; "W myśl prastarego," 1937, p. 9)

Due to the poorly conducted promotional campaign of the coronation, which merged two seemingly negative orders—political and entertainment-revised—societal reaction to the coronation was very critical, especially from the political opposition. The latter especially referred to the royal title itself, as being tyrannical and an anachronism ("Cyganie zarobią," 1937, p. 3; "Za mało im jednego króla," 1938, p. 2). Furthermore, even the magazine *Naokoło Świata* (Around the World), open to multiculturalism and promoting Gypsy culture in the Second Republic of Poland, could not resist highlighting the miserable artistic program that was presented during the coronation. It also denied that crowds have attended the event:

> One saw…outside the group of senators, a few groups of Gypsies wandering and squirming on the pitch….Everything looked like an inefficient, hastily assembled nativity scene, which could have saved the good performance from the concert part. ("Jak było naprawdę," 1937, p. 19)

Thus, the negative reception of both the authorities and the Warsaw Gypsy elite was signalled in the press ("Jak było naprawdę," 1937, p. 19). Despite the first emerging critical voices after the coronation, *IKC*, on the 7th of July, continuing its bombastic-like style, defended Janusz Kwiek and asserted the importance of the event:

> The wonderful coronation of King Janusz Kwiek will be told by mothers to their children and grandmothers to their grandchildren at bonfires scattered over the rivers of Europe. That is how Poland got entangled in the great legend of this strange nation of eternal vagabonds and the 'sworn' opponents of our civilization….The monarch had a hot time when he was freshly baked, when after a solemn coronation a crowd of domestic and foreign journalists besieged him. ("Cygańskie pokłosie koronacyjne," 1937, pp. 5–6)

At the same time, in the same article, it gently reacted to the criticism, openly noting that not all titles referred to the event with kindness. The newspaper first broadly referred to allegations that all accessories and gadgets, including the crown and coat, came from the Grand Theatre's rental shop and tried to present this fact as an interesting circumstance in which theatre and illusion "mix with life." Summing up the coronation aftermath, and wanting to explain support for the party, it wrote:

> After all, what do we have to accuse the people who arranged for the king's election in Warsaw for? It is better that they have a king than to wander the world without feeling associated with any authority. However, some letters called the 'Gypsy coronation' a chutzpah! Huh! Maybe so! We will not run atilt for Gypsy honour here, but we would like to defend the city theatres. ("Cygańskie pokłosie koronacyjne," 1937, pp. 5–6)

The mood that prevailed at this great coronation Gypsy fair was probably best described by Mr. Wojtkiewicz in Kurjer Warszawski, who wrote: "It was solemn and funny—pleasantly and randomly" ("Cygańskie pokłosie pokoronacyjne," 1937, pp. 5–6).

An additional unfavourable circumstance was the reaction of Western European media to the coronation, which was probably based on the fact that this exotic event created fantastic, untrue stories about the course of the Warsaw election. They have been denied in the Polish press, termed 'uncreated spoof' ("Krwawo-egzotyczne," 1937, p. 10). *IKC* cited, for example, the *Daily Mirror*:

> After a night of terrible struggle in the dense forests that surround Warsaw, 30 000 gypsies smashed their tents here at dawn and gathered at the Military Stadium….6 people were killed, more than 30 wounded, when knives flashed and ambushes from the death spat during the night fight for the Gypsy crown. However, according to a report that appeared in Central News, 10 people were killed during the coronation ceremony. *IKC* summed up: To both correspondents…we are yielded with a sincere heart to go on vacation as soon as possible. Maybe the best somewhere around Tworek [psychiatric institution]. ("Krwawo-egzotyczne," 1937, p. 10)

Importantly, Kalderash Polish Gypsy communities joined the criticism, targeted against the government, Janusz Kwiek, and the idea of coronation. Actually, consciously or unconsciously, they stood up against the government, refusing to organise in such a way the internal life of Gypsies in Poland. The sharpest voice came from the lips of Matejasz's wife, Julia, who, during the interview given on 6th July to the *Morning Express*, described him as "a garbage collector" (Ficowski, 1985, p. 102), and also stated that Rudolf Kwiek, supported by Julia had to succumb to pressure in order not to compromise Gypsies on the eyes of the public. Aside from the speculations that Julia mentioned the pressure of the Polish authorities to withdraw any support for Janusz Kwiek, she also pointed to the machinations during the vote:

> What voices were there! They did not even know how to sign. There was a line and a cross on the pages. Who would know there, whether it meant Janusz Kwiek or something else. ("Dziś w Warszawie," 1937, p. 4; Ficowski, 1985, p. 102)

Rudolf Kwiek's reaction was also very decisive and even radical—in anger, he planned to see what was organised in 1936 by Polish nationalists, committing anti-Semitic riots in the city of Myślenice ("Marsz 14 tys," 1937, p. 10).

The wave of criticism led to the fact that the newly elected king himself was, above all, ridiculed. To defend his own name, he hired the renowned Hofmokl-Ostrowski office to fight against the insinuations and accusations that had appeared. Although he informed the *IKC* himself, he was already far removed from the election, drawing up a kind of catalogue of disputed issues (i.e., harming the Gypsy opposition with Rudolf at the forefront, and the conflict with Julia Kwiek, who accused the king of threatening her with death and financial embezzlement over the distribution of income from the show) ("Kancelaria," 1937, p. 8; "Król cyganów zapowiada," 1937, p. 9; "Nowy król Janusz," 1937, p. 9).

The negative attitude of the Catholic Church had a decisive influence on the distance of power from the Gypsy coronation, as well as on the abandonment of the Gypsy issue, understood as part of the Sanation's concept of national consolidation. The authorities had to take his opinion into consideration because Poland was a Catholic country. Church hierarchies criticized participation in the event given the representation of the Orthodox clergy. This opinion, of course, also directly reviewed the recent zeal of the authorities to conduct such events The Catholic Press Agency issued a press release expressing its surprise that the Orthodox clergy took the matter seriously and arrived in liturgical vestments for the event, sacrificing the theatrical crown: "Because it is hard to suppose that he consciously committed profanation of the Christian religious rite to the delight of the ungodly" ("Koronacja," 1937, p. 6). It was a very harsh judgment, and it concerned the clergy, the central authority and the Gypsies in equal degree, as the Catholic clergy refused the Gypsies the right to sincerely profess the Orthodox faith, which proved the ignorance of the Catholic hierarchy ("Koronacja," 1937, p. 6). The position of the Catholic clergy is even more glaring because, in the second half of the 1930s, reports about the funerals of Kwiek appeared from time to time in the press, emphasising the fact that the conductors were headed by Catholic priests, a matter which did not cause any sensation ("Cygański pogrzeb w Bydgoszczy," 1938, p. 13; "Niezwykły pogrzeb," 1937, p. 9).

The official abandonment of the Gypsy cause by the authorities after the coronation fiasco manifested itself above all in scant information about it in the pro-government press, and as such, information about the subsequent activity of Kwiek is incomplete and certainly more modest than in comparison to previous years. Ficowski (1985, p. 103) signalled that the atmosphere that had prevailed in the final two years of the Second Polish Republic in the circles of the Kwiek clan was full of quarrels and disputes. He claimed that Gypsy leaders focused only on the fight for primacy over Polish Gypsies. In this way, the entire political project of 'ordering Gypsy life' was liquidated. Janusz Kwiek clashed with his two main opponents: Rudolf and Basil Kwiek. Their actions aimed at undermining the legality and legitimacy of the coronation. None showed any interest in the project to unite the Gypsy population and, even less so, in the idea of building their own state.

An in-depth query in the press materials showed that this was particularly the case in the first months after the coronation, up until autumn 1937. At that time, the anti-Janusz Kwiek opposition was extremely active in trying to regain influence, affected by the coronation project. Rudolf Kwiek, to strengthen his position, declared himself "the prime minister of a united Gypsy nation" ("Rewolucja wśród cyganów," 1937, p. 5), an expression of open rebellion. The legitimacy of the title would be reflected in new seal, with the inscription 'Rudolf Kwiek—President of the Council of Ministers of the United Gypsy Nation,' which he made for himself. He also conducted a campaign with Basil Kwiek to send emissaries to Gypsy camps to persuade these to declare obedience to the new king. At that time, the Polish Gypsy opposition also cooperated with Baron Stojka, who lived in Slovakia, and who sent a telegram to Janusz Kwiek, demanding that he fold the crown and convene the Supreme Gypsy Council. Because Janusz tried to conceal this message when this case came to light, he discouraged some of the Polish Gypsies ("Rewolucja wśród cyganów," 1937, p. 5).

The opposition, led by Julia Kwiek, also accused Janusz Kwiek of tolerating theft and other dishonesties of members of his community. Julia Kwiek decided to create at home an investigation office to look into the abuse and crime among the Gypsies subjected to Janusz Kwiek (it is worth mentioning that Julia resided in Warsaw in the Wola district at Dworska street, while Janusz Kwiek had his headquarters in 1937 in Grochów, Praga district).

Her activity in the context of the role of women in the Gypsy community is very interesting, and certainly requires in-depth queries in press materials. Although her leading activity as a Gypsy woman, Julia Kwiek was eloquent and unique on the eyes of the Polish at the time. She made mistakes in the fight against Janusz Kwiek because she began to draw ordinary members of the Gypsy community into the power struggle, dividing them into hostile factions. By attacking Janusz Kwiek and his Gypsies in this way, she wanted to direct the attention of the police to groups within Janusz Kwiek's sphere of influence, weakening his income from tributes and taxes derived from them, which he collected during regular Gypsy gatherings ("Cygańskie biuro," 1937, p. 7). The problem of unfair cooperation of Gypsy elites with police authorities, including paid agents, was raised by Ficowski (1985, p. 105), calling Janusz Kwiek a "pet of the Sanation police." The Kwieks' agents' work for the police was so strongly present in the Polish consciousness that one of the Polish newspapers published in New York during the war, describing the wartime fate of the King of Lviv, Stefan Kwiek, discussed his work for the investigating office in Lviv. The problem of cooperation arose because investigative offices, unable to control the nomadic way of life of Gypsies in Poland, tried to control this minority by various agent methods, unfortunately disintegrating it at the same time ("Losy polskich cyganów," 1943, p. 4).

In addition, during this period, Basil, who had a strong influence on the Eastern Borderlands, declared in Lutsk that Janusz Kwiek did not even have the right to bear the name Kwiek, because he had Greek citizenship. Basil Kwiek also announced a verification action aimed at separating the real Kwieks from those who had such a name illegally, and announced Basil's efforts to annul the coronation to state authorities ("Jeszcze jeden Kwiek," 1937, p. 8). All these activities certainly had a destabilizing effect on the Gypsy community, contributing to its even greater atomisation. Therefore, considering the Kwiek's declared prior aspirations of broad unification, the coronation turned out to be counter-effective.

A tangible manifestation of the coronation fiasco of 1937 was a full blockade by the authorities to organise such events in subsequent years. Janusz Kwiek was not allowed to renew the coronation, which the leader planned for the 7th of July 1938. It was to take place in Warsaw's Łazienki Park. It is significant that, in the meantime, Janusz and Rudolf Kwiek came to an agreement. As a 'prime minister,' Rudolf received messages announcing the arrival of delegations from Hungary, Romania and even Belgium. Their alliance was now threatened by the prowling Pomerania pretender, Michał Kwiek, another member of the clan. Rudolf also anointed the Gypsy leader in Poland, announcing that Gypsies should pay tribute to him, not in the capital, but in Pomerania—Gdynia. *IKC* reluctantly presented his efforts, and it resulted in the fact that the leader was not likely to have Polish citizenship.

As mentioned before, against the rightful king collides Michał Kwiek, also claiming to be the king. Not having permission to settle permanently, the self-proclaim king spreads false news that Gypsies would gather at Pomerania to pay him tribute ("Hołd swemu królowi," 1938, p. 8; see also "15 tysięcy Cyganów," 1938, p. 5; "Cyganie zjeżdżają na elekcję," 1938, p. 6; "Rocznica koronacji króla cyganów," 1938, p. 9; "Walka o 'tron' cygański," 1938, p. 8).

So, both Janusz and Michał probably did not understand that the Polish authorities decidedly stop supporting and firming with their authority coronation conventions with a national dimension, resulting in the aforementioned abandonment of the Gypsy question. The organisation of the congress in Brest was refused to Basil, and Michał was also refused a congress in Świeć on Wda (region of Pomerania; "Król cyganów w Świeciu," 1938, p. 8; Król cyganów, Michał Kwiek," 1938, p. 7; "Królowie cygańscy walczą o koronę," 1938, p. 8). The same occurred in 1939, when the prospect of a congress in Łódź appeared. *IKC* said that for this purpose, four Gypsies volunteered to the local township office with a request to designate a large square for the congregation. The officials refused, however, motivating disagreement by the lack of a proper square in the city. They also pointed to the threat to security and order in the event that large numbers of camps would come into the city. Not discouraged, the Gypsies announced that they would go to another centre ("Elekcja króla," 1939, p. 8).

The exception was Płock, where for generations Gypsies had organised conventions. In 1938, with the participation of 200 representatives of Gypsy families, the king of Polish, Hungarian and Romanian Gypsies was elected in the state forests of 'Góra,' near Płock. Paula Kwiek, the new leader, was unrelated to any of the famous Kwieks. The regional press informed that he came to Poland from Germany. His election as Gypsy leader shows how atomised the supremacy of the Gypsy community was at that time. The scale of the fragmented Gypsy leadership was in fact much larger than was shown by the nationwide press, which mainly lived with the clashes of great Gypsy leaders ("Sejm cygański pod Płockiem," 1938, p. 3). Along with the number of regional, lesser kings arriving in 1938–1939, all the wealth of the titles of their courtiers appeared. For example, in 1939 in Vilnius, a certain Jan Kwiek added his title in a false passport under the title "Diplomat of the Gypsy King Kwiek in Poland" ("Kandydat na króla w kryminale," 1939, p. 8).

A year before the outbreak of war, interest in Gypsy affairs and the Kwiek clan became a completely marginal issue. At the time, government and society lived in suspense, watching the development of political events that inevitably aimed at armed conflict. The last note in the pro-government press, which from 1926 set the tone for the Gypsy case, appeared in June 1939, three months before the attack of the Third Reich and the USSR troops on the Polish state, which initiated the outbreak of World War II. It reads as follows:

> The camp in Przemyśl left for the Romanian border. The interior of the 'royal' tent was decorated with expensive tapestries, members of the Kwiek family were carrying themselves well, decorating their hands with wonderful rings. (Królewski obóz cygański," 1939, p. 10)

5. Conclusion

To sum up, the failure related to the coronation fiasco for both Polish and Gypsy political elites was of key importance for the Gypsy issue in Poland. The coronation project, which was supposed to be just an introduction to 'sorting out' the Gypsy issue, collapsed for several reasons. First of all, the undemocratic political conditions that determined the concept of election played a huge role—instead of a real congress and election of the real king, a government candidate was imposed from above, moving the centre of Gypsy life from Eastern Borderlands to Warsaw, contrasting to the location Gypsies themselves. Theoretically, the Polish authorities could enforce the orders of the new king but, quickly, almost a few days after the coronation, realized that its course and its facade character united almost all of them against Warsaw and Kwiek: political opposition, an increasingly nationalist society, and even journalistic circles, unfriendly towards the Gypsies. Some Gypsy leaders also revolted against the coronation fiction, who did not want to change the current model of exercising power by many local kings, leaders and chiefs (who were given different names), and certainly not by one person. For fear of losing their influence, they caused the intensification of often sterile factional fights between themselves. Therefore, the Polish authorities, ashamed of their idea and observing the growing dislike in society towards minorities, abandoned the Gypsy issue altogether, completely marginalizing it, which was ultimately determined by the position of the Catholic Church on the matter.

For the Warsaw Kwieks it was a double defeat. Firstly, the Polish authorities back-off, which had previously given them a relative sense of co-governance of Gypsy affairs since 1926, and, secondly, the idea of unification proved to be counter-effective, leading to chaos and even greater atomisation of local leadership. However, it is difficult to blame the Kwiek family in Warsaw, who was unlucky enough that the process of their maturing to participate in political and public life came at such an unfavourable time as the 1930s. Rather, all their efforts should be appreciated, because they managed to articulate Gypsy demands, in spite of unfavourable conditions. This is their greatest merit. In the end, their efforts led to the existence of the Gypsy representation, although it was not free from infirmities and various weaknesses.

It also relevant to mention that, unfortunately, the coronation also interrupted the naturally ongoing discussion process within the community, mainly around the issues of unification and the state-building, which was demonstrated by the grassroots Gypsy initiative of the Rivne Congress.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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Article

‘The Books to the Illiterate?’: Romani Publishing Activities in the Soviet Union, 1927–1938

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Abstract
As one of the projects of the Soviet cultural revolution, the Gypsy project was notable for its unusual success in creating a new literary language and active book publishing. Among its achievements are both original fiction, textbooks and manuals in various fields of knowledge and technics. For instance, the elementary school was almost fully provided with necessary books in Romani. It is noteworthy that Roma women played an active role in the creation of new literature and proved to be not only translators, but also authors of original works in several genres. As the most hardworking author, N. Pankovo, who was distinguished by incredible productivity, should be noted. This project was regularly supported by the state, which allowed the distribution of books at reasonable prices. This project was stopped in 1938, which overwhelmed the narrow group of writers and activists, though it did not lead to fatal personal repressions against them.

Keywords
book publishing; cultural revolution; Gypsy project; Roma women; language

Issue
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1. Introduction

The 1917 October Revolution in Russia proclaimed a series of slogans, such as ‘The land to the peasants’ and ‘The factories to the workers,’ for example. One more slogan, ‘The Books to the illiterate,’ could be added there as a short formula of the cultural revolution. One of the many ethnic/nationalities-oriented projects the Soviet cultural revolution comprised was a Gypsy one (Pankovo, 1930, pp. 3–4) and many aspects and results of this project have been successfully described and analyzed during the last decades. The main events and persons of the Soviet project (N. Dudarova, A. Germano, N. Pankov, I. Rom-Lebedev, N. Satkievich, etc.) are listed in the Historical Dictionary (Kenrick, 2007). A new approach based on treating Roma as an actor and not as an object of ethnic and cultural constructing appeared too: B. O’Keefe (2013) shows how Soviet Roma used ‘Gypsiness’ as means of advancing themselves in new social and political contexts, playing actively their own roles; an earlier fundamental research by A. Lemon in particular focused on Moscow Theater Romen actors, showing how Roma themselves have negotiated their images in various situations (Lemon, 2000). As for Roma, an idea of imaginary invention or artificial construction of a united ethnic entity (Bogdal, 2018; Malvinni, 2004) is, to some extent, very useful in the interpretation and assessment of some splitting opinions and statements. These approaches are shared in the present article as an instrument for the interpretation of controversial parcels of original documentation concerning editorial and publishing processes of 1927–1938. Sometimes Romani books published in the prewar USSR, before 1938, were first of all accessed as a simple, but hardly effective tool of communist propaganda (Demeter, Bessonov, & Kutenkov, 2000, pp. 206–207). A multidimensional analysis by V. Kalinin and A. Rusakov (2013) shows the Soviet Romani literature as a successful sample of a new national literature. The last author also focused on the Soviet version of the Standard Romani language of 1920–1930s as a unique phenomenon in a socio-cultural context (Rusakov, 2013). Thus, several important aspects of the history and

results of the Soviet Roma cultural project have already been carefully observed and thoroughly studied. This saves us from repeating the well-known provisions and allows us to move on to the details of the organization of the publishing process.

2. Soviet Books in Romani as a Part of the Big Cultural Project

2.1. Peculiarities of the Romani Book Printing Project

2.1.1. When Did the Romani Publication Activities Finish?

Our approach is not a common one, as we start from the very end. This helps to see the final result of the project dealing with the details illustrating the steps of its development. In the USSR, book publishing in the Romani language was stopped in 1938. This decision is poorly documented; for instance, there is a small piece of paper torn from an organizer. This provisional document was found among papers of the late 1930s. An official person, Alexandra P. Ryabinina (1897–1977), the editor-in-chief of the national section of GIKhL/Goslitizdat (a big unified state publishing house), unofficially informed her secretary about the end of the Romani project: "Valya, write him, Goslitizdat will not publish anything in Romani in 1939" (Rom-Lebedev, 1938, p. 59, author's translation; see Figure 1). This note instructs the secretary about what answer should be sent to a Roma person asking about the possibilities to publish his works in the future. This was A. N. Balaban, a student who was studying medicine in the city of Rostov-on-Don (Balaban, 1938, p. 3). The note mentioned above had been written about 18 March 1938, the day when the answer following the chief's note was sent to A. Balaban: "In the Goslitizdat, publications in Gypsy language are terminated" (Rom-Lebedev, 1938, p. 58, author's translation). Unfortunately, no more serious official documents concerning this decision about the end of Romani book printing have been found yet. Is it reasonable to say that such an end was unusual? At that time, some other nationalities' literatures in the USSR were almost fully destroyed; the Romani literature was just stopped: It was a relatively good finish under those conditions.

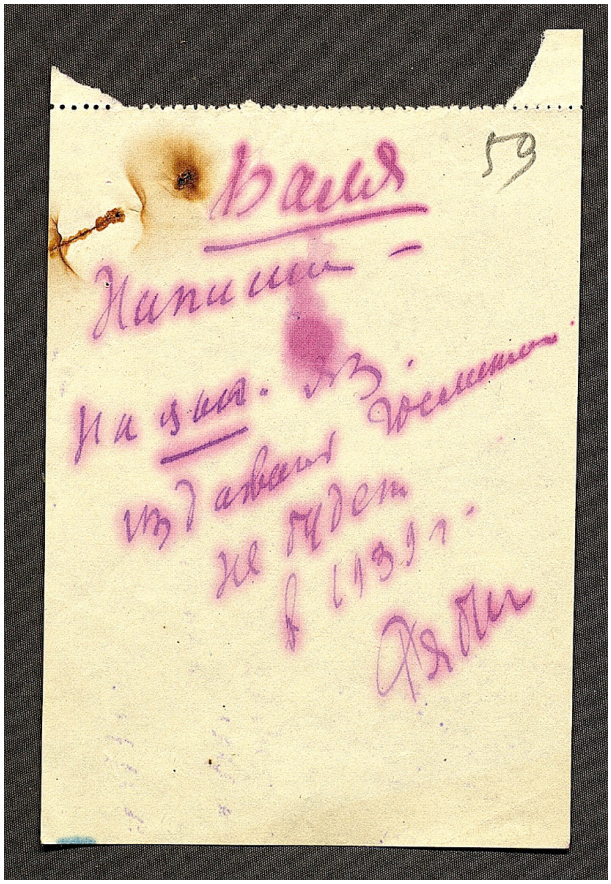

Figure 1. Note signed by A. Ryabinina: No Gypsy language books are planned for 1939 in Goslitizdat publishing house. Source: Rom-Lebedev (1938, p. 59).

Romani writers and other artistic and academic workers linked with the Romani culture development were overwhelmed when the project stopped: "Pankov took it as a personal tragedy" (Kozhanov, 2019, p. 4). His colleagues felt shocked too, and some fell ill. It looked unbelievable. They started to fight for the project continuation very soon. On 19 December 1939, Prof. Maxim Sergievskiy finished a fundamental article where the newly born Romani literature was shown to be a very product of the Soviet government's national and cultural policy and the project was worth to be saved and developed:

> Gypsy fiction literature is, in the true sense of the word, the brainchild of the Great October socialist revolution: it exists only in the USSR, where Gypsies in 1926 got their own alphabet for writing, for the first time in the world, whereas they are remaining to this day without it in all other countries of the world. (Sergievskiy, 1941, p. 1, author's translation)

Many official letters were sent to the highest authorities, e.g., to the Presidium of the Union of Soviet writers (Sergievskiy, 1941, pp. 32–38), though in vain. The plans for 1940 and onwards were obviously not known at that moment, so future decisions could be various. But, as it is known now, the next Romani book appeared in the USSR not earlier than in 1970 (Kantya, 1970); the folklore tales' publication by prof. P. A. Ariste (1904–1990) has resumed only in 1958 (see Smirnova-Seslavinskaya, 2012, p. 194).

2.1.2. Romani Books and Unprecedented Interest in Romani Culture at That Time

The essential difference between a literature created for an ethnic minority and created by an ethnic minority is quite visible. The latter cannot be made at once and by external sources and actors. At the very begin-

ning, the Soviet Gypsy cultural project was not a purely immanent ethnic initiative, as well as it was not an artificial construction at all. It was developed as an enthusiastic breakthrough undertaken by the Roma and non-Roma activists and sympathizers in order to reach many cultural aims at one moment. These aims were partly idealistic and controversial, but sincere. The balance between the original and translated books shows that external and especially communist ideological and esthetic values were dominating, but the language itself saved some internal peculiar values. After 1938, the project did not continue further and many plans were left without ending, though the national theater Romen was saved and became the new center of the cultural growing. Nevertheless, a dozen years of predominantly elementary schooling could create a very thin but strong layer of relatively educated people in/for the small nation. Seemingly a Potemkin village for propaganda purposes, the project could luckily unite very talented Roma and their sympathizers. This narrow circle successfully created a numerous and diverse literature and many other cultural projects. Though this interesting experiment was very fruitful, not very expensive for the state and very fast developed, it was abruptly stopped. The Roma were not the only ones suffering from this decision, as many people were involved in the project.

There are some striking peculiarities of this project which could not be ignored. It is interesting that only 0.04% of the Soviet population were getting such a big cultural assistance for about a decade. Many non-Roma people were involved in it. There were two bibliographies that compiled information about the printed sources in Russia/USSR, containing mentions of Gypsies for the period of 1780–1930 (Germano, 1930) and a more amplified manuscript for the period of 1624–1966 (Satkevich, 1966). They show, for instance, that in the 19th century the most remarkable year was 1899 (10 and 15 items in Germano's and Satkevich's sources respectively) and that in the next year, 1900, Gypsy issues were touched only in two and three publications. The period of our special interest is outstanding in this aspect. Figure 2 shows a very high level of activity concerning Gypsies in published sources. One should remember that every published item of that time was attentively controlled by special censorship institutions, like Glavlit for books and periodicals, and Glavrepertkom for any text performed on stage. In this context, such an exceptional attention of the media toward Gypsies should be officially approved and ruled. Something undesirable was just invisible for the media of that time. Why, in particular, did the totally controlled media pay a very special attention toward Gypsy issues in about 1927–1938? There is no answer yet.

Had we no other evidences of the Gypsy project in the USSR, the only picture with the crown of three apices between 1927 and 1937, as seen in Figure 2, makes us think about the reasons for such a noticeable unevenness. Fortunately, we have much more. One can conclude that this particular interest of periodicals is fully coincident with other activities in Roma cultural development in 1925–1938. However, it is difficult to imagine that a very similar peak in the usage frequency of the word *tsygan*, 'Gypsy,' is also discovered in a wider corpus of Russian texts (see Figure 3). Russian National Corpus contains more than 600 million word forms. The graph in Figure 3 shows that during the whole documented period of 1800–2010, the Russian term for Gypsies reached the highest frequency at the beginning of the decade in 1927 (Point 1 in Figure 3). This popularity cannot be explained as the only effect of the total control by the Soviet authorities. Such an interest toward Gypsies was unprecedentedly high at this time for some objective reasons. The highest level of interest is visible in the entire mass of printed sources, including media of the decade 1927–1938. This decade is unique: For two centuries since the 1800s, there hadn't been such a high number of articles and mentions on Roma, as it is shown in data documented and automatically counted in the Russian Corpus (Russian National Corpus, 2019). It means that there were many sympathizers ready to support the Gypsy project everywhere, as well as people with opposing attitudes.

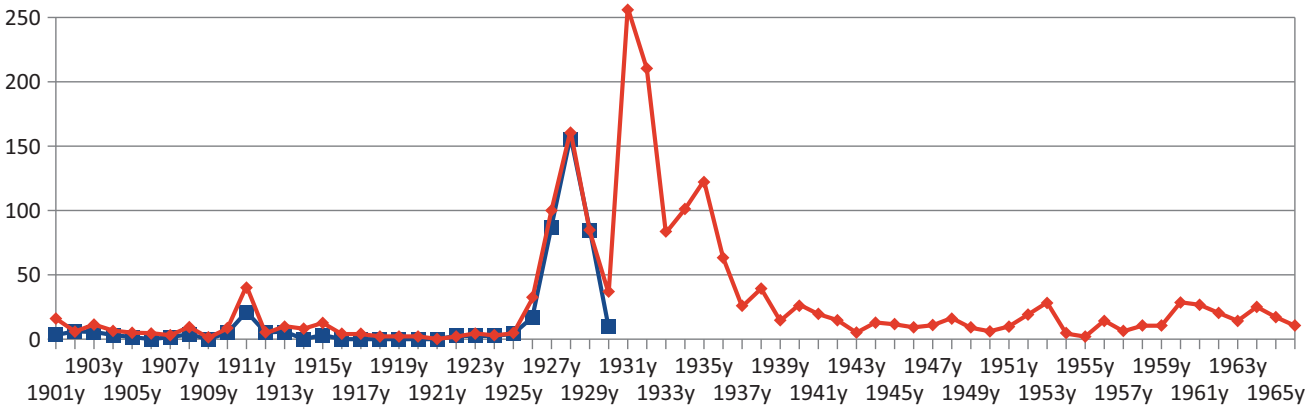

Figure 2. Number of published sources concerning Gypsies in Russia/USSR (1901–1966). Note: The blue line refers to data by A. Germano (1930) and the red line to the data added by N. Satkevich (1966).

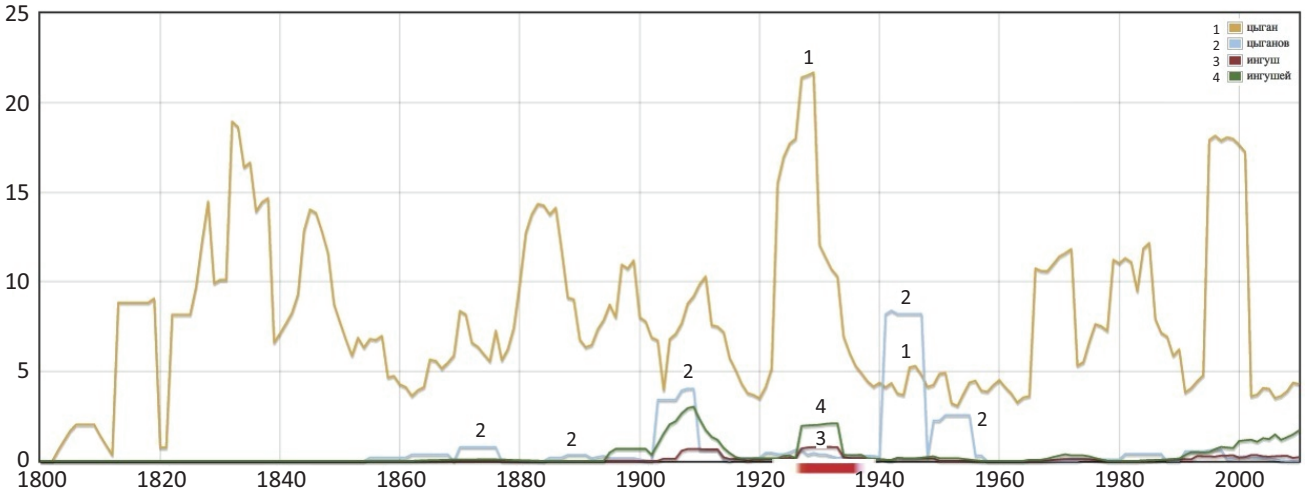

Figure 3. The number of usage per year of *tsygan* 'Gypsy,' *tsygan'ey* 'Gypsies, a rare form of gen. pl.,' *ingush* 'Ingush,' *ingushey* 'Ingush, a form of gen. pl.' in the Russian National Corpus (1800–2010). Notes: The period of 1925–1937 is marked bold red. Brown line (1) represents the usage of the form *tsygan* 'a Gypsy'; the blue line (2) the usage of *tsygan'ey* 'Gypsies, a rare form of gen. pl.'; the cherry line (3) the usage of *ingush* 'an Ingush'; and the green line (4) the *ingushey* 'Ingush, a form of gen. pl.'

These two ethnic groups are compared on the graph because their numbers, according to the 1926 census, were approximately equal: about 61,000 Gypsies and about 75,000 Ingush (Kerzhentsev, 1926). The term 'Gypsies' is at least ten times more usable than 'Ingush' in printed sources of the searched decade.

Romani and Ingush printed production can be compared too. Comparing Ingush and Romani literature, based on the data of the bibliographic reference (Mal'sagov, 1933) and our calculations for Romani literature, we can find a significant difference. The Ingush have no more than 25% of translations; Romani publications were mostly translated from Russian. In Ingush, 97 items are described (including articles and poems counted separately, not only books and brochures), and more than half of the total recorded items were printed during the period 1923–1933. In the second case (Gypsies), book publishing only began in 1927, nevertheless at least 110 books (more than 5800 pages) have already been published in Romani in 1927–1933. It is worth underlining that 21 of the items were fiction and books for children. This demonstrates special attention to the development of Romani book publishing and literature. This particular comparison shows a very high level of affirmative action (Martin, 2001) toward Gypsies in this aspect.

3. Soviet Romani Books as Main Evidences

3.1. Quality of the Sources

3.1.1. Why the Books are More Important than Other Evidences of the Gypsy Project

There were Gypsy schools in Moscow and in other places from the end of 1925 (Dudarova, 1927, p. 15). Unfortunately, those schools were closed in 1938, and papers of their activities are hardly saved in archives. There were Romani organizations in many places, and most of their documents have not been fully saved and are hardly accessible now. On the contrary, the Romani books of that time have been saved better. There are two collections of Romani books in the Russian State Library (Moscow, Khimki) and in the National Library of Russia (Saint Petersburg). The latter is digitalized and accessible on the website Fenno-Ugrica Etusivu (2017).

Thus, printed Romani books are material witnesses and touchable results of that project. By studying them, we can judge their repertoire, language development, quality of paper, print and book bindings, etc. Nevertheless, our data are not absolutely full and accurate. There are some books known from catalogues and announcements which have not been found in libraries yet. There are no traces of Romani posters also printed at that time. Thus, any of our conclusions are relatively reliable, though we still hope for some additional findings.

A few additional words about the insufficiency of sources will not be useless. Russian authors involved in some Romani publishing and cultural projects sometimes gave no information about them. In the biography of Zinaida Kokorina (Smelkova, 2016), the first Soviet woman graduating from a military aircraft school, there is no mention about the book by Z. Kokorina about women's military schooling translated into Romani by M. N. Lebedeva (Kokorina, 1932). Zosima Pavlovich Zlobin, a teacher of so-called biomechanics (invented by V. Meyerhold) in the theater studio Romen (Rom-Lebedev, 1990, pp. 169–172), did not mention anything in his autobiography but the "many theater schools in Moscow" where he taught (Zlobin, 1935, pp. 1–2, author's translation). The painter Vasiliy Vatagin

(1883/84–1969) did not give any information about a Romani version (Vatagin, 1936) of his book for children *Big and Small Animals* (Vatagin, 2017, p. 337). Many other people involved in the Romani project have not left any notes about it.

3.1.2. Archive Sources

More serious problems are detected in archives. The history of Romani publications has generally very poor documentation for the more productive time of the first five-year plan period (1928–1932). From the second five-year plan period, the papers in the archive RGALi have been saved relatively better. The next problem is a result of wrong recognition of languages. A Georgian song about the sobbing Varvara quite accurately written in Russian Cyrillic is described as a Gypsy song (Stikhotvoreniye, n.d., p. 2). Another type of mistakes occurs more often: Manuscripts in other languages are discovered between Romani ones. It does not look like an ordinary confusion; somebody hid some texts of temporarily 'undesirable' authors among Romani materials. There are two translations described identically: for the novel *The Stationmaster*, by A. Pushkin and translated into Romani by N. Pankov (Pushkin, 1937a); the second text is not in Romani, it is a translation of the same novel into a Turkic language using the unified Latin alphabet of 1930s (Pushkin, 1936). The next problem are the gaps in files, e.g., no Romani texts found among poems translated by Arkadiy Yakovlevich Kots (1872–1943), the famous author of the Russian version of the proletarian anthem *International*, and other translators, although Romani poems by A. Germano in Russian translation are specified in the description of this archive item (Kots, 1938). These losses are extremely discouraging.

3.2. Language and Writers

3.2.1. Choice of the Basic Dialect as a Political Decision

From 1927 onwards, new literature started to be published in the North Russian dialect of Romani. Only one dialect was considered to be a base of the standard language. The Soviet linguists dealing with the Romani were keen on accepting a very simple dialectal structure including only two groups of dialects, Northern and Southern (Demeter & Chernykh, 2018, pp. 19, 161). And finally, as a result of exhausting efforts of a very small group, around 260 books were published in a very homogeneous standard language during about a decade. The strategy of editing either regional materials sent to the Moscow Romani journals or original fiction texts before publication was not researched yet. The general principle was officially declared: "There are dialects and varieties" but there must be "a unified printed language for a given nationality" (Gasilov, 1928, p. 14, author's translation). For example, the Ukrainian and Belarusian standard languages are hardly understandable to many school children in Russia, but following the instructive letter Number 18, December 30, 1927, the Ukrainian and Belarusian population should be taught in the languages of the respective republics (Gasilov, 1928, pp. 249–251). Soviet nationalities' policy used to generally focus on "constructing ethnicity" (Shadt, 2002, p. 226). Roma were not an exception in this aspect. It is very significant that published Soviet Romani texts have totally ignored genuine ethnonyms at the indication of various Romani subgroups like Kelderarya, Lovarya, Servurya, Ursarya, etc., as one can conclude by analyzing data of Romani corpus (Kozhanov, 2015). The problem of dialectal split, ignored by educators and creators of this standard language, even between very similar idioms, happened to be crucial for successful schooling under the conditions of total illiteracy. Thus, a school for Gypsy children near Smolensk (in the village of Serebryanka) received Romani textbooks from Moscow, but there was no one to organize educational work with them on a regular basis; there were no specialists with the appropriate qualification and experience. The expert concluded: "The educational and methodical level is unsatisfactory. If there are Romani textbooks for the first, second, third and second years of study, the teaching is in Russian" (Gerasimov, 1932, p. 17, author's translation). The reasons for this are understandable: In this case, inter-dialect gap is quite serious for almost illiterate people and demand special preparation of a teaching person.

3.2.2. Why is the Border between Original and Translated Books not Fully Clear?

About ten books were either rewritten, shortened, or supplemented by translators. There were various reasons for it. Some special technical and scientific terms did not exist yet, and the translator made a shortened version, e.g., an instructive book on tin works (Leontovich, 1930) was reduced by translator N. Pankovo from 110 pages to 32 pages (Leontovicho, 1932). On the contrary, a book for children about book printing technology (Zhytkovo, 1932) has the translator's addition useful for teaching Romani workers-correspondents (*rabkory*—non-professional correspondents) who should inform media about success or criticize poor management and technology at their workplaces. Criticism was very popular everywhere as a means to get to a better level in work and life.

Romani writers and poets worked extremely hard, and it is worth to remember that there were a lot of creative young Roma who enthusiastically wanted to join artistic ranks in order to take part in the national culture building and development. That was a very unusual time, full of new opportunities for young Roma. Some of them became authors of books later (Demeter-Charskaya, 1998), but their desire to be writers had already got support at that time. In an unsigned review for the translation of *The Song about Stalin* (by Maksym Ryl'sky) made by Olga Demeter-Charskaya (1915–2016)

into Soviet standard Romani, dated 23 February 1938, the unknown person (probably A. Germano) underlined that the translator was a talented person, and it was necessary to translate not from the intermediate Russian translation, but from the Ukrainian original (Rom-Lebedev, 1938, p. 2). The process of teaching new writers and poets was very popular and it was the aim of many amateurs' circles in industrial plants, farms, army units, etc. On the other hand, intermediate Russian translations could serve as a model for national versions of the most popular anthems. The *International* translated by A. Germano and M. Bezl'udsko (Germano & Bezl'udsko, 1932, p. 1), as well as the anthem of the *Comintern* was translated into many languages of the peoples of the USSR, including Romani, from the Russian translation by Ilya Frenkel, not from the German original (Pankova, 1932, p. 21).

3.2.3. The Collective Authorship as a Socialist Ideal

The new Romani literature was developing under the same conditions as other national literatures in the USSR. The slogan of collectivism found its application in the artistic work and creativity. Thus, the resolution on the Report of the Nationalities Sector ONTI (Unified State Scientifical and Technical Books Publishers) by comrade Shapiro declared on December 19, 1931: "5. The Sector's orientation to the compilation of the original book by brigades of the authors…is right" (Protokoly, 1938, p. 1, author's translation). Collective literary works in Romani compiled and edited by A. Germano illustrate this trend (Germano, 1931, 1934). This sometimes led to neglecting individual authorship. The names of translators in journals and even books are often missing, as well as the names of designers and illustrators. The editors regularly appeared in Romani books from 1932.

In principle, an individual authorship as a concept contradicts, to some extent, the highest degree of collectivism. Though the reasons are not fully clear, it must be significant. A review of the new poems collection by A. Germano was written by A. Svetlovo (he had a very specific handwriting) and signed by A. Taranov (Rom-Lebedev, 1938, p. 9). The way of editing similar to co-authorship was usually practiced by A. Germano, who inserted several politically correct 2–4 lines long amendments in the manuscript by Mikhail Il'insky (Rom-Lebedev, 1936, p. 82). All the editor's addenda were accepted by M. Il'insky, as seen in the printed book (Il'insko & Rom-Lebedev, 1938).

3.2.4. The Path to Romani Literature

The new literature was created by people from various backgrounds. Writing was a profession that did not previously exist for Romani. They started to work professionally for different reasons and entered into the literature in various ways. For instance, Michail Bezl'udskiy had planned a military career as a frontier officer, but for reasons of weak health he had retired. Later, he published a curious article about his path to literature work. This was a popular topic in fiction of that time. For example, Isaak Babel published his short novel *My First Fee* in 1928. In the same year, M. Bezl'udskiy was in the (famous in prison folklore) Moscow Taganka prison under investigation and later served his sentenced term in the experimental colony of Lianozovo, near Moscow. He had the opportunity and strong intention of attending a literary circle there. This form of cultural development of workers was very popular then. There, he was taught to write poetry and prose fiction (Bezl'udsko, 1932, pp. 22–23). It is quite natural to suspect this story to be just fiction. Two popular motives of that time were combined in one article: someone's path to the literature and the so-called 'reforgement' (re-education of criminal persons). In the Romani journal, this article might have been ordered by the editorial board to the author in connection with the theme of reforging prisoners into builders of a new society. The next year, 1933, 36 Soviet writers visited the White Sea-Baltic Canal, a great gulag construction. Nevertheless, M. Bezl'udskiy's story occurred to be true. From August 28, 1928 to November 7, 1929, at least 10 articles signed by M. Bezl'udskiy or M. Bez-L'udskiy appeared in the newspaper of the Taganka prisoners symbolically titled as *Heading the working community* (Bezl'udskiy, 1928, p. 6, 1929, p. 2). Some of very productive Romani authors were not Roma by origin, and others developed their native language ability relatively late.

3.3. Quantity of Romani Books and the State Plan

3.3.1. Publication of Romani Books by Year

Why is it reasonable to conclude that the Romani culture renaissance was carefully planned by the authorities? Analyzing a chronological distribution of published books, we can notice an essential contrast between two 5-year periods. Figure 4 reflects the process in total numbers of published pages per year. The first five-year plan period (1928–1932) was the time when the quantity of Romani books dynamically increased, whereas the second five-year period (1933–1937) for the publishing Romani book was a time of accelerating decrease.

The first five years, the progress in Romani books' printing is a very remarkable and unusual phenomenon. In the USSR, the early 1930s were the time of the so-called 'paper hunger.' Shortage of everyday bread was followed by a shortage of paper, so for writers this was equally painful and crucial for a normal work process. Under these conditions, Romani literature developed very fast; for instance, the number of books published in 1932 reached the top (57 items), as seen in Figure 4. 1932 was a very remarkable year for national book printing in the USSR. In 1931, Tsentrizdat (Central publishing house of the peoples of the USSR) closed, and so the other state publishers were obliged to publish books in the languages of the people of the USSR, including Romani.

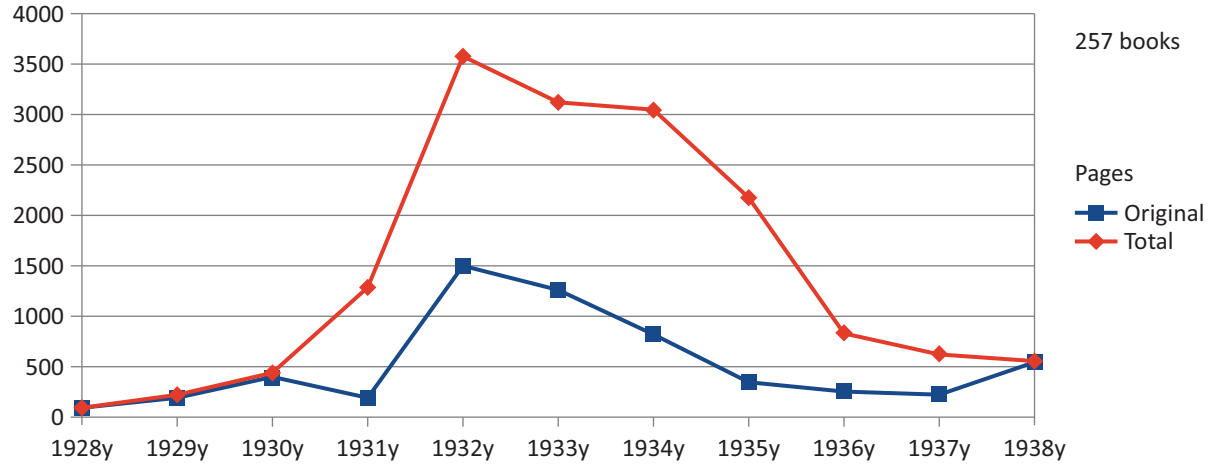

Figure 4. Total number of translated and original Romani books.

In 1938, the last books in Romani were ordered to be printed at the beginning of June, among them the Gypsy–Russian dictionary compiled by A. Barannikov and M. Sergievskiy, the edition which symbolically closed this more than 10-year cultural project (Barannikov & Sergievskiy, 1938). The last items published in Romani in 1938 were obviously planned for the previous (2nd) five-year period. In 1938, when the third five-year period began, 4 fiction books in Romani as being late had already had no special financial support established for ethnic minorities editions more. That is why the prices indicated in the last Romani books are unusually high in our collection, from one to two rubles.

3.3.2. The State Support of Romani Books

By the beginning of 1929, a growing lack of paper provoked closure of some popular journals (Golitsyn, 1990, p. 412); in the meantime, the first Romani books were still distributed for free. This project was standing far from any financial gain planned in advance: For instance, contract Number 1739 (June 20, 1936) between N. Pankovo and the state publishing house GIKhL showed that the translator of the famous poem written by A. Pushkin Gypsies had to get 490 rubles for the manuscript presented until December 15 (Rom-Lebedev, 1938, p. 23). The book had 1000 copies made (Pushkin, 1937b), and when they were sold the profit could only be 250 rubles (one copy costs 0.25 rubles). The next example is more significant: N. Pankovo had to get for the story by A. Pushkin *The Stationmaster*, translated into Romani (about 110–120 pages), 875 rubles according to the contract Number 1568 signed on April 13, 1936 (Rom-Lebedev, 1938, p. 28). In this case, the profit could only be 50 rubles (500 copies by 0.10 rubles each). It is obvious, then, that book production costs were significantly higher. Unfortunately, we have no information about other books. Often contracts specify a twice higher number of planned copies than was finally shown in the issued book. This was a consequence of the severe lack of paper. How this decrease in circulation affected the fee for the translator and the author is unknown.

The state support for ethnic minorities culture was regular and clearly seen in their literatures' development. In 1934, when Maxim Gorky addressed the All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers, he especially declared official position: "I find it necessary to point out that the Soviet literature is not only the literature of the Russian language; this is an all-Union literature" (Gorky, 1953, p. 324, author's translation). Thus, every national minority had opportunity to take part in this very important cultural movement, developing the language and literature. This aspect of internationally-oriented cultural work has a specific name: "The name of the work was language building" (Alpatov, 2000, p. 222). Gypsies could be assessed as a tabula rasa and an ideal object for such a social experimenting. They were almost all illiterate. There was no alphabet for Romani, neither a formal schooling tradition. They were considered to be nomad by the authorities, though in reality the picture comprising the whole scale of Romani ethnic subgroups was more complex and full of contrasts.

3.3.3. The Gender Balance in the Romani Literature and the Language Building Project

As it is broadly known, the Romani traditions and rules were sometimes very restrictive as for the rights and freedoms of Romani women. Nevertheless, it is worth to underline that women were also active in the Romani cultural project, as well as in the new Romani literature in particular. For instance, in 1932, they gave five original and nine translated book in Romani. This means that their activeness and efficiency were comparable to the feminine participation in Russian literature of that time. For example, five books translated into Romani in 1932 were written by Russian women (see Figure 5).

As for the whole period, 1928–1938, the number of books translated into Romani by women (red line) is visibly higher than the number of Romani original books

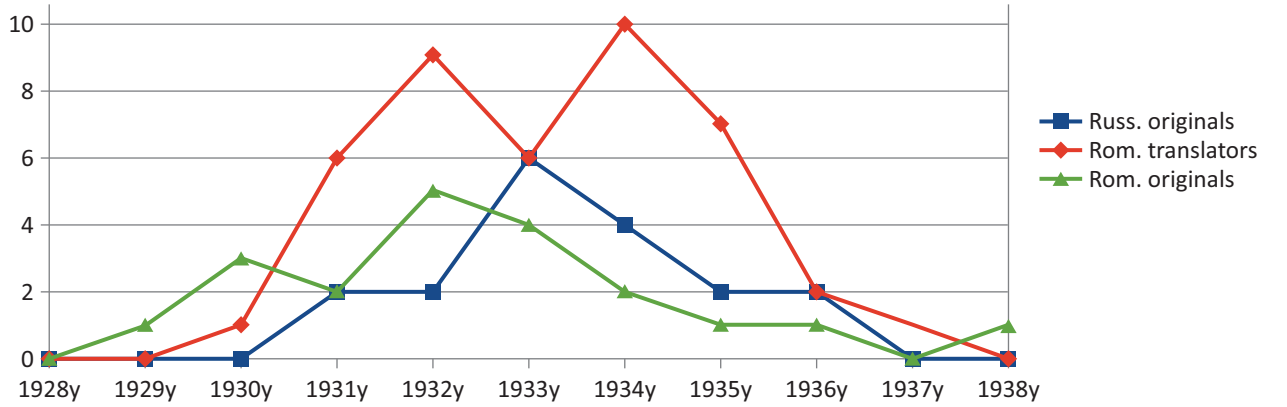

Figure 5. Romani women as translators and authors in 1928–1938.

written by women (green line), and the last number is commeasurable to the number of Russian originals written by women and translated into Romani (the blue line). That means that in literature, Romani women were at least as active as the Russian.

Olga Pankova was a Romani woman, who might have been one of the most productive translators (32 books), following Nikolayo Pankovo (at least 42 translated books). Table 1 shows the number of translated pages by year.

The other woman who translated at least 6 published books was M. N. Lebedeva. Information about her is very insufficient, even in comparison with the incomplete biographical data of many other Romani authors. As one can guess, this was Maria Nikolaevna, died in 1936 (Rom-Lebedev, 1990, p. 158), a very famous singer in the Strel'na Choir and the wife of the choir's head Ivan Grigoryevich. So, it is hardly understandable why her son, the guitar player and Soviet play-writer I. I. Rom-Lebedev, did not leave any mention about the unusual fact that his mother has translated several books. If this is true, she was a unique person who sang romances to the highest society: either to the famous millionaire Ryabushinskiy, or to Grigoriy Rasputin, and after the 1917 revolution she translated the biography of Lenin and many other books, including handbooks on agriculture.

Evdokiya Orlova was a very talented person too. Starting as a singer in a Gypsy choir before the 1917 revolution and only having elementary home schooling, by the early 1930s she had already been the head of a mobile Romani theater and a genuine Romani poet (Orlova, 1933). Many other Romani women of that time and their contributions to the cultural project deserve further studies.

4. Unceasing Struggle for the Project

4.1. Everyday Life and Troubles of Romani Activists

4.1.1. Sources of Frustration

The 1917 Russian revolutions have seriously changed the lives of millions of people. There were many good and bad consequences, though new free national activities were beyond limits from 1917 on. Many national organizations arose everywhere, in cities and towns, in culture and politics. From the very beginning, Roma in Moscow stood far from these initiatives. They felt shocked, because their choirs had lost most of their audience, as well as the people around were getting poorer, and, as a consequence, Romani horse trading businesses were collapsing too. Everything changed simultaneously: new money and prices, new state structures and terminology, new borders, new metrical measures, new town and street names, etc. The new calendar (with latter additions like

Table 1. Two of the most productive translators.

Year	N. Pankovo (pages)	O. Pankova (pages)
1931	161	131
1932	461	411
1933	409	411
1934	475	609
1935	447	515
1936	364	142
1937	17	0
1938	16	0

Note: In some years, Olga Pankova was the most efficient translator into Romani, as the total number of pages translated by her was higher than male translators.

the five-day week established in 1929–1930, then the six-day week till 1940) was a measure aimed against religions, and in the meantime it destroyed leisure services and reduced Roma choirs' incomes too). The famine of 1932–1934 (Eaton, 2004, p. 16) was a very heavy period for Roma, who "were mainly city dwellers" (Eaton, 2004, p. 42). There were a lot of reasons to feel frustrated at that time. Young Roma started to look for new opportunities, and many of them were successful.

4.1.2. The First Steps and Challenges

Only in 1925 did a narrow group of mostly young Romani activists start to organize the All-Russian Union. Its dissolution at the beginning of 1928 did not substantially change the state policy toward Gypsy issues (Marushiakova & Popov, 2008, p. 2). It is worth to add that this was not an exceptional measure against this Romani organization. All public organizations in the USSR were temporarily suspended and inspected in February 1928 (Il'ina, 2000, p. 80). The activists started to look for new organizational formats to gain the state support and were acting further, being interested in many things: political organizations and vocational education for Roma, clubs, collective farms, etc.: "As a result, a few Romani activists worked with pure enthusiasm to develop literary tradition in Romani, to create Romani schools and a new Romani intelligentsia" (Kozhanov, 2019, p. 4).

On the other hand, the period of 1925–1938 was not the Golden Age for Romani activism, as well as for the young Romani literature in particular. Every year and every day they had to demonstrate their social usefulness and political reliability: For instance, on 20 October 1931, A. Germano, as secretary of the Romani Writers' Section of the Moscow Association of Proletarian Writers, officially asked the Tsentrizdat about Gypsy books planned for 1932 (Rom-Lebedev, 1938, p. 66). The answer is unknown, as the Tsentrizdat was reorganized in a few months, and a number of fully prepared manuscripts of Romani translations have never been published and got lost later. At best, the number of printed copies until 1935 went from 5000 planned in contracts to 1000 issued in the reality (Bezl'udskiy, 1932, p. 2; Germano, 1935, pp. 1, 3) and from 1000 to 500 in 1936 and onwards (Rom-Lebedev, 1938).

4.2. The Afterlife of the Closed Project

Romani writers worked extremely hard for years. More than 140 books were translated into Romani by only seven persons. Their letters to A. Ryabinina are full of reasons why they were late delivering manuscripts, and she was often ready to accept their reasons for breaking the terms of contracts (Rom-Lebedev, 1938). The process of their exhausting and long lasting work was stopped, but it did not happen due to political reasons. In comparison with some other groups of writers, Gypsy writers were still living relatively safe and sound and had opportunities to create new works. For comparison, six members of the Union of Soviet writers (the whole regional organization in Novosibirsk) were arrested during the Great Purge time (Papkov, 1997, p. 133). The section of Romani writers in Moscow luckily survived that time and were still active later, after the 1938 mass repression. They had been gathering their regular meetings at least until 25 May 1941, discussing new plans and tasks (Sergievskiy, 1941, pp. 80, 89), inviting new Romani authors and reading their works, for instance, a Communist party member Crimean Rom Yu. B. Dzhaltyrov (Sergievskiy, 1941, p. 70), a Russian Romani girl Shura Merkholenko (Sergievskiy, 1941, p. 72). Previously printed Romani books were still distributed via state mail service by International Book company (Sergievskiy, 1941, p. 109). N. Pankov became a member of the Union of Soviet writers in 1944. Nevertheless, after 1938, no Romani book appeared in the USSR for decades.

5. Conclusion

This cultural project must be considered as a part of the Soviet Cultural Revolution, aimed especially at the development of one so-called 'culturally backward' small nation. During the two first five-year plan periods (1928–1932 and 1933–1937), there were unprecedented achievements reached by a very narrow group of enthusiasts, especially in book publication in Romani. That cultural renaissance has left about 260 Romani books, two journals, and the first Roma national theater which still exists. The project, as it is believed, was thoroughly planned and stopped or rather suspended in 1938. A new educated generation was its natural product. That very fruitful time for Romani culture was a very hard time as for everyday life conditions. The Romani renaissance paradoxically started in the period of food shortage increasing, and reached the highest success at the time of 1932–1934 famine, provoked by the forced collectivization in the agriculture; finally, its closure was chronologically coincident with the Great Purge of 1937–1938. Fortunately, the Romani activists have survived (they were not arrested and shot), although their cultural and social activities were mostly stopped or at least essentially reduced before World War II. The reasons for the stoppage of publications in Romani are not entirely clear. It is important to keep in mind that new Romani books were not planned in 1939. Further plans of the Soviet government concerning the Romani cultural project are not clear due to the lack of official documents. Nevertheless, the statement "Government bans Romani language and culture" from 1938 (Kenrick, 2007. p. XXVI) looks like exaggerated. There was no ban on Romani books and the remains of previous editions were available to buyers anywhere in the USSR. Thus, it would be more correct to talk about a suspension of publications. The outbreak of the war in June 1941 has crucially changed all plans, but it does not mean that the continuation of Romani book publishing was not possible under

better conditions. Otherwise, the fact that the Romani writers section kept looking for young writers even in 1941, despite the third year lasting pause in Romani publications, cannot be understandable. Their contacts with the authorities were positive, and their hopes were reasonably optimistic. No one expected such a long period of coming disasters, which severely affected the whole Roma population. Those Gypsy books which appeared between 1927 and 1938 were little known to the next generations and hardly understandable to them because of now odd topics, ideas and intentions. In general, this is a sad story of success and failure.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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Article

The Kalderash Gypsies of Russia in Industrial Cooperation of the 1920s–1930s

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Abstract
At the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s, in line with the state economic policy of the time, which was aimed at industrialisation and cooperativisation, and also as part of the implementation of measures to promote a settled way of life for nomadic Gypsies, the Kalderash Gypsies became actively involved within cooperatives and started establishing artels (Gypsy production cooperatives). This article analyses the issue of Gypsy artels, their manufacturing activities, the reasons why they flourished, their decline and their subsequent repression. The study is based on documents from the central and regional archives of the Russian Federation. The historical experience of that period was especially important for the Kalderash community—the establishing of artels helped them to adapt to the emerging economic reality of Soviet society. Indeed, during the following decades artel cooperative associations remained the main form of production and economic interaction with enterprises and organisations. As such, artels existed until the 1980s and then continued to exist within the new economic conditions of the post-Soviet period. Later on, the state never provided special support towards the creation of the Gypsy production associations and took more severe measures to implement its policy. The experience of these cooperatives has also remained a vibrant part of historic tales and been firmly instilled in family oral histories. The historical experience of that period is therefore important for understanding and building a modern policy towards the Gypsy population and solving their social and economic issues.

Keywords
artels; cooperation; economy; Gypsies; industrialisation; Kalderash Gypsies; Roma; Russia; Soviet Union

Issue
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1. Introduction

The period of the 1920s–1930s in the history of the Soviet state was marked by social and economic changes connected with the industrialisation, cooperation and collectivisation of agriculture. Social and economic changes took place against the backdrop of the new ideologies and the implementation of the Soviet approach regarding the Gypsies across the national policies of that period. The basic concept in terms of national minorities was their integration into the socialist economy and the new Soviet culture. The mechanism of this integration, that was also fully applied to the Gypsies at the time, consisted in the policy defined by 'affirmative action' and in giving Gypsies certain preferences, including economic ones (Martin, 2001).

In accordance with state economic policy aimed at industrialisation and cooperation, and also as part of the implementation of measures conducive to the sedentary way of life of nomadic Gypsies, certain shifts occurred within conventional Gypsy occupational structures and activities. Along with different ethnic groups they became involved in the economic activities of the Soviet government and joined cooperative movements in villages. Gypsy agricultural collective farms (*kolkhoz*) were established and the Gypsies participating in industrial production were involved in industrial artels (Gypsy production cooperatives).

A particular Gypsy group—the Kalderash Gypsies—is one of numerous Gypsy ethnic groups found within Russia and across the rest of the world (Demeter, Bessonov, & Kutenkov, 2000, pp. 95–96). Their formation as a specific ethnographic group happened in southeast Europe (Romania, Serbia and Greece), and their main occupations were tinning, production and repair of cauldrons and metalwork. The migration of the Kalderash Gypsies from the territory of southeast Europe to Russia occurred between the end of the 19th and the first 30 years of the 20th century.

Once they had settled, it was not long before the Kalderash Gypsies—at that time a fairly numerous group in Russia—became actively involved in the cooperative movement. The specificity of their traditional occupations (tinning and cauldron-making) as well as their town settlement defined their participation in the policy aimed at creation of industrial artels. The objective of this study is to show how the Kalderash Gypsies participated in the economic transformations and economic life of the country in the 1920s–1930s and were involved in the process of industrial cooperation.

2. Source Database and Historiography

Despite widespread opinion that events of the Gypsy history are poorly documented, it is worth noting that there is a whole body of source materials that reveal the processes of the Kalderash Gypsies' participation in the cooperative movement of the 1920s–1930s in the Soviet state. Among the sources that enable historical studies to be carried and reveal the details of cooperation processes among the Kalderash Gypsies, are those which were discovered and analysed from the state archive of the Russian Federation, and that represent the main database source. There are official documents and data from public authorities and organisations responsible for such matters (for example, the cottage industry sector of the Moscow Regional Council of Industrial Cooperation, as well as the Moscow Regional Executive Committee). A separate group of sources comprises personnel files of repressed Kalderash Gypsies, including the heads of Gypsy artels, along with various data on the foundation and activities of Gypsy cooperative organisations.

In our research, we analyzed a number of published sources referring to the period of active development and cooperative activity among the Gypsies in the 1920s–1930s. Among them we should mention the articles in the journals *Revolutsia i natsional'nosti* (The Revolution and Nationalities) and *Sovetskoe stroitel'stvo* (Soviet State-Building; Bril, 1932, pp. 60–67; Popova & Bril, 1932, pp. 126–138; "Soveschanie po trudoustroistvu," 1936, pp. 61–72) that feature articles on matters such as the Gypsies' employment and the work of Gypsy industrial cooperatives, as well as analytical and editorial articles on the results of the state policy. Among the sources we should also mention materials taken from Gypsy journals *Romani Zoria* (Gypsy Dawn) and *Nevo Drom* (New Road), which publish separate notes on events in Gypsy life and cooperative artels (Pope, 1932, p. 12; "Romane arteli," 1930). A range of editions also contain some information on the activities of Gypsy cooperatives and may be used as a source for the study. The first of these is the book *Tsygany v promkooperatsii* (Gypsies in industrial cooperation) by Rogi (1934), which discusses Gypsy cooperation in the artels of the Soviet Union. Despite the fact that the book has an evident ideological context idealising the state policy and its results, the facts that it is based on retain their value.

The available documents demonstrate the official attitude towards the policy and describe a complex of events performed for its implementation, and the problems and reasons that made the Gypsy cooperation more difficult. For the purpose of this study, it is important to take into account statistical data on the number of industrial artels, their financing, staff and the amount of goods produced by cooperatives.

The vision of the Kalderash Gypsies, their attitude towards cooperation, their evaluation of the state events and of personal and group strategies are specified in other documents, such as Gypsy memoirs. These documents also provide information on the period of the 1920s–1930s and the Gypsies' participation in industrial cooperation. For example, from the books by Demeter-Charskaya *Amaro trayo ande Russiya* (Our Life in Russia, 1998) and *A Gypsy Girl's Destiny* (2003), we learn the story of a Gypsy family and their participation in cooperativisation and the creation of industrial artels in Kharkov and Leningrad in different periods, the motives of the artels' foundation, the range of goods, and other sides of 'cooperative life' in a Gypsy camp. The book by Petrovich *The Gypsy Tribe of Saporroni* (2007) is less relevant for the subject, conveying only fragmented information on the period researched and the Gypsies' participation in industrial cooperation.

A separate group of sources consists of interviews that were recorded during field studies in the Kalderash Gypsy camps. Unfortunately, the field studies of the 2000s could not include any record from the generation that took part in the events, so stories about the 1930s and Kalderash participation in cooperative movements were reproduced based on accounts given by the elder generation. They are very fragmented and cover only the main thread of the events; as such, their value lies in the general overview they provide of the period and the events, as well as certain details.

Thus, documentation for this study includes documents and texts that are divergent both in their content and origin, and reflect both the official position of the authorities and the views of the Gypsy community on the process of cooperation. In sum, the sources collated and analysed allow us to trace the peculiarities of the Gypsy artel development and operation from the end of the 1920s through the beginning of the 1930s in the Soviet Union.

The period of Gypsy history in the Soviet Union from the Great Russian Revolution of 1917 up until (and in-

cluding) the beginning of the so-called Great Patriotic War, which started after Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union in 1941, has still not been fully explored. The full range of sources pertaining to this era have not been collated or analysed, and many aspects and matters of Gypsy life during the first decades of the Soviet government are not yet examined (see the historiography of studies on Gypsies in Demeter et al., 2018). Subject matters dealing with the economic changes of the interwar period relating to the Gypsies were reflected only in Russian historical studies, amongst which are the work of Bugay (2012) and Demeter et al. (2000), discussing general matters relating to the changes of that period. The major part of studies touching upon economic policy and the policy of Gypsies settling in the Soviet Union is devoted to their participation in collective farm building (Bugay, 2015; Ivaschenko, 2011; Kamenskikh, 2017; Kilin, 2002), and the policy of Gypsies turning to a sedentary way of life and their participation in the resettlement movement (Kilin, 2005; Kiseleva, 1952; Platunov, 1976). Similarly, their participation in cooperation is fragmentarily discussed only in regard to certain more general issues (Bugay, 2012; Demeter et al., 2000) none of which refer specifically to the Kalderash ethnic group.

International historiography is also represented by a few works discussing the problems of changes during the period through the prism of the Soviet ideology and national policy, the construction of identity and an attempt to involve ethnic minorities including Gypsies into the system of the 'Soviet socialist state-building' (Lemon, 1991, 2000, 2002; Marushiakova & Popov, 2016; O' Keefe, 2013).

Thus, the historiography of the period reflects important directions of policy regarding Gypsies and certain implementation activities. Until now the problems of its implementation in certain ethnic groups of Gypsies including the Kalderash remain unstudied, and the observations of economic policy in cooperation and the work of industrial artels are limited to general questions. The vast array of source material coupled with the significant gaps present in historiography make this study all the more relevant and allow us to carry out a thorough investigation into the subject.

3. Legislative Basis of Gypsy Cooperation

Gypsy participation in cooperativisation was one of the main initiatives of state economic policy and was developing in various forms in the Soviet Union up until the end of the 1930s. Cooperation in agriculture and some fields of industry was declared to be a prior form of agricultural organisation. At the state level, the cooperative movement was regulated by a number of legislative acts of the Soviet state. These were the decrees *On Consumer Cooperative Organisations* (10th April 1918), *On Consumer Cooperation* (7th April 1921), *On Means of Cooperation* (26th July 1921), *On Consumer Cooperation* (20th May 1924), amongst others (Vakhitov, 2010, pp. 180–181).

The cooperation movement as a form of organisation was also referenced in documents relating specifically to the Gypsy population, in particular in the Decision of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars of the Soviet Union on assistance to those Gypsies wishing to transit to a sedentary way of life (1st October 1926; Bril, 1932, p. 61), the Decision of the Presidium Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic *On Granting Land to Those Gypsies Who Transit to a Sedentary Working Way of Life* (20th February 1928; Bril, 1932, p. 61). Traditionally, these documents are regarded in the context of events concerning the settling of Russia's Gypsy population and the organisation of Gypsy collective farms, though they played their role in documenting the Gypsies' participation in industry and industrial cooperation as well. The peculiarities of the decisions that were taken at the time and the need for active work in this direction are evidenced in the materials from the Decision of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee *On the Provision of Services to the Working Gypsies* (1st April 1932) and the discussion of 'Gypsy matters':

> A sedentary way of life, however, does not solve all the issues connected with work among Gypsies because there are some of them who are quite skilled at certain crafts (tinsmiths or coppersmiths) and who want to join industrial artels or join factories. That is why special attention must be paid to matters relating to the Gypsies' involvement in industry and industrial cooperation. (Bril, 1932, p. 66)

The revitalization of work on Gypsy cooperation at the end of the 1920s up until the beginning of the 1930s was also connected with the general direction of the economic policy of the Soviet Union. During the period of the second five-year plan aimed at developing the national economy of the Soviet Union (1933–1937):

> Trade cooperation was aimed at…uniting all the artisans and craftsmen and to carry out a lot of work on overcoming the remnants of capitalism in the minds of artel members, turning them into active and conscious builders of socialism. This work demands special attention and energy in the artels with a predominance of members from national minorities, especially Gypsies. (Rogi, 1934, p. 26)

4. The Creation and Members of Gypsy Artels

The term 'artel' or 'industrial artel' was widely used both in official documents and colloquially referring to industrial cooperatives. The word 'artel' referred to people's voluntary grouping together for common work. The artisans' shift from individual to collective production

was defined by the terms 'cooperation,' 'trade cooperation' or 'industrial cooperation.' Artel represented an organized group of people, usually not a numerous one, united for some common production activities. It was based on the principles of self-governance and had an elected leader (a chairman). It had to have a charter—a document that regulated its operation—and an accountant. In the economic conditions of the Soviet system this form of organization of production ensured the interaction with superior executive authorities and helped with the distribution of goods and purchasing of the necessary raw materials.

Information on the first Gypsy artels refers to 1925 (Rogi, 1934, p. 17) while the period in which Gypsy industrial artels flourished occurs in 1928–1933. Official documents give different information on numbers and the placement of Gypsy artels, noting their growth until 1931. The most complete data is available on Moscow, allowing us to trace the dynamics of the Gypsy cooperative movement's development during that period. According to the report of 1934 in Moscow in that time period there were "177 families with a total of 925 Gypsy tinsmiths" ("The all-Russian Central," p. 264). All in all, at that time in Moscow there were about 20 ancestral groups of Kalderash Gypsies. In 1930–1931, Moscow Gypsies were actively involved in industrial cooperation or, as the sources note, "where already in 1930–1931 industrial cooperation started to unite Gypsies" ("The all-Russian Central," p. 264). One of the reasons for this emerged during several meetings of the All-Russian Union of Industrial Cooperation, where it was noted that the National Bureau tasked with carrying out certain activities among national minorities including the Gypsies did not have a provision to speak of for the Gypsies, hence why the work in this direction was initiated (Popova & Bril, 1932, pp. 133–134). Bril's publication notes that "in 1930 in Moscow there were four artels, in 1931—28 including 1,351 Gypsies or 3,755 people including members of their families" (Bril, 1932, p. 64). Other sources mention there being only 21 artels and that 18 of them consisted of Gypsy tinsmiths ("The all-Russian Central," pp. 205, 262). In fact, each Gypsy camp organized its own artel and got the opportunity to buy raw materials and organise the sale of products.

The official list of artels registered in Moscow with their addresses published in *A Kolkhoznik's Compilation* included 13 artels: Romanian Foreigner, The First Serbo-Romanian, Krasniy Zabaikalshchik, Greco-Romanian, Serbo-Romanian named after Stalin, Romanian New Way of Life, The Black Sea Emigrant, Red October, The International, Wasteland, The Second Serbo-Romanian, Tiflis Tinsmith, and Ukrainian Tinsmith (Bezludsko & Germano, 1933, pp. 205–206). Other sources also name artels Yugoslavia, The Red Banner, Athens, Serbia and Romania, Caucasus, Jupiter, The Red Star, Yugoslav, Bakhchysarai, A Southeastern Artel, Red Northerner, etc. ("The all-Russian Central," fol 29). The names of Gypsy artels are not coincidental, but in fact based on three principles. The first group features Soviet and ideologically motivated names which were typical and widespread in that period, such as The Red Banner, Red October, The New Way of Life, etc. The second group consists of names that already include reference to a geographical term from the native region of a certain Gypsy camp that came to Moscow, such as Krasniy Zabaikalets from Siberia, Bakhchysarai from the Crimea and Ukrainian Tinsmith from Ukraine. The third group is related to identification of the Kalderash Gypsies' citizenship, such as Yugoslavia, Athens, Yugoslav, and A Serbo-Romanian Artel. In that period, the majority of the Kalderash Gypsies were the citizens of Romania, Greece and other countries and that fact was also reflected in the naming of the artels.

There is only fragmented information on other regions examining the activities of Gypsy artels. Besides the Moscow region, the cooperative movement involved Gypsies from other territories of the Soviet Union: The Kalderash artels were located in Smolensk, Leningrad, Kharkov, Dnepropetrovsk, Kirov, the Black Sea coastal area, as well as other cities and regions.

The report of 1932 on industrial cooperation among the Gypsy population says that besides Moscow:

> In the North Caucasus there are no special Gypsy artels. On January 1, 1933, in combined artels there were 78 Gypsies involved in industrial cooperation efforts. According to the cooperation plan in 1933 a metalworking artel with up to 150 people was to be organized. In the Northern Krai there is one metalworking artel comprising eight people. A workhouse is under construction. In the Central Black Earth Region there are two metalworking artels with totalling 41 cooperative workers. These artels are provided with placement, i.e., lodging and a workhouse. Some Gypsies involved in cooperation could be found in Western Siberia, UkSSR [Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic], Eastern Siberia, etc. ("The all-Russian Central," pp. 233–234)

Other sources tell about cooperative artels in Simferopol in Crimea (Barannikov, 1931, p. 84), the Romanian Foreigner artel in Kirov, the New Way artel in the Smolensk region (Bessonov, 2002, p. 5), and the National Metallist artel in Leningrad (Demeter et al., 2018, p. 211). Not always a source gives us precise information on the Kalderash staff of an artel but the majority of metalworking and tinning artels consisted of the Kalderash Gypsies.

Cooperation and the development of industrial artels at the end of the 1920s–1930s involved a lot of the Kalderash Gypsy camps. Such activity was connected with different objectives. This form of industrial organisation coincided with the economic and ideological policy of the Soviet government and was in line with decision-making that ensured institutional and economic support from the authorities. Gypsies' interest in creating artels was also connected with the need for an institutional form of interacting with the economic system and power.

The artel as a construct allowed raw material for production to be obtained and ensured goods could be marketed. The work and conditions of artels is characterized in one of the existing documents:

> Despite having an official chairman, charter, stamp, etc., all the Gypsy artels in Moscow are in fact entirely mythical constructs. Inside an artel, all members work on an individual basis. Each Gypsy buys goods on his own, makes products out of them and sells them on behalf of the artel. Such fictitious artels can be found in each tribe and are led by the cleverest man of the tribe. He is also the head or the chief of the tribe. Such fictitious artels led by the chiefs of tribes help families of arrested and convicted Gypsies. They can be found in the tribes of Dukoni, Poroni, Domoni, Chukuroni and Dobrodaya. In all these tribes the families of convicted Gypsies are living well. ("The Agency of the Committee," p. 39)

Due to certain reasons, the Kalderash Gypsies became active participants of the industrial cooperation process during this period. Firstly, the nature of their traditional activities—tinning and metals crafts, while other Gypsy groups focused on trade, blacksmithing and delivery of other services to the rural population. Secondly, the nature of the group settlement—at that time, as well as later, the Kalderash Gypsies aimed at cities and their suburbs. At the same time, the composition of artels corresponded to that of the traditional organisation of the Gypsy community. Since each tribal group or community organised its own artel, it allowed it to preserve traditional forms of leadership and collective decision-making, while the industrial organisation corresponded to traditional industrial group 'vortechia' (Demeter et al., 2018, p. 323). The leadership of the Kalderash Gypsies in cooperation is proved by the following numbers. Out of the 21 Moscow artels only two large production associations (Tsygpishcheprom and Tsygkhimprom) included the representatives of other Gypsy groups ("The all-Russian Central," pp. 262, 205). Other Gypsy groups had a different experience of social and economic activities at that time and it was not connected with industrial production. They took part in the organization of collective farms in rural regions, in trade, and provided services (organized transport artels and creative teams). The closest to the Kalderash Gypsies group of 'Lovari' was trading products and consumer goods (Demeter et al., 2018, p. 98).

An undeniable role in the organisation and popularity of artels at that period was owed to consumer demand and the economic need to provide people with necessary goods that are proved by the documents:

> Due to the growth of the network of canteens to cater to the masses, the demand for pots and their repairing is especially high, not only in Moscow but in remote provinces as well. That is why these artels should be afforded due attention, not only from a political but an economic point of view. ("The all-Russian union," p. 5)

Thus, artels as an alternative form of industrial cooperation were profitable and benefited both sides' interests.

5. The Road to a Sedentary Way of Life: Building Lodgings for Artel Members

The implementation of state policy on Gypsies in that period was solving two objectives. First, to involve them in the 'socialist system of production' via cooperation, and second, to create industrial artels, thereby providing a solution for them to transition to a sedentary way of life. Due to this reason, documents on the activities of Gypsy artels also discuss matters of granting land and building residential and industrial premises.

The Congress of the Moscow Regional Executive Committee of Workers, Peasants and Red Army Deputies' Soviets on the 15th July 1931 on Gypsy-related matters decided "to help working Gypsies pass from a nomadic to a sedentary way of life and to involve them in industry" ("The all-Russian union," p. 16). Among concrete measures, it ordered the Moscow City Executive Committee to grant land for building shacks to Gypsies working in industries and artels who did not have permanent lodgings in Moscow over five days. In particular, there was a discussion on the possibility of granting land in the Sokolnichesky region, on the 6th *versta* (mile) of the Yaroslavskaya railway, where the Gypsies had previously settled:

> Considering that most Gypsies live in tents which must be changed in winter into heated shacks, the Committee is ordered to get started on this and draw up the plan of works. ("The all-Russian union," p. 16)

To solve the matter of building residential and industrial premises:

> By Decree of the Congress of the Moscow Industrial Union (1931), in addition to a number of objectives outlined by the Moscow Chemical Industrial Union, the Moscow Food Union and Metkopromsoyuz [Union of cooperative artels of the Metalworking industry], 120,000 rubles were assigned for enlargement of workshops and 155,000 rubles—for providing all Gypsies with lodgings. ("The all-Russian union," p. 19)

The overall picture of the housing stock construction for Moscow Gypsies, including the Kalderash Gypsies trade artels, is reflected in the work of Bril:

> The budget was spent on constructing 35 shacks with 104 rooms in August–October, 1931, while 15 shacks with 20 rooms were repaired and 23 non-residential shacks were equipped for living. Four shacks re-

> mained unfinished. The construction was carried out slowly. There was a lack of construction materials. (Bril, 1932, p. 64)

Indeed, it was not possible to quickly solve the matter of lodging construction and the support of Gypsy families. Finally, it was noted that "only 70% of them were given residential shacks" ("The all-Russian union," p. 254). The problem of housing in such cases was often solved by Gypsy communities in a traditional way: In the summer, tents were set up, and in winter, the families lived in the shacks or built huts or temporary wooden lodgings.

One of the large-scale projects of the period was the organisation of a Gypsy trade town in the village of Krupino in the Pavlovo-Posadsky District in Moscow region. On the 17th October 1934, the Moscow Regional Council of Trade Cooperation decided to build a trade town that would provide the Gypsy tinsmiths with lodgings, a school and a club. The construction was financed and had to be finished by the 1st September 1935. One hundred families of the Gypsy tinsmiths from the Moscow Gypsy artels The Star, Jupiter, Caucasus, and Yugoslavia had to be relocated there. The project was carried out slowly and was not completed ("The all-Russian Central," pp. 260–261).

Despite the attempts to solve the matter of production basis, Moscow artels were also doing their work in an old way in the streets near the tents. Out of 20 investigated Gypsy artels in Moscow (which included 797 members in October 1931), only two of them—Romanian Foreigner and Athens—had their own workshops, the other were working in the open space or in tents. Although officially named 'workshops,' those of the Romanian Foreigner artel represented "barns with leaking roof where the tinning of cauldrons was partially done" ("The all-Russian Central," p. 228).

6. The End of the Period of Gypsy Artels

The system of Gypsy artels in which each of them represented a separate community or a camp was quite mobile. This high mobility often led to the fact that a camp, and consequently an artel, was disbanded because of its decision to change lodging. For example, the Athens artel from Moscow was closed because its members moved to the Crimea. The Red Banner artel was dissolved because its members returned to a nomadic way of life. The Bakhchysarai artel "moved away from Moscow" in 1933 ("The all-Russian Central," pp. 201–221).

The period between 1929–1931 witnessed the greatest number of Gypsy artels in existence in Moscow, but from 1932 onwards, the movement towards the liquidation of Gypsy cooperatives began, for which there were several reasons. First of all, we should note the ideological reasons that have been repeatedly cited in different sources. Difficulties in artel organisation and their successful functioning were attributed to the counterrevolutionary activity of the heads of artels—tribal leaders—as well as to the fact that artels were led by bourgeois elements, *kulaks*, all of which was compounded by the absence of a socialistic system of production. The second reason consisted in organisational difficulties in building an artel's management system encountered by superior organisations, as well as difficulties in the provision of artels with raw material and in managing the system of goods marketing. The third group of reasons may be defined as industrial: The artels had no production basis, tradesmen were forced to work in the streets and in yards without any workshops and equipment. Their work had a seasonal character and in winter all their activities stopped.

No doubt that at first, beginning in 1932, there were several attempts to increase both the productive efficiency of the artels and strengthening them from an ideological standpoint, in order to be better aligned with the Soviet ideologies of the period. Describing organisational measures of 1933, we should mention the fact that Moscow artels were transferred from the administration of the Moscow Trade Union to the system of Metizsoyuz (Union of Metal Products) and Metremsoyuz (Union of Metal Repair) in order to make the management of Gypsy artels more successful.

Organisational and ideological problems were partially solved by the change in management of certain artels and the appointment of new leaders that were not Gypsy. Thus, after the examination of Gypsy artels in the autumn of 1931 among the necessary measures, it was prescribed that those responsible:

> Remove the chairmen of the Serbo-Romanian and the Krasniy Zabaikalschik artels, and replace them with people who can guarantee the artels working rights. ("The all-Russian union," p. 5)

It is clear from the reports that "experienced workers of other nationalities were repeatedly sent to help the artels as chairmen, accountants and book-keepers". This did not bring desirable results either because Gypsy communities and artels were preserving their traditional organisation and social institutions and "did not accept" the specialists appointed by superior authorities ("The all-Russian Central," p. 262).

Another method of improving the activities and the situation in artels was either to merge them or to incorporate Gypsy artels into non-Gypsy ones, which had been practised since 1934. However, for the same previously mentioned reasons, such practice was not supported by Gypsies and resulted in resistance.

From 1932 onwards, in order to "improve the atmosphere in the artels," repressive measures were taken. In the spring and autumn of 1932, several members of the Gypsy artels were arrested:

> We had to resort to serious measures and call to account a group of Gypsies that were disrupting and derailing the normal functioning of artels. In March 1932,

> 18 people were arrested, 12 of them were chairmen. In September, 80 people were arrested, and are still being held. Some of them also were chairmen. ("The all-Russian Central," p. 159)

In April 1934, the organisational meeting with the Nationality Department of The All-Russian Central Executive Committee (concerning the Gypsy involvement in cooperation in Moscow), ordered the Inter-Ministerial Commission of the Moscow State Council, together with the Moscow Regional Council of Trade Cooperation and the Metizsoyuz, to work out the issue on the transition to other types of production within five months, as well as to find and equip a common workhouse for the remaining three artels that are to be united into one artel under the Metizsoyuz system ("The all-Russian Central," p. 244).

The final decision on the removal of the Gypsy artels from the Metizsoyuz system in Moscow was issued in 1935, according to the meeting of the Congress' record on the 17th January 1935 ("The all-Russian Central," p. 232). Finally, it was noted that "the attempt by Moscow metal unions to bring about work reorganisation among Gypsies was not a success" ("The all-Russian Central," p. 232).

After the removal of the artels from the Metizsoyuz system, some of them were placed under other cooperative organisations in Moscow: Stamp, Tank, XX Century Autostamp, Exhibitor, etc. Eventually, however, the disbandment of artels put an end to the period of Gypsy cooperation in Moscow, although by that time some Gypsy camps still remained in Moscow. In the Krasno-Presnensky, Dzerzhinsky, Oktyabrsky and Sokolnichesky regions, former members of the artels Jupiter, Serbo-Romania and Caucasus continued to exist, while not belonging to any industrial or cooperative organisations ("The all-Russian Central," p. 261). Some Moscow Gypsies were moved from their former artels to a newly founded industrial town in the village of Krupino, in the Pavlovo-Posadsky District of Moscow Oblast ("Soveschanie po trudoustroistvu," 1936, p. 69). A new influx of the Gypsy population to Moscow during that period was also limited by the beginning of certification and the complexities associated with obtaining legal residential status in the city. Also, the objective to "rid Moscow of the Gypsies" was put forward ("The all-Russian Central," p. 142). Since 1933, within the framework of the operation to "rid" Moscow of "undesirable elements," several hundreds of Gypsies were sent to Siberia, including a large group of the Kalderash (Bessonov, 2005, pp. 631–640). As a result, the majority of the Gypsy camps left Moscow.

However, in other cities, Gypsy artels continued to exist for some time. Until the end of the 1930s, there were artels in the Moscow Oblast, in particular in the Pavlovo-Posadsky District and in the Smolensk Oblast (Bessonov, 2002).

7. Results

The participation of Gypsies in industrial cooperation was part of the state economic and ideological policy of that period, as well as part of a series of measures related to the Gypsy population and its involvement in industrial activities and the settlement of nomadic camps. The policy on Gypsies during that period was part of two directions (economic and national) of domestic policy.

The building of a 'new socialist society' that became one of the most large-scale experiments of the 20th century defined the declaration of new ideas—a shift towards new forms of labour as well as labour and national relations. But the realization of this motto turned out to encounter certain difficulties and contradictions. The experience of the period was unique—in Russian history, there were no other large-scale state measures aimed at the support and development of Gypsy society—from creating the norms of literary language and book publishing to Gypsy collective farms and cooperative artels. There were no other state measures aimed at establishing Gypsy-only production associations with sufficient state support as it was at the turn of the 1920s–1930s, and as was the case in the Gypsy artels.

However, in general, this experience should be considered unfortunate: it had no significant results and no perspectives. Industrial cooperation for the Gypsy community was just a 'historical event' during a short period at the end of the 1920s to the beginning of the 1930s.

At the same time, the participation in cooperation and the concentration of most artels in Moscow and other big cities was the reason for more significant repressive measures of the 1930s related to the Kalderash Gypsies. The failure of the cooperative movement was one of the reasons arrests and convictions happened. In Moscow and Saint Petersburg, where most of the Kalderash Gypsy camps were concentrated, such repressions were most far-reaching. There were many reasons for the repressive policies aimed at the Kalderash Gypsies but the failures of the cooperative movement and the wave of abuse in artels, as along with the upholding of community orders in artels, were the main ones (Bessonov, 2002).

8. Historical Experience and Modern Times

Similarly, the historical experience of that period was important for the Kalderash community—the stage of artels helped them to adapt to the emerging economic reality of Soviet society.

With the support of the state authorities, the artels managed to procure the necessary raw materials and market their goods as per the conditions of a planned economy and the absence of market relations. In Soviet times, it was the first mass experience of the Kalderash Gypsies' interaction with the state authorities and the state economic system. Subsequently, this experience allowed for the preservation of traditional areas of

employment—that of metalworkers, tinsmiths and cauldron makers—throughout the Soviet period up until now. This experience allowed them to adapt to the existing economic relations. It was also essential for adapting traditional institutions and the social structure of the Gypsy community to the existing legal and economic system.

The dissolution of artels and the beginning of mass repression at the end of the 1930s significantly impacted the resettlement system. The Kalderash Gypsies left Moscow and only some families would later live in the city. If during the period of artels the majority of Gypsy camps were concentrated in Moscow and the Moscow region, later those dispersed and began resettling across different cities and regions of Russia.

After the Great Patriotic War and the stabilization of the country's economic life, artel organisation and the experience of artel industrial workers was needed once again. During the following periods, it remained the main form of production and economic interaction with enterprises and organisations, with Gypsy artisans concluding agreements with collective farms, catering industries and factories and certain types of work. Such a way of working existed until the 1980s. In the conditions of perestroika and the post-Soviet period, it continued under new economic conditions—in certain Russian cities, Gypsy artisans once again became active participants of relevant, legal cooperative movements.

The failure of Gypsy production associations in the 1920s–1930s had a bearing on the approach of state policy. Later, the state never created Gypsy-only production associations. The following policy on Gypsies was based on their involvement in existing production associations and factories. In comparison with the 1920s–1930s, when cooperation was declared and when there was the support from the state institutions, more severe measures geared towards implementing the policy were taken during the post-war period, including administrative punishment and criminal penalties.

The historical experience of the 1920s–1930s has not been properly evaluated until now. Furthermore, its role in shaping a modern policy on Gypsies, in order to help overcome their social and economic problems, should not be underestimated.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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Article

From Christian Mission to Transnational Connections: Religious and Social Mobilisation among Roma in Finland

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Abstract
Based on the analysis of archival material, and combined with ethnographic fieldwork conducted among the Finnish Kaale (the Finnish Romani population) since 2011, this article looks at the historical intertwining of Roma religious and social activism in Finland from the beginning of the 20th century. A focus is placed on the role of the Gypsy Mission (*Mustalaislähetys*), nowadays Romani Mission (*Romano Missio*), in shaping both historical and present-day Roma policy, activism and mobilisation within the country. Founded in 1906, and initially led by non-Roma Evangelicals, its impact has nevertheless moved beyond a strictly Roma-focused/non-Roma-led mission. While rarely mentioned, Kaale were active participants within the organisation, and some of the earliest Roma activists were shaped within its midst. Furthermore, Roma mobilisation in the country continues to have a religious undertone, particularly in the contemporary transnational humanitarian work conducted by Finnish Kaale missionaries among Roma communities in Eastern Europe. Tracing the legacy of present-day religious mobilisation among Roma in Finland, as well as Finnish Roma's active involvement in shaping Roma-projects elsewhere in Europe, is therefore crucial in revealing not only contrasts in how Roma activism may have manifested during the interwar period in Europe (from political to religious, from Roma-led to Roma-focused) but points to the present-day influence of Evangelical missions in shaping particular visions of the 'future' among Roma communities across Europe.

Keywords
Eastern Europe; Evangelical; Finland; religion; Roma

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1. Interwar Roma Emancipation: The Finnish Puzzle?

Whenever discussing processes of Roma civic emancipation during the interwar period, the countries of Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe are recurrently mentioned as key examples of the rise of ethnic consciousness among Roma, a rise which would often be combined with an expressed sense of their national belonging. The analysis of this specific regional context is undoubtedly crucial in our understanding of both past and present-day Roma activism, as these countries appear to have been at the centre of debates which continue to be relevant to contemporary Roma mobilisation in Europe. Moreover, this region appears to have been at the forefront of conversations concerning the 'naming' of Roma/Gypsy communities, the establishment of Roma/Gypsy organisations, schools and cultural institutions (for Romania, see Achim, 2007; Matei, 2010a, 2010b) as well as the focus on the development of Roma/Gypsy-focused national policies (for the Soviet Union, see Marushiakova & Popov, 2017, in press). Indeed, one might argue that such shifts and movements have inspired later developments both in their own countries and beyond.

However, much less focus has been placed on countries which may be seen as lying at the 'periphery' of empires, or countries which do not fit the category of Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe. Among these, Finland constitutes a particularly striking example, as a nation which had historically been at the crossroads of state powers (such as the Swedish Empire and Russia)

and, especially during the interwar period (1918–1939), striving for the construction of its own national identity, in the aftermath of its independence from Russia and the aftermath of a bloody Civil War.

Within this context, it is interesting to observe how processes of Roma mobilisation have been shaped at the beginning of the 20th century, and through to the beginning of the Second World War, in Finland. This is primarily so given the important role occupied by the first and arguably most active Roma organisation in the country, the Gypsy Mission (*Mustalaislähetys*; presently Romani Mission, *Romano Missio*), founded in 1906. While at its inception the Gypsy Mission was by no means a classic type of Roma organisation (namely, it was not led by Roma), it nevertheless constitutes an important example of how an organisation has moved from a historical position of non-Roma leadership to one which, under a revised name and agenda, is presently led primarily by Roma and focuses its work on Roma in the country. Furthermore, while its initial aims were the 'reaching out' to the Roma community conducted from a primarily religious standpoint, it has since moved to a primarily social work focus. Finally, the Gypsy Mission, though non-Roma led, was the first organisation in the country to address issues of equal rights and equal opportunities for Roma living in Finland, alongside being among the first in the world to bring forth the topic of labelling as a means to address widespread prejudices against this community.

Within this backdrop, this article will analyse the manifestations of religious and social mobilisation among Roma in Finland which have taken place within the frameworks of the Gypsy Mission, with a focus placed primarily on the Finnish Kaale (Finnish Romani population). A key focus will be placed on the Gypsy Mission's initial aims and goals, the Roma members of the organisation, and the ways in which present-day religious mobilisation of Pentecostal Kaale in the country needs to be understood in the background of a historical focus on education, evangelisation and social work which have shaped 'Roma work' (*Romanityö*, or Roma missionary work) in Finland for over a century. This approach, and therefore the contribution of this article, is not only relevant but crucial in gaining a better understanding of the diversity of emancipatory actions which took place during the interwar period, therefore contributing not only to scholarly debates within the field of Romani studies concerning processes of Roma mobilisation and Roma activism but also highlighting the active role played by Roma themselves in the shaping of their own visions of the future.

Methodologically, the arguments in this article are based on two key sources of information. The first one comprises extensive ethnographic fieldwork conducted among the Kaale since 2011, consisting of participant observation, living with and among Kaale families in Southern Finland, in-depth interviews with Kaale Pentecostal believers, family histories and life histories, and participation in the transnational missionary projects conducted by Kaale missionaries in Central and Eastern European countries. These are all crucial in understanding the contemporary transnational character of their religious and social activism, which may (or may not) have its own political consequences. The second source of data informing the arguments of this article consists of archival materials gathered over the past two years. These comprise both the contents of the Gypsy's Mission main publication (namely, the newspaper *Kiertolainen*), and additional material collected from and with the aid of the Finnish Literature Society. The latter materials concern specifically the work of later activists among the Finnish Kaale (such as Ferdinand Nikkinen and his son, Reima Nikkinen), alongside that of key civic Roma organisations in the country (such as the Romanengo Staggos [Roma Association]), which came to act almost as a counterpoint to the Mission's aims: namely, moving away from the 'spiritual' dimension of the Gypsy Mission's work, to a more secular one focusing on social activism, non-religious education and improving the image and role of the Finnish Roma within mainstream Finnish society. The aim is thus to understand both the legacy of the Gypsy Mission's work among later activists in the country and the ways in which the focus and aim of missionary work currently taking place among the Finnish Kaale needs to be understood in a longer historical perspective: as shaped and as shaping particular imaginaries and visions of the future of Roma communities, within the language of faith and the discourse of Evangelisation.

Before proceeding to the analysis of the material, some terminological points should be made. Firstly, whenever using historical sources, and for accuracy purpose, I will maintain the terms used in the material presented and the cited sources: Roma, Gypsy or Kaale. However, whenever using contemporary experiences and in the analysis of the material, I will be using the term 'Roma,' with the exception of the discussion concerning present-day religious mobilisation, where the discussion will be on the 'Finnish Kaale,' a term my interlocutors used for themselves, and a term also found within the historical sources used for the purpose of this article. Secondly, it should also be noted that while the 'Roma community in Finland' has often been portrayed through an almost homogenising frame (i.e., often referred to as 'the' Finnish Roma), presently there are (and historically have been) several Roma/Gypsy groups inhabiting or moving through Finnish lands. These include, historically, temporary economic migrants from Russia or other Nordic European countries (cf. Tervonen, 2010, 2012a, 2012b) and, presently, Eastern European Roma migrants living in cities across the country (Roman, 2014; Tervonen & Enache, 2017). In this article, however, the focus will be exclusively on the Finnish Kaale, whose presence in the country goes back to the early 16th century and the interchanging concepts used (Roma/Kaale or Gypsy) are grounded in either the ways in which the term was used in historical sources or the ways in which

the people I have worked with referred to themselves. Nevertheless, it is important to stress that they are not (nor have been) one homogeneous community but, rather, have always found themselves in interaction with local majorities and other national Roma communities.

2. A Backdrop to Roma Activism in Finland? The Inception of the Gypsy Mission and the Shaping of Social Work

The Gypsy Mission is the first and oldest Finnish organisation to focus exclusively on the country's Roma population. It is interesting to note that while the Gypsy Mission was at its inception an eminently 'external' project (as in, run and led primarily by non-Roma), it has changed its approaches and policies several times, throughout different historical periods. An example of this is the movement from the 20th century primary focus on spiritual Evangelism to the more interventionist policies of the 1950s, and the collaboration with state institutions and incentives to 'civilise' the Roma. Another notable move was the gradual addition of more Kaale individuals as actual leaders of the organisation. As such, the first Roma managing director was Henry Hedman, appointed in 1996. Connectedly, the change of the name from the Gypsy Mission to Romani Mission occurred in the same year, in 1996 (Hedman, 2012, pp. 254–255). While there is no space to go into detail about these shifts, they mirror broader shifts occurring in the political discourse concerning Roma in the country, specifically in the 1990s, which argued for a larger participation of Roma in society and a recognition of their role as active members of society (for more, see Hedman, 2012). Yet, as will be argued throughout this article, Roma were always active and engaged members of the Gypsy Mission, even when not in leadership positions. As such, the acknowledgement of their voices, from the onset, needs to be taken into account when assessing the complex history of the Gypsy Mission.

Founded in 1906, the organisation's main aims were those of conducting a spiritual awakening among the Kaale in Finland, along with providing social and educational projects. Alongside these, the organisation also put an active emphasis on the process of sedentarisation and the role of children's education in the social integration of this community within mainstream society. The organisation thus aimed to address, in incipient forms, that which they identified as being both the spiritual and social 'needs' of the Roma community in Finland and began its work at the initiative of one person: Oskari Jalkio (1882–1952, born Storbacka, also known as Oskari Johnsson and sometimes publishing under the pseudonym Andreo Phaal, the latter term meaning 'brother' in the Romani language). In fact, Jalkio himself was an interesting character, who, alongside his wife Helmi, is often attributed to being the inspiration behind many of the organisation's ventures. Born in 1882 in Teerijärvi, Eastern Finland, he was initially affiliated with the Finnish Free Church, an Evangelical Protestant movement particular to Finland and also affiliated with a revivalist, reformist group within the Free Church called Evangelical Friends. The latter was founded by a friend of Jalkio, Axel Alfred Skutnabb (Mäkinen, 2014, p. 44; Tervonen, 2012a, p. 125; Viita, 1967, p. 25). Grounded in his interest in Roma, Jalkio published several small materials concerning social structure and folklore, including a book of collected Roma songs, many of which had previously featured in the pages of the Mission's journal, *Kiertolainen* (Jalkio, 1939). Among other things, and beyond his interest in Roma, Jalkio was also a devout pacifist and a promoter of vegetarianism (Jalkio, 1925).

In terms of its inception, in 1905, a Tampere-based meeting, to which many Roma from across the country are said to have attended, led to the foundation of the idea to establish a 'Gypsy mission.' The aim was to focus on the 'spiritual and economical salvation of Roma' in the country and to welcome within its midst missionary workers from all denominations (Viita, 1967, p. 36). The central location of the organisation would initially be Tampere, with large tent meetings and off-spring charters being organised across the country: such as in Viipuri (present-day Vyborg), Oulu, Helsinki, Sortavala (where a children's home was also established), etc.

As mentioned above, the Mission also had its very own publication avenue: the newspaper *Kiertolainen* (translated as Traveller). *Kiertolainen* was published between 1907–1929, preceded in 1906 by a Christmas special issue *Maailman kiertäjä* ('World Traveller'). It is worth mentioning that, unlike the name of the organisation, which only changed its name in 1990, the name of the newspaper shifted several times. For example, from 1949, its name changed to *Vaeltajankansa* (The Wanderer People) and between 1956–1970 it was changed again to *Kotitiellä* (Home on the Road). Its current name, *Romano Boodos* (Roma News), was adopted in 1971.

The first leaders of the Mission were non-Kaale/non-Roma pastors and evangelists and the majority of active workers within the Mission (both as evangelists and as writers for their organisation's newspaper) were Jalkio's friends from the Evangelical Friends movement. The latter had begun a form of 'Roma-focused work' even before the official establishment of the Gypsy Mission. Nevertheless, as we will later see, though often seen as 'silent' members, the organisation could not have survived and developed as it did without the aid of key Roma figures within it (such as Sofia Schwartz, Antti Palm, Herman Korpp).[1]

One of the most interesting aspects of the Gypsy Mission, beyond its Evangelical incentives and faith-

[1] Beyond the focus on the Gypsy Mission, recent research in Finland has also highlighted the contribution of Roma to Finnish folklore (Mikkola & Blomster, 2014), with others critically assessing the politics of collecting in Finland (Stark, 2016) and thus challenging previous misconceptions of Roma/Gypsies as being 'outside' of nation-building processes.

based evangelism, was its focus placed on the topic of social work, in its various forms: educational, professional, and the support of those without homes or work. A clear example of this sort is the first Roma School (*Romanikoulu*) to be organised in the country, between 1905–1907, in Viipuri (presently Vyborg, in Russia). Not only was this a first in terms of its pupils but also in the fact that of its teacher was a Kaale woman under the name of Sofia Schwartz (1887–1932).

In fact, Sofia Schwartz (later, Santamo) was one of the first female teachers (Kaale or not) in early 20th century Finland. She was also a recurrent writer for the newspaper *Kiertolainen* and supported the Mission in many of its activities (cf. Schwartz, 1907). Born in Kuivaniemi (Northern Ostrobothnia), Schwartz graduated from elementary school in 1905, in Paltamo, where she eventually met Oskari Jalkio. It was Jalkio who would arrange her to become a teacher for Roma children in the newly proposed Viipuri Roma school. After the closing of the school, Sofia Schwartz would later be employed within the Sortavala children's home and was to become an advocate within the Gypsy Mission for the settlement of Roma in Finland, which was also a key aspect of the organisation's social interventions at the time (for more, see Rekola, 2010). She died in 1932, at the age of 45, but continued to be mentioned as a key figure of the Gypsy Mission in the journal's publications.

The Roma school in Viipuri, while having a limited run of two years, was notable in several respects. It brought forth the issue of education as a key feature and theme within the Gypsy Mission and made it as its aim the schooling of Roma children from across the country. It also gained the support of local authorities. Nevertheless, the school was a difficult project to keep alive and soon subsided under other activities of the Mission. In this respect, worth mentioning is also the first Romani course, which was organised in Seinajöki (in Central-Western Finland) in 1906 as well as the first Roma children's home, which was organised in Sortavala between 1910–1918. The latter's activities died down at the beginning of the First World War, but the Mission's children's homes continued to be a focus of their activities throughout its existence. For instance, Romani Mission (the re-structured Gypsy Mission) still has under its leadership two children's homes. While the post-Second World War period represented a somewhat dark period in the organisation's history, specifically in the 1950s (see Grönfors, 2012; Grönfors & Viljanen, 2009; Tanner & Lind, 2009), when the Gypsy Mission became affiliated to the state's incentive to make Roma into 'better' Finnish citizens, taking Roma children away from their families to educate them within the 'proper Finnish moral values' (see Friman-Korpela, 2014; Pulma, 2006; Stenroos, n.d.), the focus on children remains a key point in the organisation's history.

In many ways, the Gypsy Mission thus clearly aimed to combine spiritual work (such as tent and religious meetings organised across the country), with a social dimension shaped within their social work. Suffice to say that such activities were not always uncontroversial, particularly after the Second World War, when the Mission became affiliated with state policies aiming to address the 'Gypsy question' in the country, at times by forcibly removing children from their families. At the same time, many of the early incentives could not have been successful or long-lasting without the aid of Kaale workers within its midst. While most of the members of the central board, at least at the beginning of the 20th century, were non-Roma, Kaale did feature as key members: both within its activities (such as speakers at local meetings) and as writers/figures within the Mission's newsletter articles.

Furthermore, while most of the preachers may have been non-Roma, there were notable exceptions, such as Antti Palm and Herman Korpp, who acted as speakers at various religious meetings, or Kr. Fr. Lindström, who acted as speaker and evangeliser among Roma in different localities, and continued to be a key figure within the pages of *Kiertolainen* even after the interwar period (see Lindström, 1913). In addition to this, an interesting development occurred within one local branch of the Gypsy Mission's organisational board, in Viipuri. This particular charter of the organisation seems to have had, in 1907, a membership made up of a majority of Roma (see also Tervonen, 2012a, p. 128). This situation did not last for long, as the Roma membership gradually decreased, due both to decreasing financial resources coming from the central organisation and potential conflicts of interest. As Tervonen has argued, the reasons, while unclear, may also lie behind the fact that Jalkio seemed to promote a religion-first approach to the Mission's work, as compared to the Viipuri charter's members' interest in improving first the social situation of Roma and later bringing in the spiritual dimension (Tervonen, 2012a, p. 128). Another possible element fuelling disagreements within this branch may have been the charter's clear desire to have a higher level of autonomy and independence, which may not have been received with open arms by the centre.

What is clear, however, is that Kaale employees and workers within the Gypsy Mission facilitated not only the reach of the organisation but also, to some extent, its initial success. The notion of education was especially emphasised, be it in the organisation of schools and language courses or in the setting up of orphanages (for some articles depicting Kaale member's own voices and experiences as presented within the pages of the newspaper *Kiertolainen*, see Isberg, 1913; Lindström, 1913; F. Nikkinen, 1913; Schwartz, 1907). Furthermore, the focus on children's education and upbringing was recurrently on the cards of the Gypsy Mission and, later, of the reconfigured Romani Mission (see 'Mustalaislähetyksen r.y. säännöt', 1927). As can be seen from the present-day missionary activities of Pentecostal Finnish Kaale conducting work among Roma communities in Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe countries, education

and the emphasis placed on children's upbringing into a Christian worldview continues to be at the centre of activities organised with a humanitarian aim. While this cannot be seen as a direct consequence of the Gypsy Mission's work, the continuities (and distinctiveness) of present-day religious humanitarianism need to be understood also by taking into account its historical configuration.

3. Naming: On Labels and Labelling

Over the past decades, increasing awareness of the power of labelling seems to have emerged, with Roma activists recurrently arguing for a terminological shift (from 'Gypsy' to 'Roma'), in diverse national contexts. While this may appear to be a post-socialist phenomenon, in reality, the topic of shifting terminologies has been predominant since as early as the interwar period (for Romania, see Matei, 2012). Yet, as will be evident from this section, this topic may have emerged much earlier, at the beginning of the 20th century.

In fact, one of the most interesting aspects within the aims and goals of the Gypsy Mission, as evidenced in an article published in the first issue of *Kiertolainen*, was Jalkio's pursuit for the change of terminology when referring to Roma in Finland (Jalkio, 1907, p. 5). Below is a translated segment of the above-mentioned manifesto for a terminological shift:

> Kiertolainen's aim is to avoid the name 'mustalainen'[2] as far as possible. Roma people often say: "It hurts like cutting with a knife when you hear the name mustalainen." So let us avoid that hated name. Let us use instead the name Romani (not romaani). Roma themselves use that name. We can use this name because it is very old and its meaning is so beautiful. Its origin is in the Sanskrit language 'dom' and in the Roma language, the word 'rom' means 'imies' = man (ihminen). We must still keep the name of our organisation 'Mustalaislähetys,' for various reasons.

In fact, through this, Jalkio, a non-Roma, may have been the first within the country (and, perhaps, in the world) to have pleaded for the terminological shift when referring to Roma. It is not made clear what or who had first planted this idea in Jalkio's mind, but the journal does indeed continue to use the term 'romani' throughout, with some exceptions (when translating poems or referring to a shift in lifestyle choices). Roma writers within the journal also used this particular terminology and, later, some mainstream media would also incorporate this format, whenever referring to the Gypsy Mission's activities. In addition to the term 'Romani,' the term 'Kaale' was also used, grounded once again in Jalkio's initial argumentation:

> Besides the name 'romani' we can also use the name 'kaalo' (black, mustalainen).[3] 'Romani' is the clean, unstained name inherited from forefathers and is an ancient name, but 'kaalo' (pl. kaale, kaaleita) is the stained name, which describes the appearance or state of being of Roma people. It means the same as 'mustalainen,' but the difference is that hearing the word 'kaalo' does not hurt Roma as much as hearing the word 'mustalainen.' So if we want to find a corresponding name for 'mustalainen,' let us use the word 'kaalo,' otherwise let us use the word 'romani.'

While the Mission continued to keep the word 'Gypsy' in its title, the journal nevertheless began a shift in terms of the use of labels and influenced the subsequent usage of both terms. Through this, Gypsy Mission was not only a precursor to present-day debates but may have begun the shift in the first place. Given that the other well-known attempts to shift the terminology are those in Romania (primarily in Roma-led newspaper publications of the 1930s), this first issue of *Kiertolainen* is a crucial manifestation of the long history of this debate.

4. From the Silence of the Interwar to the Criticism of the Postwar: The Emergence of the Roma Civic Movement in Finland

One of the striking elements concerning the process of interwar Roma mobilisation in Finland, especially when compared to Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe countries (such as Romania and Bulgaria), where the interwar was the period with the strongest Roma/Gypsy emancipation movements, is the apparent 'inactivity' or 'silence' concerning similar processes taking place in Finland at the time. This is particularly so, given the context in which a focus on Roma religious mobilisation seems to have been a strong feature in the country, long before 1918.

This situation is grounded in the particular historical and social context of Finland between 1918–1938, a country battling in the aftermath of the Civil War, a period characterising Finland's transition from being a Grand Duchy of the Russian Empire to becoming an independent state. It was also a period within which Finland was struggling with an economic recession, country-wide starvation and a struggle to create a sense of unity in the follow up of a bloody internal conflict, which had torn the country apart and separated the 'reds' from the 'whites.' The latter two terms are often used to refer to the two sides of the 1918 Finnish Civil War: namely, the Finnish Socialist Worker's Republic, the 'reds,' who sought to establish a socialist Finnish Republic, and its opposition, the 'whites,' or the refugee government, whose aim was to stop the 'reds' from gaining political power.

[2] The only English equivalent for 'mustalainen' would be Gypsy, though the meaning in Finnish points to the colour of the skin, and would literally be translated as 'dark-skinned' or 'black-skinned.'

[3] 'Kaalo,' like 'mustalainen' would also mean 'black,' but it is a translation from Romani language, rather than Finnish.

For this reason, it is crucial to understand the manifestations of Roma emancipation (or, in this case, mobilisation) in its broader context, by focusing specifically on elements which may have shaped it. Furthermore, contributing to this may have been the fact that in 1931, Oskari Jalkio, had moved with his family to Haiti, to conduct missionary work (Tervonen, 2012a, p. 138; Viita, 1967, p. 118). During this time, the activities of the Mission vastly decreased. Some 'Roma Days' (*Romanipäivät*, or Roma celebration days) continued to be held, the best known being the one in Keuuru, but the number of publications of the Gypsy Mission and the number of events greatly diminished until after the Second World War. Finally, the post-war context became known as one of the darkest in the history of the organisation, when many of the activities of the Mission became more clearly tied with state incentives to 'civilise' Roma in Finland and transform them into 'acceptable' Finnish citizens (see, for instance, Friman-Korpela, 2014; Pulma, 2006).

In fact, the Gypsy Mission was never without its critics but a counter-point movement came to be crystallised specifically after the end of the Second World War when previous members affiliated with the Mission became some of its most outspoken critics. A key example of this was Ferdinand Nikkinen, a well-known Roma activist in the post-war context and the founder of the first civic Roma organisation in the country, Romanengo Staggos. He is also known for the critical standpoint he had taken against the Gypsy Mission.

Yet, his activities had not always been completely detached from those of the Mission. Nikkinen had written a short article in the journal *Kiertolainen* as early as 1913, arguing for the settlement of Roma in Finland (an issue of concern also for the Gypsy Mission) and against the following of particular traditions (such as clothing), which he saw as hindering Roma's possibility of advancing within Finnish society. Below is a translation of some segments of this key article:

> Forgive me, that I dare to tell my opinion of how we could rise to the level of the civilized people. 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 us many bad traditions. There are, naturally, also many good things—for instance, our own language and nationality. If we retain our parents' way of life, our children will suffer from a similar misery and be despised by other people. Because of our bad habits, other nations despise us. This curse is a big burden on our shoulders. To remove this curse, we must leave aside our forefathers' inheritance—give up wandering, deceiving people in the selling of horses and in future-telling also. Let us ask for God's power that we could leave our bad habits and learn good habits instead. We ought to leave wandering and live in one place. We ought to leave begging and start to work, to leave deceiving and to be honest. We ought to leave superstition and believe in God. As we believe in God, we'll win everything good….Our and our children's happiness depends on us. Let us not waste our time with vanity. I have heard people say: 'We have tried to teach Roma to know God but they do not care.' Let us take Jesus to our hearts. He also gives us civilization. I have heard that many Roma children have forsaken a good offer. People have promised to pay for their education, but they have refused. If somebody offered this possibility to us, we would have accepted it with joy. We, who are a part of Roma youth, let us look at life with greater hopes. Let us not be content with misery. Let us strive for a better life. Let us throw away that which bind us to misery. Homelessness is the greatest curse in the world. A home—even a small one, can protect us from the storms of the world. For what lives a person, who does not know, where to sleep the following night? A wanderer does not know how lovely it is to work for a good life. (F. Nikkinen, 1913, p. 15)

While much of Nikkinen's focus in this article seemed to be aligned with the aims of the Mission—especially the topics of children's education and that of sedentarisation—(for similar concerns in other countries, see Marushiakova & Popov, in press), two editorial notes highlighted already then a potential emerging conflict. In fact the two notes seemed to disagree with some key points that Nikkinen put forth. Below is a translation for the two notes:

> 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.
>
> 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. (F. Nikkinen, 1913, p. 15)

It is unclear why or how Nikkinen's views shifted towards an opposition of the Mission itself but it is certain that, after the Second World War, he became an outspoken critic of the organisation, its projects and its approach. Interestingly, in addition to this, and despite his references to God in the above-mentioned article, as well as the emphasis placed on the role of spiritual awakening and faith in the potential uplifting of Roma in the country, Nikkinen became an outspoken atheist. It remains, however, unclear how the two elements are connected. In fact, neither his son, Reima Nikkinen (who, in 1967, would go on to establish the Finnish Gypsy Association), nor others who had known him could elaborate on the reasons for the shift, other than Nikkinen's increased interest in reading mainstream literature, a manifested desire to help the Roma community in the country out-

side of a religious discourse and a general curiosity for the world (R. Nikkinen, 2000, 2012). Furthermore, at the same time as Nikkinen moved away from the Gypsy Mission, he also became a critic of the lack of Roma voices within it (specifically the lack of Roma as board members) and, in 1946, he sent a letter to the Ministry of Interior, in which he collected 364 signatures from Roma men, asking the state for a more active involvement of Roma in matters that pertained to their own community (see Pulma, 2006, p. 166; see also Friman-Korpela, 2014; Stenroos, n.d.). While this letter did not lead to many changes at the time, in 1953 Nikkinen did successfully set up Romanengo Staggos, which later influenced the wider Roma civic movement in the country (cf. Friman-Korpela, 2014). Thus, though Romanengo Staggos was short-lived, it was nevertheless the precursor to a longer-lasting civic organisation, the Finnish Gypsy Association, founded in 1967, which continues to be active until present-day, under the name of the Finnish Roma Association. The latter constitutes a notable and important present-day Roma organisation in the country, making their contributions also within the field of policy work and policy implementation in matters pertaining the Finnish Roma community (for more, see Stenroos, n.d.).

In other words, the shape and discourse of present-day civic activism among Roma in Finland was, and continues to be, in connection (even when in contrast) to that of the religious organisation that shaped it: Gypsy Mission and, presently, Romani Mission. This is especially clear when looking at Nikkinen's move from a supporter of the Gypsy Mission, to one of its most fervent critics, as well as his continued efforts to work in support of the Finnish Roma community, outside of the Mission's activities. At the same time, the Gypsy Mission seems to have provided both space and means for future Roma civic activists to become politically and socially active, even when in opposition to the Mission itself (for before 1918, see Tervonen, 2012a, p. 132). In other words, by providing not only space within its official publication, *Kiertolainen*, but actively encouraging Roma writers to submit their experiences and thoughts for broader dissemination, the Mission created space for the shaping of a Roma intellectual elite, some of which would later become its very own critics. As such, alongside Nikkinen, other critical voices would later come also in the shape of Roma artists, writers, musicians and social workers, who had previously been pupils in some of the Mission's former children's homes or who had previously had some form of affiliation with the Mission (cf. Grönfors, 2012; Grönfors & Viljanen, 2009; Roman, 2018a; Tanner & Lind, 2009). Through this, and in the context of a long-lasting critical re-assessments of its previous projects, the Gypsy Mission's influence on the shape of Roma mobilisation in the country cannot be denied, either in its attempts to combine a religious and a social dimension to their work or in their shaping of future critics of its activities.

5. From Christian Mission to Transnational Humanitarianism: The Continuities and Discontinuities of Religious Work among Roma in Finland

Throughout my fieldwork with Pentecostal Finnish Kaale, I have been made well-aware of the importance not only of figures such as Oskari Jalkio in the religious life of my interlocutors but also of the legacy of the Gypsy Misson's early work on the shape of present-day Kaale missionary movements. Furthermore, the Mission's current publication, *Romano Boodos*, is a regular presence in Kaale believers' homes and one of the most recurrent topics of conversation among Pentecostal Kaale is that of faith and missionary work. That is to say, Pentecostal Kaale are not only preoccupied with the state of their individual believer's lives but are actively involved in sharing that faith with others. This is done both nationally, within Finland, and transnationally, through the medium of Roma-focused religious humanitarian projects they organise in Eastern European countries.

In fact, among the Pentecostal Kaale missionaries I have worked with, at least three such missionary projects are active in Romania alone, two of which began in 1990, soon after the fall of the Communist Regime in the country (for more, see Roman, 2018b). These projects, often led by Finnish Kaale believers (at times jointly with non-Kaale Pentecostal members of their congregations), were conducted specifically among Roma communities abroad, rather than among impoverished communities more broadly. Oftentimes, this type of religious humanitarianism, grounded in the discourse of Pentecostal evangelism, was linked to a perceived need for social action within the countries that were being missionised, which were seen as needing development and social intervention. This was grounded in, on the one hand, the evangelical ethics of missionary work so common among Evangelical communities more broadly (see Elisha, 2011; Kwayu & Stambach, 2013; Malkki, 2015) and, on the other hand, the stated necessities of reaching out to other Roma communities, in other countries. In a sense, this was a form of both 'missionary work,' 'social work,' and 'Roma work.'

Most importantly, in all the projects that I came across, the emphasis was unequivocally placed on the issue of 'development' and education of Roma children within missionised settlements. Likewise, the notion of children as 'the future' of Roma communities was a recurrent theme within all of these missionary projects (cf. Roman, 2018b, 2019). Moreover, while each project would have their specific focus, all of them argued for the necessity of ensuring that the missionised Roma communities attained an equal footing within their majority society and the access to the means for achieving that. In that sense, though shaped in the language of Evangelism, a discourse of modern-day emancipation lay grounded in the emphasis placed on education. For them, that access was seen as being granted by the upbringing of children, as a pathway to shaping a different life for their community.

Some of the most common means of approaching and achieving these goals were also reminiscent of the early projects of the Gypsy Mission in Finland: such as setting up day-centres for children, food cantines, preschool facilities within the missionised areas, the training of local pastors, etc. Through this, present-day religious mobilisation among Roma in Finland attained not only a transnational dimension but re-approached the topic of children's future (and, more broadly, the future of the Roma community itself) through the discourse of economic and social development. Though in distinct ways, these were also pivotal in the initial stages of the Gypsy Mission.

Nevertheless, the present-day manifestations of Kaale missionary work attain new meanings and dimensions, having gone from a primarily Roma-focused/non-Roma led movement, which aimed at bringing up the social status of Roma in Finland, to a Roma-focused/Roma-led transnational engagement, shaped in the language of modern-day developmentalism. While that which brings them together are the focus on social inclusion and economic development, the main actors engaging in the leadership of these projects are no longer non-Roma evangelists but, rather, Kaale missionaries from so-called 'developed' Western countries, conducting their work among impoverished Roma communities in Eastern Europe. Through this, the future of these projects and the role they will eventually play in shaping a form of transnational Roma identity among its protagonists provide interesting and fruitful grounds to understand the complexity and diversity of 'emancipation' and 'mobilisation' processes, from both a historical and a contemporary perspective.

For this reason, this article aimed to highlight the necessity for both a historical and national contextualisation of the shapes that Roma mobilisation(s) may take, wherein Finland provides an important additional example, especially when compared to Roma/Gypsy emancipation movements in other European countries (Marushiakova & Popov, 2017, in press; Matei, 2010b). This, I believe, invites further reflection on the continuities and discontinuities between early emancipatory movements and present-day forms of Roma activism. Most importantly, it also highlights the active role Roma/Gypsies/Kaale have always played in the history of social mobilisations in their respective countries, as agents and protagonists of their own lives and as actively contributing to shaping the future of their communities.

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The author declares no conflict of interests.

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