

The Roma/Gypsies of Europe: a persecuted people

'The treatment of Roma/Gypsies has become a litmus test for a humane society. Their widespread suffering is now one of Europe's most pressing-but most neglected-human rights issues.' **Margaret Brearley**

Summary

Second to the Jews, the Roma are Europe's oldest non-Christian minority. In many European countries which now have a minimal Jewish presence, Roma have taken over the role of principal scapegoat. Their treatment has become a litmus test for a humane society. Today they suffer serious and increasing persecution. Since the collapse of communism in Central and Eastern Europe in 1989, their plight has significantly worsened in that region. Roma face new forms of discrimination and legal harassment in several West European countries, including Britain. The widespread suffering of Roma is now one of Europe's most pressing-but most neglected-human rights issues. This Policy Paper outlines the tragic history of persecution of the Roma in Europe from their arrival in the fourteenth century to barbaric measures against them in the sixteenth-eighteenth centuries-including forced labour or expulsion, enslavement, forcible and permanent removal of children, hunts to the death, the imposition of the death penalty on the sole grounds that the individual was a Gypsy-and their genocidal suffering during the Second World War. Numerous parallels are drawn between the history of anti-gypsyism and the history of antisemitism. Above all, the paper focuses on the contemporary situation of Roma in various European countries. Persecution of Roma today takes many forms. Grassroots prejudice, deriving from centuries of official outlawry, runs deep and often results in public hostility and discrimination, lynchings, house-burnings and murder. Roma are a prime target for skinhead and ultra-nationalist violence, and are sometimes victims of police brutality. They are virtually always on the bottom rung of society: the severity of their health, educational and housing problems approximates that in the developing world and is more acute than in any other sector of the population. In some Central and East European countries most Roma are destitute. Since 1989 many impoverished or persecuted Roma in Central and Eastern Europe have been able to extend their nomadism (their traditional survival mechanism) across borders and seek asylum in the West. This in turn has triggered hostility, violence, repressive government legislation and forced repatriation. Although it concentrates on the urgent humanitarian needs of today's Roma, this paper also records the new measures being introduced at national and European levels, both by newly formed Roma organizations and by governmental and voluntary bodies. Concern at the unique and growing problems faced by Roma has resulted in important initiatives within the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. The paper also makes a number of recommendations for further policy initiatives on behalf of Roma.

Preface

In devoting this Policy Paper to the persecution of Roma in Europe, the Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR) is continuing the tradition of commitment to general human rights issues followed by its predecessor, the Institute of Jewish Affairs. Moreover, Jewish scholars have for many years been involved in Romany issues, both at an academic level and in political activism on behalf of Roma. It is hoped that this Policy Paper will contribute at both levels by outlining the tragic history of the oppression of Gypsies in Europe, highlighting the factual details of their current situation and proposing policy recommendations. The preparation of this paper has been long and complicated, partly because there are no Roma archives in Britain. Many of the materials used were drawn from the private libraries and document collections of two academic specialists and political activists working on behalf of Gypsies, the linguist Dr Donald Kenrick and the sociologist Dr Thomas Acton, to both of whom I am deeply indebted. I am especially grateful to Dr Paul Iganski, social researcher and a member of the JPR Research Board, for writing the policy recommendations and to Dr Donald Kenrick for providing material enabling me to update the current developments section. While there may well be ethnic and cultural overlap between Roma and other travellers (e.g. Irish travellers and the Swiss Jenisch), who also experience hostility and persecution, this paper focuses solely on Roma. For reasons of space, it cannot be comprehensive. There is no discussion of Romany communities outside Europe. Regrettably, certain countries with sizeable Gypsy populations have had to be omitted, primarily due to lack of space or of sufficient readily available material, but also because there is normally less active harassment in those countries.⁽¹⁾ Readers familiar with JPR's Antisemitism World Report and its standardized format for coverage of individual countries should not expect similar standardization in this paper. With some exceptions, such as Spain, the length of an entry reflects the relative numbers of Roma resident within that country and the acuteness of their situation. Data relating to Roma are often sparse and contradictory. Information is easier to obtain for Central and Eastern Europe than for Western Europe, with the major exceptions of Albania and the former Soviet republics. It is known that harassment of Roma is currently an increasing problem in some of the Baltic states, Belarus, Moldova and the Ukraine, but no details appear in this paper due to lack of verifiable sources. Within Europe as a whole, the history and present situation of Gypsies within a given country is often highly distinctive. Each country is therefore treated as a discrete entity and, where appropriate, a brief history of Gypsies in that country is included. Nevertheless, key common factors in the treatment of Roma do emerge. Both historical and contemporary factors have been summarized. The paper cannot claim to be an adequate reflection of the complex economic and social burdens experienced by Roma today. But it will, I hope, transmit something of their past and present suffering and alert its readers to the urgency of their plight and to the importance of protecting both the Gypsies and their unique identity.

1 All statistics of Roma populations (unless derived from government census figures, which are invariably unreliable) are taken from the Minority Rights Group report by Jean-Pierre Liegeois and Nicolae Gheorghe, *Roma/Gypsies: A European Minority* (London 1995), 7 (hereafter MRGJ). Countries/areas omitted include: Turkey (300,000-500,000), Greece (160,000- 200,000), Scandinavia (24,000-32,000), Portugal (40,000-50,000), Belgium (10,000-15,000), the Netherlands (35,000-40,000), Switzerland (30,000-35,000) and Ukraine (50,000-60,000).

Introduction

A land without Gypsies is a land without freedom.⁽²⁾

Living scattered all over Europe, not having a country to call their own, Gypsies are a true European minority, but one that does not fit in the definitions of national or linguistic minorities. Council of Europe recommendation, January 1994

The Roma are the most vilified and harassed minority in Europe today. Exact population figures are not available: in censuses many Roma conceal their identity due to the internalized racism and shame borne of persecution and/or as a survival mechanism. Numbering between 7 and 8.5 million, including over 5.2 million in Central and Eastern Europe, Roma are more despised than any other ethnic group. In opinion surveys of attitudes towards various nationalities/ethnic groups sponsored by the American Jewish Committee in a number of European countries between 1991 and 1996, respondents almost consistently voiced the greatest degree of hostility towards Gypsy communities.⁽³⁾ Referring to Roma in Central and Eastern Europe, Tom Gross wrote in 1994: 'No other group in this region ... is currently exposed to such widespread racial hatred and prejudice—and there are signs that the situation is worsening.'⁽⁴⁾

Dominant cultures tend to mistrust nomadism and autonomous, non-conformist communities. Throughout 600 years as non-Europeans in Europe, Gypsies have been consistently persecuted solely for being Gypsy. French sociologist Jean- Pierre Elegeois stated: 'The Gypsies, moving about in their nomadic groups, were seen as physically threatening and ideologically disruptive. Their very existence constituted dissidence.'⁽⁵⁾ Myths contributing to the cycle of Gypsy persecution and deprivation have abounded. Some still have wide currency—e.g. that Gypsies are thieves, abduct children and are parasites on the host community. Long-extant negative stereotypes of Gypsies have gained new force in the European media, for most people their only encounter with Gypsies.

Post-1989 The persecution of Roma has intensified during the past seven years. As the break-up of Russia's communist empire removed inhibitors of ultra- nationalist and racist sentiments and far-right movements have grown, anti-gypsyism has flourished. While no government has proposed expelling all Gypsies, some right-wing parties have made such a proposal—with popular support. Several governments, including those of Germany, France and Britain, do not want Gypsy refugees. The worsening economic and social climate in both Western and Central and Eastern Europe has reduced many Gypsies to destitution. The reaction of European Union countries to the mass migration of refugees, including many Roma, has led to increased hostility towards indigenous Gypsies, a tightening of legal controls on them and forced repatriation of most Roma refugees. Their one traditional means of fleeing persecution—escape across national borders—is now virtually closed.

Largely unprotected by local authorities and the police, European Roma communities have endured much since the major political upheavals of 1989— forced evictions from homes; expulsions from villages and towns (often with the support of local mayors); physical assault and murder by skinheads, policemen and neighbours; exclusion from public places; widespread legal discrimination; unduly harsh prison sentences and extortionate fines for petty offences; and endemic racial abuse. With reason, a Polish Rom leader, Stanslaw Stankiewicz, remarked at a Council of Europe conference on Roma in 1991: 'Today we are witnessing the new changes which are sweeping through Europe. What we see causes us great fears . . . We Roma must ask: is there room for us?'⁽⁶⁾

Contemporary problems Roma have become the pariahs of Europe, sharing a collective fate of rejection. Nicolae Gheorghe, sometime vice-president of the International Roma Union, has said: 'To be a Gypsy is not just an ethnic identity, but is also a stigma.'⁽⁷⁾ The 1995 Minority Rights Group report

on Roma/Gypsies stressed that they 'are uniquely subject to measures of control, and expulsion, among others, which affect the group as a whole, rather than a given individual under suspicion for a precise reason.'⁽⁸⁾

Most Roma are poor; each year their poverty increases and their plight deteriorates. Their life expectancy is up to a third lower than that of non- Gypsies. Roma throughout Europe have high birth and death rates, high infant mortality, early marriage and large families; many suffer from malnutrition and diseases now rare in the general population. They thus experience many of the hardships associated with populations in developing countries.⁽⁹⁾ Their situation is one of 'powerlessness in the face of oppression and violence'.⁽¹⁰⁾

Ways forward Yet there are signs of hope.⁽¹¹⁾ A new generation of Rom intellectuals and activists has created an infrastructure of Gypsy organizations which work together with EU and governmental bodies to ameliorate conditions for Roma. Gypsies are now recognized as an ethnic minority or nationality in Britain, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary and Slovakia; museums of Gypsy life have been established in the Czech Republic and Poland; Macedonia and Slovakia now have broadcasts for Roma on radio and television. Some governments (notably that of Hungary) help to fund Gypsy clubs and societies.

Projects to increase awareness among police and teachers of the special needs of Gypsy communities are being undertaken in several countries.

This paper will explore the historical background to the contemporary situation of Roma, their present persecution and current projects and proposals to alleviate their suffering.

Terminology⁽¹²⁾ *Gypsy* A term used to denote ethnic groups formed by the dispersal of commercial, nomadic and other groups from within India from the tenth century onwards, and their mixing with European and other groups throughout their diasporic history. The term is not intrinsically derogatory and is now used widely by Romany leaders and writers.

Roma/Rom A broad term used to signify (a) ethnic groups (e.g. Kalderash, Eovari) who speak the 'Vlach', 'Xoraxane' or 'Rom' varieties of the Romani dialect; (b) any person identified to others as 'Tsigane' in Central and Eastern Europe and Turkey, plus those outside the region of East European extraction; (c) Romany people in general.

Sinti Long-established Gypsies in Germany.

2 A prayer in *Divesò* a Gypsy newsletter in Albania. 3 See Renae Cohen and Jennifer Golub, *Attitudes Toward Jews in Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia: A Comparative Survey* (1991); Lev Gudkov and Alex Levinson, *Attitudes Toward Jews in the Soviet Union* (1992); Fntz Karmasm, *Austrian Attitudes Toward Jews, Israel, and the Holocaust* (1992); Zora Butorova and Martin Butora, *Attitudes Toward Jews in Independent Slovakia* (1995); Jennifer Golub, *British Attitudes Toward Jews and Other Minorities* (1993); Jennifer Golub, *Current German Attitudes Toward Jews and Other Minorities* (1994); Renae Cohen and Jennifer Golub, *Current Austrian Attitudes Toward Jews and the Holocaust* (1995); Renae Cohen and Jennifer Golub, *Knowledge and Remembrance of the Holocaust in Poland* (1995); *Current Russian Attitudes Toward Jews and the Holocaust: A Public-Opinion Survey* (1996). 4 Tom Gross, *Jewish Chronicle*, 25 February 1994. 5 Jean-Pierre Liegeois, *Gypsies: An Illustrated*

History, trans. Tony Berrett (London 1985), 104. 6 'The Gypsy people and Europe: continuation of the tradition in a changing Europe', Council of Europe (CE) Conference Report, July 1991,30. 7 *The Times*, 30 September 1992. 8 MKG,13. 9 'The situation of Gypsies (Roma and Smti) in Europe', European Committee on Migration (CDMG), CE, May 1995, 4. 10 Diane Tong, *Gypsies: A Multi-disciplinary Annotated Bibliography* (New York 1995), 171. 11 See especially section 6 of this paper. 12 Taken from MRG, 6. Except in certain specific contexts, the terms 'Gypsy', 'Romany' and 'Roma/Rom' are used more or less interchangeably in this paper.

List of abbreviations

CDMG European Committee on Migration (of the Council of Europe) CE Council of Europe
CERA European Centre for Research and Action on Racism and Antisemitism CSCE
Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe EC European Community EU European
Union IRR Institute of Race Relations, London MRG Minority Rights Group NGO Non-
governmental organization ODIHR Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (of
OSCE) OECD Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development OSCE Organization
for Security and Co-operation in Europe UNHCR Office of the United Nations High Commissioner
for Refugees

1/ Historical outline

It is certain that the Gypsies have at all times been godless, wicked people who are harried with complete justification.(13)

Origins The Roma are, like the Jews, one of the oldest surviving minority groups in Europe. It is assumed, on linguistic and ethnic grounds, that they descend from several tribes or castes which left northern India between 500-1000 CE, perhaps following Muslim invasions. The Roma comprise many diverse tribal groupings, distinct but linguistically and ethnically related. Although culturally heterogeneous, they are linked as one people by the Romani language, which has more than 100 dialects but a common core vocabulary, two-thirds deriving from Sanskrit or Hindi. Other uniting factors include: a strong core culture and value system, cleanliness/pollution taboos, autonomous systems of justice, traditions of purposeful nomadism and a shared history of persecution and group solidarity.

Roma who were long settled in Central and Western Europe were often given derogatory names by non-Gypsies (*gaje*, *gadze*), reflecting their presumed origins ('Gypsies' from 'Little Egypt', claimed by some Roma as their country of origin and perhaps referring to Rom settlements in the eastern Mediterranean) and presumed heresy ('Heiden' in German; 'Cigane', 'Tsigane' and 'Zigeuner' out of confusion with the heretical Byzantine sect from Asia Minor of 'Atsinganos', 'untouchables'). But long-established Roma groups developed other names for themselves—Cale ('blacks') in Spain and southern France, Romanichals in England, Sinti in Germany and Manouches in France. Later nineteenth-century arrivals from the Balkans, following the abolition of Roma slavery in 1855-6, included tribes named from traditional skills (Kalderash, or copper-smiths; Lovari, or horse-dealers; Ursari, or bear-leaders).

Roma in medieval Europe After their departure from India, Roma migrated slowly westwards in family or tribal groups through Iran and Armenia, reaching Constantinople in the eleventh century. By the late fourteenth century they were widely established in the Balkans and beyond. By 1427 they were travelling throughout Western Europe in groups of 100-300 or more and had reached Saragossa, Augsburg, Eeipzig, Zurich, Hamburg, Brussels and Rostock.

In pre-Reformation Europe, paganism had been extinguished. Marginal groups—including heretics, early proto-Protestants and Jews—were at best tolerated, at worst harshly persecuted and killed or, in the case of Jews in numerous states, banished. Europe meant Christendom—Roman Catholic in the West, Orthodox in the East. Although essentially animist, Roma were not immediately persecuted. Claiming to be penitent pilgrims under papal or imperial protection, they initially inspired a warm reception by ecclesiastical and secular authorities and local populations, despite their exotic dress and outlandish appearance. Official gifts of alms, food and clothing were the norm. But although Roma leaders—frequently non-Gypsy and called 'dukes' or 'counts' in contemporary chronicles—produced often authentic documents of safe conduct from emperors, nobility or the Pope, hospitality soon gave way to hostility.

Beginnings of repression As constantly shifting groups of 'pilgrims' returned, benevolence waned. Some local populations were alienated by incidents of petty theft; the Church opposed fortune-telling and healing; racism triggered by a dark skin, oriental dress and presumed Islamic provenance increasingly provoked contempt. More importantly, as increasingly centralized nation- states grappled, during the sixteenth century, with the massive social upheavals caused by early agrarian capitalism (including unemployment, destitution and increased vagrancy due to field enclosures and abandoned villages), harsh legislative measures were introduced to curb begging and all itinerants.

Linked to these harsh measures, and perhaps to new theological intolerance and fear of popular uprisings (such as the German Peasants' Revolt in 1523) inspired partly by the incipient Reformation, were 'the sustained genocidal persecution and enslavement [of Roma] which appeared in the third and fourth decades of the sixteenth century'.⁽¹⁴⁾ In this more repressive climate Gypsies proved a ready-made scapegoat. Banishment, refusals of safe conduct passes and repressive legislation designed to outlaw nomadic Gypsies replaced charity virtually everywhere by the end of the sixteenth century.

Roma in Eastern Europe The fate of Roma in Eastern Europe varied widely (cf. sections on individual countries); they became predominantly sedentary, as opposed to West European Gypsies, who remained predominantly nomadic. In the north they experienced expulsion, forced assimilation and extermination in turn. Under the Ottoman Empire (Albania, Bulgaria and other parts of the Balkans), Roma generally fared better than in Christendom, although taxation could be harsh. Roma occupied separate quarters of towns and villages. They were free to remain nomadic and not specifically subject to repressive laws. In Wallachia and Moldavia, however, they were perpetual slaves from the fourteenth to the mid-nineteenth century, and bear the scars of slavery even today.⁽¹⁵⁾ Without rights and as the property of secular princes or monasteries, they were in the absolute power of their masters, who could dispose of them at will, and torture and kill them without penalty. Mihail Kogalmceanu, a campaigner for the emancipation of Roma slaves, wrote in 1837: 'The Europeans are organizing philanthropic societies for the abolition of slavery in America, yet in the bosom of their own continent of Europe, there are 400,000 Gypsies who are slaves, and 200,000 more equally victim to barbarousness.'⁽¹⁶⁾

Roma in Western Europe In Western Europe the fate of Roma varied in detail from country to country and from decade to decade, but most states sought at some stage to annihilate the Gypsy presence within their borders, particularly if it was nomadic. In various countries at various times, organized Gypsy hunts became a fashionable sport. To be a Rom was a crime; if apprehended, the penalty could be torture, flogging, branding and banishment. The penalty for a second offence was death by hanging for men and drowning for women. To deter Romanies from entering a particular territory, public warning signs showing the flogging and branding of a Romany were often displayed near borders.

Male Roma were often sent to the royal galleys, serving as chained oarsmen for many years. Women and children could be forcibly banished. In Hungary, Germany, Spain and elsewhere, children as young as two or four could be forcibly removed from their mothers and given to non-Romanies to rear. (The fact that Gypsy children often sought to escape and their parents attempted to rescue them may have led to the myth that Gypsies steal non-Gypsy children. In fact, non-Gypsies stole Gypsy children for forced assimilation.)

France The most difficult period for Roma in France was the late seventeenth century. Laws enacted in 1666 decreed that all Roma males were to be sent to the galleys for life. Louis XIV strengthened these laws in 1682: boys too young for the galleys were to be placed in hospices, women and girls branded and : banished. Nobility and magistrates were forbidden to shelter Romanies on pain of losing both office and domains. Such laws were enforced as rigorously as small police forces permitted. Romany bands were hunted down, many were sent to the galleys and clan groups were dispersed. Small family units became sedentary or sought shelter in isolated mountain or border regions.

Germany In some German states, all adult Romanies faced torture, flogging, branding and banishment, while males could be sentenced to life imprisonment with hard labour. If banished Romanies reappeared, they were liable to hanging without trial. The Netherlands pursued an equally repressive policy: harsh measures, bordering in the eighteenth century on genocide, included organized large-scale Gypsy hunts, hard labour and the gallows.

England In England, specific legislation adopted against Gypsies was designed to expel all who chose not to become sedentary, on pain of forfeiture of life and property. Wandering Romanies "were hanged for nomadism until the 1650s in England and 1714 in Scotland. Lesser penalties for being apprehended as Gypsies remained, including whipping, hard labour or perpetual banishment. Children between the ages of five and fourteen could be taken into unpaid bonded service until the age of eighteen for girls and twenty-four for boys (such legislation also applied to non-Gypsy beggars). Laws attacking vagabondage continued to name 'Gypsies' specifically as late as the Vagrant Act of 1824.

Roma and the Church Although, from early on, Roma had often sought to baptize their children and have Church marriages and funerals, the Church was largely hostile towards them until nineteenth-century Protestant revival movements encouraged active proselytizing among them. In Central and Eastern Europe, slaves belonging to churches and monasteries were treated even more cruelly than those of the nobility. In 1568 Pope Pius V sought to expel all Gypsies from the domain of the Roman Catholic Church, prompting Spain, Portugal and France to begin shipping Roma as slaves to colonies in Africa and the Americas.

Forced assimilation in the eighteenth century By the eighteenth century, the forcible sedentarization and assimilation of Roma had replaced the aims of total exclusion and death. The ultimate aim was the annihilation of Romany identity and language (and even, in Hungary and Spain, their very name) rather than of the Roma themselves. The measures designed to achieve this could be brutal, and Roma sought to evade them wherever possible. Forced settlement with prohibition on travel was common; children remained vulnerable to forcible seizure by the state until recently (between 1926 and 1973 Switzerland's Pro Juventute organization took hundreds of Jenisch children to be reared by non-Gypsy families); in some countries Romanies were forbidden to marry one another. In Spain all male Roma were rounded up in June 1749 and sent to penal establishments and mercury mines; many died of exhaustion and disease, and some were not released for sixteen years.

Strategies for Roma survival It is remarkable that the Roma have survived, given the harshness with which they have been treated throughout Europe. They subsisted on the geographical margins (border lands, remote or mountainous regions) and the economic margins of society, working among rural peasants or the urban poor as skilled craftsmen, itinerant smiths, musicians, peddlers, casual labourers and seasonal farm-workers. From the sixteenth century onwards, army commanders valued Rom smiths as makers and menders of weapons. Gypsies were illiterate and without books. But they possessed a rich heritage—valuable crafts and technical skills acquired in India or Byzantium (including weaving, smelting, making shot and basket-making); facility in music, dance and entertainment; a profound knowledge of the natural world and its free products to sell or transform for their own use.

Roma learned to adapt quickly and with versatility to changed laws or circumstances, rapidly acquiring new crafts and means of earning an independent livelihood. Their widely attested love of children, close kinship bonds and social solidarity forged strong ties of loyalty and identity within their particular Roma grouping. Moreover, they could frequently count on support among the nobility and gentry, as well as among some elements of the local peasantry and urban working class, among whom they lived often harmoniously in 'cultural osmosis',⁽¹⁷⁾ providing valued peripatetic services to settled populations. Indeed, it is known that numbers of *gadze* joined the Gypsies permanently.

Survival mechanisms included: developing a financially independent 'culture of invisibility'; patterns of migrating and emigrating in search of work; flexible habits of seasonal nomadism; and temporary or longer-term settlement according to opportunities for employment.

Roma in European culture From the late eighteenth century onwards there was some amelioration in attitudes towards Roma. Scholars, particularly philologists, began to appreciate the antiquity and rich provenance of Romani language and customs. The Romantic interest in the Volk awakened interest in Gypsies as a distinct 'people'. Romany instrumental music, song and dance became popular from Spain to Hungary; leading Rom musicians entertained aristocrats in Hungary and Russia, a few even marrying into the aristocracy. Numerous non-Gypsy composers, including Liszt, Bizet, Brahms, Rachmaninov and Bartok, were inspired by Gypsy music. Artists frequently painted romanticized portraits of Gypsies.

Whereas earlier literature, particularly drama and clerical writing, had treated Roma with contempt, casting them in an entirely negative light, Goethe was one of the first to characterize a Romany chief as a 'noble savage'. While the semi-autobiographical novels of George Borrow, including *Lavengro* (1851)

and Romany Rye (1857), drew on prolonged though ambiguous first-hand experience of Romanies as 'real' people, many nineteenth-century writers like Sir Walter Scott romanticized Gypsies or, conversely, portrayed them as lawless outcasts. In nineteenth-century France and elsewhere Roma were still banished or imprisoned simply for being Gypsies; in Germany children were forcibly removed to orphanages until the end of the century. Negative stereotypes abounded. (And still do: Gypsiologist Diane Tong recently wrote: 'Gypsies are often devalued as people at the same time that their arts are valued and imitated world-wide.'[18](#)) Yet during the nineteenth century some churches and humanitarian bodies began to grow aware of the increasing poverty of many Roma communities.

Nineteenth-century developments While deep-seated prejudice remained widespread, some persecution from official sources lessened. Emancipation of Romany serfs and slaves in Wallachia and Moldavia was completed in 1864 and coincided with large migrations of diverse Romany tribes from the Balkans and Hungary. Exotic in appearance, speaking strongly Romanian- influenced dialects, the Kalderash and other occupation-based tribes emigrated to the Americas and settled widely throughout Europe, providing a marked contrast to the long-settled 'Gypsies' and today forming important subgroups of the Romany people.

Yet in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the influx of Rom into Europe triggered new outbreaks of anti-Gypsy legislation and prejudice, particularly within the German state, Switzerland and France, and led to widespread attempts to control Gypsy nomadism prior to the First World War.

13 *Universal-Lexicon alter Wissenschaften und Künste* (Eeipzig 1735), quoted in Angus Eraser, *The Gypsies* (Oxford and Cambridge, MA 1992), 190. For the historical section I am indebted to Fraser and to David M. Crowe, *A History of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia* (Eondon 1995); cf. also Ian Hancock, *The Pariah Syndrome: An Account of Gypsy Slavery and Persecution* (Ann Arbor, MI 1987). 14 Nicolae Gheorghe and Thomas Acton, 'Dealing with multiculturality: minority, ethnic, national and human rights', *OSCE ODIHR Bulletin*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1995, 31. 15 Marcel Courtiade, 'Quelques reperes psych(olog)iques dans l'histoire des Roms de l'Est', in Claire Auzias, *Les Families Roms d'Europe de l'Est* (Paris 1995), 15-23. 16 Quoted m Hancock, 33. 17 Jean-Pierre Liégeois, *Gypsies and Travellers: Soeio-cultural Data, Socio-political Data* (Strasbourg: CE 1987), 17. 18 Tong,33.

2/ The forgotten holocaust

Anti-Gypsy racism prior to the Jewish Holocaust The social Darwinism deriving from theories of Aryan racial superiority propogated by Richard Wagner, Count Gobineau (*L'Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines*, 1853-5) and Houston Stewart Chamberlain led to increased contempt for Roma. In 1876 Cesare Lombroso, in *L'uomo delinquente*, typified Roma as atavistic and criminal.[19](#) Decrees to deport or exclude foreign Roma and pressurize nomadic Roma to settle were passed in Germany at Bismarck's instigation. In 1899 research on Roma began in a Munich institute, later named the Central Office for Fighting the Gypsy Nuisance. The institute was created by the Bavarian police and was closed only in 1970.[20](#)

In 1906 the Prussian government issued a directive, 'Zur Bekämpfung des Zigeunerunwesens'

('Combating the Gypsy nuisance'), listing bilateral agreements with nine neighbouring states on forcible expulsion of Roma from Prussia. A 1926 law aimed at 'Gypsies and the work-shy', described by Joachim Hohmann as 'a legally encoded requirement to destroy specific Gypsy culture',⁽²¹⁾ forbade nomadism for families with school-age children, outlawed travelling in groups and curbed Gypsy ownership of animals. Further measures forbade the carrying of weapons and made fingerprinting and close police supervision of all Gypsies compulsory.

Nazism and Roma The Nazi Party encouraged research into Roma genealogy. Dr Robert Ritter, who in 1936 founded what became the Racial Hygiene and Population Biology Research Unit of the Department of Health in Berlin, had by 1942 created files on 30,000 Sinti, Roma and part-Sinti in German territories. Nazi researchers regarded Roma, although 'Aryan' in origin, as asocial, -with 'a criminal element in their whole make-up',⁽²²⁾ and redefined them as 'non-Aryan'. Intermarriage with pure- or part-Roma was seen as a threat to the German nation; so too were their high birth-rate and alleged welfare costs. Ritter regarded Roma as primitive and mentally backward.⁽²³⁾ He recommended sterilization for all part-Sinti; his colleague, the racial scientist Eva Justin, recommended it for all Roma.

Persecution during the 1930s From 1934 onwards some German Gypsies were forced into policed settlements. In 1936 400 were sent to Dachau. In June 1936 a decree naming nomadic Gypsies 'a plague' required the compulsory expulsion of foreign Gypsies and intense controls over those with German citizenship. Late in 1938 the first racial law against Roma and Sinti, 'Fight against the Gypsy Menace', was enacted and in March 1939 passes were issued. These were grey for non-Gypsies, brown for pure Roma, brown with blue stripes for part-Roma (those with two or more Rom or Sinti great-grandparents—a stricter classification than for part- Jews). The 1938 law aimed explicitly at the 'racial separation' of Roma and Sinti from Germans, the prevention of miscegenation and tight control of all pure- and part-Roma and Sinti.

Measures in the early 1940s In 1940, 3,000 German and Austrian Roma and Sinti were deported to Polish camps or ghettos; the remaining 27,000 continued to be forced into holding camps. Following the German occupation of Austria in 1938, Austrian Roma were sent to work camps, concentration camps (e.g. Ravensbruck, Mauthausen and Buchenwald) or to a special Roma camp in Lackenbach. Roma in territories annexed or conquered by Germany were subject to similar treatment. Some fascist governments allied to Germany (particularly Croatia, Slovakia and Romania) initiated persecution of Roma without apparent pressure from Germany.⁽²⁴⁾

Roma in concentration camps and death camps The decision to annihilate all Roma was probably taken in mid-1942, after the Wannsee conference. But already by January 1942 several thousand Roma had been gassed in closed vans at Chelmno.⁽²⁵⁾ Because records are incomplete and the statistics disputed, estimates of the total number of Sinti, Roma and part-Sinti murdered in the Holocaust vary from 200,000-500,000. Auschwitz-Birkenau contained a special Roma camp, where families were kept together, probably in order to forestall revolt. At least 19,000 were murdered or died there.⁽²⁶⁾ Many Roma not allocated to the special camp also died in Auschwitz. Thousands of Romanies were killed in Belsen and Buchenwald and in extermination camps, including Belzec, Sobibor, Majdanek and Treblinka. Many were subjected to inhumane experimentation at Dachau (salt injections), Natzweiler (typhus injections), Sachsenhausen (mustard gas) and elsewhere. In Auschwitz Dr Mengele selected many Romanies, including children, for experimentation. Many Rom men, women and teenagers

underwent forced sterilization.

While over half of all German, Czech, Austrian, Latvian and Polish Roma died, some communities suffered even heavier losses. Virtually all Roma in Belgium, Holland, Estonia and Lithuania were annihilated, as were those in Croatia, where the Catholic-supported fascist Ustasa perpetrated mass atrocities against the Roma. Rom communities in the USSR, Romania, Serbia and Hungary each lost thousands, massacred by the Nazis. Donald Kenrick and other scholars point to documentation showing that the ultimate aim of the Nazis was the "complete extermination" of the Roma people'.⁽²⁷⁾

Long-term consequences on Roma of the Second World War These bald statements mask the prolonged anguish of Gypsy suffering—starvation, separation from loved ones, brutal treatment and inhumane degradation before an agonizing death. Those who survived the concentration camps were often physically maimed, always destitute, and usually bereft of all family. Even those who escaped the worst horrors of persecution endured years of terror followed by the large-scale forced migrations after the war. Pre-war patterns of relative integration had been shattered. Roma remained outcasts, often stateless and without papers, their suffering unacknowledged and without compensation from the German state. Many of today's problems faced by Europe's Roma are a direct long-term consequence of the war-time destruction of life, community and way of life. Moreover, it should be remembered that 'the Nazis' well-publicized persecution of Gypsies followed centuries of historical precedent by virtually all peoples of Europe'.⁽²⁸⁾

While there are recorded war-time incidents of 'righteous non-Gypsies' helping persecuted Roma,⁽²⁹⁾ no European government spoke out on behalf of the Roma, either before or during the war. The Catholic Church ignored their plight completely, although many Roma were Catholic. While a few Rom survivors began collecting their memories after the war, there was little documentation of the collective Gypsy fate until the mid-1960s when Jewish scholars committed themselves to gathering it. Only in September 1994, in Vienna, did the first international conference on the Nazi genocide of Roma take place.⁽³⁰⁾

19 Fraser, 249. 20 Hancock, 61. 21 Joachim Hohmann, *Geschichte der ZigeHnerverfolgung in Deutschland* (Frankfurt and New York 1988), 81. 22 Quoted in Donald Kenrick and Gratton Puxon, *The Destiny of Europe's Gypsies* (Eondon and Brighton 1972), 63 n33. A new edition of this book was published as *Gypsies under the Swastika* (Hatfield, Elertfordshire 1995). 23 Fraser, 260. 24 Donald Kenrick, 'The Nazis and the Gypsies: a fresh look', *Jewish Quarterly*, no. 156, winter 1994/5, 46. 25 Martin Gilbert, *The Holocaust: The Jewish Tragedy* (Glasgow 1987), 254-67. 26 See Kenrick and Puxon for a full account of Rom suffering during the Holocaust, esp. 140ft. on Auschwitz. 27 Donald Kenrick, 'Fetter to the editor', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 4, no. 2, 1989, 251-4. 28 William A. Duna, *Gypsies. A Persecuted Race* (Minneapolis 1984), quoted in long, 174. 29 Kenrick, 'The Nazis and the Gypsies', 47; see also Kenrick and Puxon. 30 Mirella Karpati, 'L'altro Olocausto', in *Lacio Drom* (Rome), vol. 30, no. 6, November-December 1994, 17-20.

3/ Parallels with and contrasts to the Jewish experience

Historical parallels with antisemitism Roma have much in common with Jews in their experience of

persecution within Christian Europe. (There are, incidentally, Jewish Gypsies in Belarus and Sofia.) For both Roma and Jews, their suffering and annihilation in the twentieth century are the culmination of centuries of oppression, partly motivated by religious intolerance and racism. Some Rom leaders have noted the parallel. Nicolae Gheorghe recently commented: 'Gypsies are now the scapegoats as the Jews were before.'⁽³¹⁾ Kurt Holl of Cologne stated in 1993: 'The East European Roma have today the same role as the Ostjuden early in this century.'⁽³²⁾

There are many historical parallels. Hostility towards Roma and Jews has similar roots—fear of the unknown, of religious difference; envy (of the Romanies' apparent freedom); hatred of 'the outsider'; mistrust of possible 'spies'; simple chauvinism and racism. Roma, like Jews, were attacked in sermons, books, drama and popular art, and thus demonized in the popular mind. (Stereotypes of the Gypsy woman or the Jewess as a dangerous seductress and of the male Gypsy or Jew as a dark sinister threat featured widely in literature.) The spread of the Black Death in the fourteenth century was attributed by at least one nineteenth-century writer to both Gypsies and Jews.⁽³³⁾ Roma had their own 'blood libel', the myth that Gypsies abduct non-Gypsy children. Like Jews, Roma were subject to harsh fines and taxation and barred from numerous trades and legitimate economic practices. Historically, Jews migrated for similarly complex motives as Roma today—to escape persecution and improve their economic situation. Both Jews and Roma coped with suffering by distancing themselves inwardly from the oppressor, through jokes, songs and stories expressing ridicule. With significant exceptions, neither Jews nor Roma resorted as a people to armed struggle in defence of their cause.

Contemporary parallels with antisemitism Like Jews of old, migrating or nomadic Roma are now herded into marginal ghettos and regarded as pariahs. In Western Europe exotic newcomers from Eastern Europe are often resented by long-established Gypsies, just as late nineteenth-century immigrant 'Ostjuden' were often resented by assimilated German and Austrian Jews. (Moreover, non-Jews who publicly opposed Jewish immigration into Britain also opposed that of Lovari Gypsies in the early twentieth century at the time of the first Aliens Act.⁽³⁴⁾)

Like Jews, Roma function as a litmus test of democratic society. Both Jews and Roma were without significant support from the churches before and during the Holocaust. Both are vulnerable in post-communist countries to the resurgence of pre-war stereotypes and myths, dormant under communism. Like Jews, Roma are victims of neo-fascism and ultra-nationalism. Both Jews and Roma have been targeted by skinheads and verbally attacked by ultra-nationalists.

In some countries the 'Gypsy problem' is perceived as the dominant question, much like the pre-war 'Jewish problem'. Proposed 'solutions' to the 'Gypsy problem' echo earlier fascist 'solutions'. They include: segregation in public places; proposals to lower the birth rate; forced evictions from homes; forced expulsion from some countries; police curfews; discriminatory legislation.

Contrasts to the Jewish experience There are, however, major differences between the victimization of Jews and that of Roma. The most evident of these is the existence of Israel. Prominent Romany leaders have stressed the vulnerability of Romanies in this regard. Rajko Djunc of Yugoslavia has said: '[Unlike Jews] we have no country and no powerful lobbies and politicians see no political capital in defending us.'⁽³⁵⁾ The German Rom leader, Romani Rose, lamented at the fiftieth anniversary commemoration of *Kristallnacht*: 'For Sinti and Rom there is no State of Israel. . . All Gypsies are in diaspora; but there is no ... national home, nor even any wide recognition of the nationhood of

Romanies.'⁽³⁶⁾ There is no parallel today to Zionism. Pan-Gypsy visions of shared peoplehood or 'Romanistan' pale before the urgent, practical needs of European Roma.

Other differences are internal—for example, Rom attitudes to education. Many Roma mistrust state education, following centuries of exclusion from school, rejection within school, state persecution and necessary reliance on their own resourcefulness. Roma educate their children thoroughly, on gender-based lines, within the family. From early on, fathers teach sons and mothers daughters, passing on skills, crafts and experience, encouraging the ability to take initiatives and decisions at an early age. Children aged eleven and twelve become part of the economic unit, contributing to the family's income. Meeting immediate needs through informally acquired skills and a flexible combination of trades has to take precedence over long-term investment in formal education. Freedom from dependence on wage labour is highly prized, facilitating mobility and a communal lifestyle. Children who do attend school face rejection by teachers and other pupils and often receive little encouragement from parents deeply suspicious—with good historical reason—of non-Gypsy society: 'The legacy of centuries of vilification and persecution . . . informs the living memory of Gypsies everywhere. The passionately held view of most Gypsies today is still that gadje are dangerous, not to be trusted, and, except for business dealings, to be avoided.'⁽³⁷⁾

Traditional antisemitic rhetoric has shifted on to the Gypsy, who is widely—and wrongly—perceived as a parasite, a criminal, a threat to stable society. Few positive images of the Romany now remain to counteract negative ones; in most of Europe, nineteenth-century romantic images of the Gypsy as a fancy-free rover or passionate performer of music or dance have long since evaporated, except in the theatre. The many strengths in Romany life—intense family love, loyalty and hospitality; courage in adversity; friendship and generosity; the constant warm presence of other Roma, including in sickness and old age (a Rom is rarely alone); stringent cleanliness; collective *joie de vivre*—are simply unknown to the outsider. Despite the persistence of antisemitism, therefore, Roma are today considerably more unpopular in Europe than Jews.

Until recently, Roma have been relatively disorganized. The many new Rom organizations were, and are, quite disunited, with little international co-ordination. Roma are without internationally known spokespeople, though national leaders are increasingly emerging on to the international scene. Whereas Jewish communities contain a disproportionate number of professionals and intellectuals, most Romanies remain illiterate. The few who become professionals often abandon their Romany identity. Moreover, there may be some correlation between the mass immigration of Roma into some regions and a rise in petty theft and burglary (directly related to high unemployment, reduced opportunities for self-employment, high birth rates and extreme poverty among Roma). Some of the main champions of Roma are prominent Jews. Former German Chancellor Helmut

Schmidt for the first time publicly acknowledged the Romany holocaust in 1982 only after a Romany conference in Gottingen in the previous year, at which Jewish personalities, including Simon Wiesenthal, Heinz Galinski, Miriam Novitch and Donald Kenrick, had highlighted the war-time persecution of Roma.⁽³⁸⁾ The Slovakian Council of Christians and Jews has strongly supported local Roma.⁽³⁹⁾ In 1986 the Cologne branch of the Council of Jewish-Christian Understanding supported 100 destitute Romanies, including seventy children, forcibly evicted from Holland. Ignatz Bubis, leader of Germany's Jewish community, has spoken out strongly on behalf of Roma, as have Serge Klarsfeld and the organization *Fils et filles de deportes de France*. In the United States the new Romani-Jewish

Alliance publishes regular newsletters. High-level Jewish-Roma contacts are increasing and bode well for the future.

31 *The Times*, 30 September 1992. 32 *Regards*, June-August 1993; cf. Gilad Margalit, 'Antigypsyism in the political culture of the Federal Republic of Germany: a parallel with antisemitism?'. *Analysis of Current Trends in Antisemitism* no. 9 (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem: Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism, 1996). 33 Theodor Tetzner, *Geschichte der Zigeuner, ihre Herkunft, Natur und Art* (Weimar and Ilmenau 1835), quoted in Hohmann, 50. 34 Colin Holmes, 'The German Gypsy question in Britain, 1904-6', *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, vol. 1, no. 4, 1978, 248-67 (quoted in Tong, 177). 35 *International Herald Tribune*, 31 July 1990. 36 *Regards*, June-August 1993. 37 Isabel Fonseca, 'Among the Gypsies', *New Yorker*, 25 September 1995, 95. 38 *Regards*, June-August 1993, 38; Donald Kenrick, 'The Romany Gypsies of Europe', 1. 39 *Tablet*, 9 October 1993.

4/ Roma experience since the Second World War

Under communism 'People at all points of the political spectrum have wanted to change the Gypsies.'⁽⁴⁰⁾ This has been true of fascist, free-market capitalist, social democratic and communist governments. The Roma had at one time been free to enjoy a certain cosmopolitanism due to their peripatetic life-style (often in a radius of hundreds of miles) and disregard for national boundaries. This brought them under some suspicion in the new monolithic communist nation-states whose early sympathy and cultural and economic assistance to Roma as 'victims of capitalism' soon evaporated. Post-war communist governments compelled Roma to abandon nomadism. Use of the Romani language was discouraged. Forced assimilation caused a virtually complete sedentarization as well as the widespread loss of identity and traditional cultural values. Viable life-styles, developed over many decades and based on self-sufficiency and prized skills, were destroyed. Projects funded in some countries to improve educational standards and provide better housing, and compulsory employment in state factories and farms in Eastern Europe, which provided a safety net against destitution, could not compensate for the loss. A few Roma became leading communists, though they did not function as representatives of their people.

Former communist regimes post-1989 Lacking both education and land, Romanies were at a considerable disadvantage once communist structures began to disintegrate. While some who possessed entrepreneurial skills could grasp new opportunities for free trading, the majority found that their situation worsened in the infant market economy. Most Roma housing remains wretched, often isolated and without water, electricity or sanitation. Unemployment among Roma has risen dramatically (to 60 per cent for adult Roma in urban Bulgarian ghettos),⁽⁴¹⁾ while those in employment often earn wages below subsistence level. The lifting of oppressive restrictions encouraged non-Gypsies, themselves prey to economic distress, to express open animosity towards Roma. Nicolae Gheorghe has stated: 'Before the revolution, only the police were violent to Romanies. Now the whole population can be.'⁽⁴²⁾

Unemployment has encouraged some young Roma to engage in petty crime, which in turn has increased anti-Gypsy sentiment. Unprecedented open nationalism, moreover, has focused latent racism sharply on Roma, kindling an irrational, centuries-old hatred, while Roma feel unprotected in the face

of persistent skinhead intimidation and violence.

In the area of criminality, Romanies paradoxically act as scapegoats for populations facing political uncertainty, a sharp decline in their national economies and unprecedented financial insecurity. Since 1989 large-scale crime and fraud have increased massively. Former members of the *nomenclatura* and security forces, indigenous mafia gangs and international crime syndicates appear to be involved. Existing juridical systems are largely powerless to investigate and prosecute. Yet the alleged disproportionate increase in petty crime attributable to Roma is often tackled by mob violence with impunity and by draconian measures by police and local authorities. (Police commonly attribute assaults against Roma to local feuds rather than to their root cause—racism.) Anger against Roma can thus serve to deflect widespread popular anger and frustration at less visible—and far more powerful—non-Gypsy criminals.(43)

Post-war Western Europe In Western Europe nomadism, although permitted by law and remaining considerably more widespread than in Central and Eastern Europe, grew progressively more difficult following the Second World War as central governments increased control over marginal groups. Legislation was enacted in several countries to settle nomadic Gypsies permanently on authorized sites, particularly during the 1960s (at a time, paradoxically, when many non-Gypsies were buying caravans and becoming seasonally peripatetic, holidaying at municipal and private sites specifically closed to Gypsies). 'Steps taken without consulting the Gypsy populations often proved unsuitable, and failed to solve the problems of cohabitation with the majority population.'(44)

Gypsies wishing to remain nomadic or semi-nomadic, or unable to find space on official sites, face harassment and often violent eviction from temporary and unauthorized sites. (The burgomaster of Ghent became involved in a campaign to evict twenty Gypsy families from the city.(45)) Many still endure unsanitary living conditions, often on 'discarded land' close to motorways or industrial areas or under power-generating pylons.(46) Roma have little access to health care, and only 30 per cent of Romany children in the EU attend school regularly. Drug abuse is a new but pressing problem among young Roma in Spain and elsewhere.(47)

Economic changes following the Second World War affected the traditional livelihoods of Gypsies. In rural economies they had enjoyed financial independence and a modest living in a variety of peripatetic occupations (including fairground and circus work, basket weaving, tinkering, peddling and horse trading). Rapid industrialization, agricultural mechanization, rural decline and the increasing difficulty of remaining nomadic resulted 'in the loss of long-standing seasonal occupations. Mounting bureaucracy rendered some traditional areas of economic activity impossible for illiterate Roma. Many were therefore forced to seek unskilled or semi-skilled work in towns and cities. Technological advances in industry and recessions during the 1980s reduced the availability of such work, forcing some sedentary Gypsies for the first time into unemployment and social welfare benefits. (Nomadic Gypsies are commonly unable to draw welfare benefits, due to their peripatetic life-style.) This has underpinned widespread anti-Gypsy slurs in the media which perpetuate public negative stereotypes. Anti-Gypsy racism, far from being restricted to a lunatic fringe or the far right, is almost universal.

Ecological and community values within Romany life Gypsy culture and history are little known among the general public. This has led to a remarkable paradox. Romany values and life-styles, when associated with ethnic groups outside Europe, were idealized during the 1970s and 1980s—'small is

beautiful'; community life; 'sustainable living in ecological balance with nature'; the use of herbal healing; the recycling of waste materials; owning minimal material possessions; 'learning from the ancient wisdom' of indigenous and illiterate peoples; non-individualistic and interdependent group living in extended, multi-generational families; profound knowledge of animals and the natural world.

Yet the one ethnic people within Europe who had actually lived such values and life-styles for centuries, with dignity despite intense suffering, was ignored. Roma remained despised outcasts, regarded contemptuously as deviants or paupers, increasingly forced from rural areas into urban shantytowns, from self-sufficiency into dependency, from traditional crafts and occupations into the most arduous menial jobs and unemployment. Throughout Europe, the social fabric of Gypsy life has been damaged, as large family groups, cohesive and mutually supportive, have been broken apart by dispersal into small housing units, often far from possible sources of work.

Roma nomadism and migration Today, as Western Europe's internal borders dissolve, some long-settled Roma are reviving purposeful nomadism, often in large family groups. As many as one in ten of Europe's Romanies may cross national borders each year. (One Rom leader, Rudko Kawczynsky, has recently argued: 'Romanies are, after all, the only true Europeans.')(48) While there is some migration northwards among Spain's 400,000 Roma, migration within mainland Europe is generally westwards. Jean-Pierre Liegeois has estimated that, although they rarely use caravans, some 30 per cent of Europe's Roma are internally nomadic within their own countries, while 30 per cent are semi-nomadic (travelling for only part of the year) and 40 per cent more or less permanently settled.(49)

Renewed nomadism, both within and between states, stems partly from fear of persecution and growing anti-Gypsy hostility and violence, particularly from neo-Nazis, skinheads and police. Other causes include the need to search for work and to escape endemic poverty and ill-health and fear of increasing nationalism. But the migrations themselves have led to intensified hostility to Roma, forced repatriation and the new media myth of a possible 'Gypsy invasion'. The reality is that proportionately fewer Roma than non-Gypsies migrated from Central and Eastern Europe between 1946 and the late 1980s; since 1960 about 250,000 Roma have emigrated to Western Europe.(50)

Religious revivalism among Roma Partly as a survival tactic, most Roma have traditionally subscribed to the locally dominant religion, whether Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox or Muslim. Within this outer framework, animist beliefs and practices have subsisted hand-in-hand with informal elements of Christian or Muslim piety and observance. But, since 1952, unprecedented religious enthusiasm has swept through Rom communities. The Light and Life evangelical Gypsy pentecostal movement claims 8,000 members in Britain and 150,000 in France,(51) where there are 500 Rom preachers, 60 places of worship and a Rom Bible school. Thirty per cent of all Spanish Gypsies have become 'alleluyas', members of a similarly charismatic pentecostal form of Christianity, dubbed by Spanish Romanies the Church of Philadelphia.(52)

This new, strongly Bible-based Romany pentecostalism fosters Gypsy culture and political solidarity. 'It is a new type of movement which unites across traditional divisions . . . sustains resistance to pressure from the environment. . . through its Gypsy dynamism . . . [and] is a source of originality and a mainspring of change.'(53) Thomas Acton wrote that the Gypsy evangelical church 'does not teach its converts to be ashamed of being Romani ... [It is] instrumental in turning the different Gypsy ethnic groups from an atavistic tribalism towards a general Romani nationalism.'(54)

The new Roma churches also bring more intangible benefits, paralleling the Methodist revival in terms of fervent spirituality and puritanism (e.g. their opposition to drugs and fortune-telling).⁽⁵⁵⁾ The Roma religious revival is already having a major impact on encouraging literacy and the acquisition of education, and developing leadership. Perhaps, too, at long last, the mainstream churches may become active on behalf of Roma (Pope John Paul II symbolically used Romani in his Christmas message in 1994).

Urgent needs of the Roma people today Rom intellectuals have recently emerged as activists and articulate spokespeople, both nationally and internationally. Roma organizations have been developed in both Western and Eastern Europe. Some governments and several international agencies have recently undertaken programmes to address the dire social and educational problems faced by Europe's Gypsies (cf. Roma, European institutions and NGOs, pp. 36-9). Some state finance for Romani newspapers, language teaching and theatre is now available in Slovakia and elsewhere.

Yet, despite being archetypal 'free marketeers', Roma remain a powerless minority, the most vulnerable and poorest of Europe's peoples within the new market economy. Because Roma are largely unprotected by international law, most countries still have no national laws to protect them. They are in urgent need of measures, drawn up in consultation with Roma representatives, to protect them from violence and to improve their living conditions, health, education and housing in ways which will enable them to retain as much of their independence, rich social organization and distinctive culture as possible. But any measures that are taken must be sensitive to the historically rooted suspicion among Gypsies of non-Gypsy intervention and to the need to establish mutual understanding between local Gypsies and non-Gypsies.

A leading expert who has travelled widely in Europe summed up the situation thus:

The Gypsies are on a powder keg which may explode at any time. But the situation is not as clear-cut as it was in the 1930s for the Jews. On the surface all seems well. The Queen of Spain attended the first European Romany Congress in Barcelona. The Slovak government has upgraded the Romanics to a national minority. A Gypsy folk group is invited to perform at the National Folk Festival in the main stadium in Budapest. No one is asking the Gypsies to wear the sign or banning them from buses.

Yet not so far below the surface there is prejudice and hate, fanned by government ministers, right-wing leaders and local politicians. A high percentage of the population in every country place Gypsies as their most disliked group, the ones they would like to expel (if another country would take them). Within living memory not just the Germans but Croats, Slovaks, Hungarians and Romanians killed Romanics in wired camps and the forests. It is not surprising that in many towns and villages Gypsies live in fear of attack from their neighbours as they are made the scapegoat for the economic crises.⁽⁵⁶⁾

40 Tong, 251. 41 A. Reynlers, OECD, 1993, quoted in 'The situation of Gypsies (Roma and Sinti) in Europe', CDMG, CE, May 1995, 7. 42 The Times, 30 September 1992. 43 See Toni Sonneman, secretary of the Romani-Jewish Alliance: 'The media portray the Romanics as generic "suspects" in the rising tide of crime and black marketeering', quoted by Donald Kenrick in Report for Association of Gypsy Organizations (privately circulated), June 1995. 44 'The situation of Gypsies (Roma and Sinti) in Europe', 5. 45 IRR *European Race Audit*, November 1995. 46 *Europe*, October 1989. 47 *Gitanos v Drogas* (Madrid: Secretariado General Gitano 1978). 48 *Die Zeit*, 7 September 1990. 49 Liegeois,

Gypsies and Travellers, 24. 50 CDMG (Strasbourg 1995), 19. 51 *Guardian*, 3 May 1995. 52 *Independent on Sunday Magazine*, 11 February 1995. 53 Liégeois, *Gypsies and Travellers*, 62-3. 54 Thomas Acton, 'The Gypsy evangelical church', *Ecumenical Review*, vol. 31, no. 1, July 1979, 289-95 (quoted Tong, 256). 55 Olivier Lucazeau, 'Unc foi à soulever les Tziganes', *Le Monde*, 22 August 1990. 56 Donald Kenrick, private communication, 13 November 1995.

5/ The position of Roma in various European countries

Albania *Total population: 3.2 million Roma population: 90,000-100,000 (MRG (see footnote 1))*

Although under communism Roma lived virtually segregated from other Albanians and faced major economic problems, many had employment and there was no special discrimination against them. Albanian leader Enver Hoxha spoke of Roma positively.(57)

Since 1989 their situation has worsened relative to the rest of the population. Land where they had traditionally lived for decades on the outskirts of towns and villages has been reclaimed under privatization. Many live in hovels made of corrugated iron or in tents. The majority are unemployed, even in the capital Tirana. Those who do have work are commonly employed in heavy labour, such as street cleaning, or on municipal rubbish dumps, at below subsistence wages.(58)

Poverty among Roma can be extreme, exacerbated by the large average number of dependants (many families have eight or more children). The government has done little to ease Roma suffering. In Gjirokastra primitive homes were built for 300 Roma, without access to telephone or medical facilities; yet these were preferable to hovels or tents, and the Roma were apparently content.

Hostility towards Roma has intensified since 1989. Peasants, especially those who have again become landowners, regard them with contempt. Many Roma are now charged exorbitant rent for land given to them long ago and become indigent as a result. There has been sporadic anti-Gypsy violence. In 1991 many Roma families in Berati were flooded out twice, losing their shacks and all their possessions. The entire community is unemployed. The government provided a small amount of aid—but non-Roma residents demanded that it be withdrawn. Some Roma were robbed and injured, a few threatened with death.(59) Elsewhere, two young Roma were shot by police in separate incidents in 1993 and 1994.(60)

Austria *Total population: 7.9 million Roma population: 20,000-25,000 (MRG)*

The contemporary scene Some Austrian Roma, including Kalderash and Beash, immigrated from 1965 onwards; long-established groups, including Hungarian Roma, have been sedentary since Empress Maria-Theresa's 1762 edict; and Sinti and Lovari remained semi-nomadic until the 1960s.(61) Long-established Roma and Sinti have been regarded as Austrian citizens since 1945, while citizenship can be acquired by newer arrivals only by marriage to an Austrian. Only 5,000 of Austria's Roma population have been included in the new category of 'official minority' since 1983. Many Romanian Roma have passed through Austria en route to Germany and the United States. In addition, over 30,000 Roma refugees from Serbia, Bosnia and Macedonia have migrant worker status; those without work can stay for three-month periods on tourist visas. Roma refugees are still arriving in Austria.

Legal recognition Austria recognized Roma and Sinti as an ethnic minority group only in 1994, following increased political activity by three Roma organizations formed in 1991. Since December 1993 Roma and Sinti have been entitled to set up their own councils.

Socio-economic problems The standard of living for Roma is low, life expectancy shorter than average, and birth rate high (3-7 children per family). Only 10 per cent complete compulsory education, while girls normally leave school at the age of eleven or twelve.(62) The majority are very poor, demoralized and isolated because of the wide gap in standard of living between Roma and most Austrians, and because anti-Gypsy sentiment is particularly strong in Austria. A scheme to pay students a small stipend to teach Gypsy children in small groups has been in operation in several centres, but its funding is insecure.(63)

Recent violence Although media portrayals of Roma are largely favourable, anti-Gypsy prejudice is growing and can be violent. On 3-4 February 1995 a mock gravestone urging Gypsies to return to India was placed at the entrance to an underpass leading to a Roma encampment at Oberwart, Burgenland. (Oberwart, home to Austrian Roma who survived the Nazi period, is near Lackenbach, the former concentration camp for Roma en route to Auschwitz.) When four Roma attempted to remove it, a huge explosion occurred; all were killed. (Police were later criticized for initially claiming that the men had blown themselves up or killed one another in a blood feud.) The so-called Bavarian Liberation Army claimed responsibility for the murders. Later vigils at the site of the deaths and elsewhere were disrupted by skinhead violence; again police were criticized for having failed to protect the vigils.(64)

Bulgaria *Total population: 8.9 million Roma population: 576,927 (official statistics 1989) 700,000-800,000 (MGR)(65)*

History Roma have had a stable and significant presence in Bulgaria since the fourteenth century. Divided by the Turks into mainly nomadic Muslims and mainly settled Christians, they were 'relegated ... to the lowest rung of the Ottoman social ladder'.(66) They were subject to special taxes but had some autonomy. While Muslims may have regarded Muslim Roma as schismatics, Orthodox Christian Bulgarians held strong prejudices against Roma. In the 1860s some bishops declared alms-giving to them to be a 'great sin'.(67) Laws were passed after Bulgaria's reunification in 1886 to combat Roma nomadism and to prevent Rom immigration.(68) Discrimination against Bulgaria's Roma (134,844 in the 1926 census) existed under the monarchy (1878- 1946) and Roma were traditionally assigned 'lowest-status occupations', such as road- sweeping.(69) Literacy increased to 8 per cent due to the provision of two or three primary schools. Roma publications and societies, founded in the 1920s, flourished until the rise of fascism in 1934.

Despite fascist press attacks on them, Roma remained relatively unscathed by the Second World War, due partly to support from King Boris and to Bulgaria's long-standing multi-ethnicity. (Germany's war-time ambassador in Sofia commented on Bulgaria's refusal to deport Jews: 'The Bulgarians have lived for too long with peoples like Armenians, Greeks and Gypsies to appreciate the Jewish problem.)(70)

Under communism Following a brief post-war renaissance of Roma culture and organization after the Soviet occupation of Bulgaria, the increasingly Stalinist government adopted a policy in the 1950s of expelling Muslim Roma to Turkey and assimilating all other Roma, suppressing their distinctive ethnic and cultural identity. The Gypsy Theatre Roma was closed in 1953. Between 1953 and 1959 the

government forced nomadic Roma to settle permanently. New segregated Gypsy ghettos were created for these Roma. Measures were taken in the early 1960s to assimilate the far larger number of sedentary Roma. All Roma with Turkish or Muslim names were required to take Bulgarian names. Gypsy music was banned from radio and television and its public performance discouraged by fines. Attempts were made to disperse compact Roma communities by placing families in Bulgarian quarters. Roma were forbidden to speak Romani in public and to create distinctively Roma organizations. Roma serving in the military were commonly assigned to labour brigades and allocated the most menial tasks.

The assimilation campaign under President Todor Zhivkov achieved some positive results. Living conditions and housing improved for many Roma, and educational opportunities rose, though still remaining substantially lower than for Bulgarians. But 'the practical implication of these policies was the destruction of Roma self-identity through continued forced integration and Bulgarization'.⁽⁷¹⁾

Post-1989: Rom organizations Since 1989 several Rom political organizations have been created, notably ROMA, the Democratic Union of Roma, founded in 1990. Roma remain politically weak, however, having been denied the right to create a political party prior to the 1990 election. Factors hindering Roma from becoming a strong political force include the division between Muslim and Christian Roma, the fifty or more Romani dialects and various clan and tribal allegiances. A national lobby, the United Roma Federation (URF), was created in October 1992. In December 1993 the URF, ROMA and Rom intellectuals complained to the government about the activities of Father Gelemenov and his Vazrazhdane organization and media coverage given to their pro-Nazi views. Gelemenov has publicly advocated that Bulgaria should 'subordinate' its Gypsy and Turkish minorities.⁽⁷²⁾

Discrimination According to Helsinki Watch, 'Gypsies in Bulgaria continue to be discriminated against by the government, and are denied some of the most basic human rights'.⁽⁷³⁾ Vassil Chaprazov, chairman of the URF, has said: 'We are at the bottom of Bulgarian society . . . the most disadvantaged people are Gypsies.'⁽⁷⁴⁾ Main areas of discrimination include housing, education and employment.

Housing Most Roma live in squalid areas of larger towns and cities such as Sliven, which may house up to 50,000 Roma.⁽⁷⁵⁾ Many roads in Gypsy quarters are unpaved, with infrequent refuse collection. Dwellings often have no access to running water or adequate sanitation. The birth rate is substantially higher than that of the Bulgarian population. Most Roma quarters are severely overcrowded, with three or four families sharing one house and five or six sleeping in each room. Current land privatization schemes seem likely to exacerbate these problems.

Education and socio-economic problems Many Roma children are educated in segregated technical schools which produce goods commissioned by local industry. Educational opportunities and attainments are low, and few Roma children complete secondary school, although the reasons for this include the fact that Bulgarian is their second language, early marriage and the failure of illiterate Roma parents to support adequate schooling.

Poverty among Roma is growing. Gypsies queue at soup kitchens in Sofia, and there are many Gypsy beggars. Unemployment is high, though lower than in some East European states. Some traditional crafts have disappeared because of the assimilation campaign, while access to many jobs is limited by low educational levels and work-place prejudice (fuelled by the state media which stereotype Roma as criminals and black marketeers). No political party defends the interests of Roma, and they are

prohibited from forming their own parties. In 1993, however, the Confederation of Roma in Bulgaria was established, to 'assist the legislative and executive powers in solving Gypsy problems'.⁽⁷⁶⁾ There is now at least one declared Rom in parliament.

Anti-gypsyism Public hostility to Roma has been increasing since 1989. Racist articles now appear in the press. Some are aimed at Gypsies; 'Sofia News', for example, claimed that all Gypsies are thieves and, sometimes, murderers. A 1992 survey showed that 89.5 per cent of Bulgarians, 71.8 per cent of Turks and 74 per cent of Bulgarian Muslims did not want their children to attend a class with Roma children; 81.7 per cent of Bulgarians, 54.2 per cent of Turks and 57.2 per cent of Muslims said they would not vote for a Rom.⁽⁷⁷⁾ Bulgarian sociologists have suggested that antipathy to Roma in Bulgaria is comparable to hostility among Americans to blacks in the 1960s. Surveys have shown that Roma are far more disliked than other minorities. They are widely, and unfairly, blamed for Bulgaria's marked increase in crime. Legal moves to criminalize the black market, in which Roma are prominent, are partly responsible for the fact 80 per cent of Bulgaria's prison population are Roma.⁽⁷⁸⁾

Violence Recently anti-Gypsy violence has erupted, possibly orchestrated by the far right. In 1993 there were many attacks on Gypsies, including one in Cherganova led by the mayor. In Pleven local skinheads announced that they would 'cleanse the town of communists, Jews, Gypsies and the rich'. Skinheads held a rally in Sofia; banners read 'Turn the Gypsies into soap'.⁽⁷⁹⁾ In December 1993 an attack on Roma in Malorad left seven wounded and one dead. In February 1994 villagers in Doino Belotintsi demanded the expulsion of all Roma after a Rom deserter murdered a villager. Seventeen of the twenty families were expelled. One Rom died and fifteen were injured in an arson attack on a market district of Sofia in April 1995.⁽⁸⁰⁾

Police have been implicated in anti-Gypsy violence, and Roma held in custody are often ill treated.⁽⁸¹⁾ Four died in police custody, including one in Pleven after alleged torture, and another in Sliven in March 1995.⁽⁸²⁾ Ill-treatment and torture of Roma at police hands have allegedly occurred in Dubova, Stara Zagora, Glushnik and Pazardzhik.⁽⁸³⁾

Roma in Rakitova (Plovdiv) were attacked in January 1995 by non-Roma residents and police. Four Roma were badly wounded by gunfire, and fifteen were severely beaten by police. In an open letter the Roma of Plovdiv complained: 'We are treated worse than dogs, deprived of human rights.'⁽⁸⁴⁾ An arson attack on a Roma house near Sofia on April 1995 left one dead and fifteen injured. Shortly afterwards, the interior ministry officially condemned attacks on Roma by skinheads, as well as xenophobia and antisemitism.⁽⁸⁵⁾

Romani was taught in Bulgarian schools from 1991. However, according to the press. Education Minister Dr Ilcho Dimitrov announced in April 1995 that teaching of Romani would henceforth be discouraged, being 'an obstacle to the acquisition of the Bulgarian language'.⁽⁸⁶⁾ After protests by Roma organizations, he retracted this statement.

Czech Republic *Total population: 10.4 million Roma population: 145,738 (local authority statistics 1989) 250,000-300,000 (MRG)*

Romany population statistics in the Czecho-Slovak region are confused. Estimates vary from 400,000

to 800,000 in total. At least 150,000-300,000 Roma are in the Czech Republic, forming the second largest minority.(87) Czechoslovak Romanies speak one of three Romani dialects; most also speak Slovak or Hungarian. Before 1991 Roma had been allowed to register on censuses only as Czechs, Slovaks or Hungarians.(88) In the 1991 census Roma could for the first time declare themselves as Romany. Only 114,116 chose to do so.(89) However, even local authority statistics suggest a considerably higher figure.

History Anti-Gypsy legislation began in 1541 and intensified under Leopold I (1657-1705), who expelled all Roma from Habsburg lands on pain of death. Emperor Charles VI (1711-40) ordered the execution of all Romanies. In 1740 any Roma entering Bohemia were to be executed. Empress Maria Theresa (1740-80) sought compulsory assimilation: Romani was forbidden; so were nomadic travel, horse-trading, Romany dress and the institution of the *vajda*, the Rom leader. Children aged from seven to twelve were placed with non-Gypsy farmers. Emperor Joseph II (1780- 90) ordered the settlement of Romanies in rural ghettos. Some nomadism returned after his death. Repressive legislation and close control by the authorities persisted into the twentieth century.(90)

Of 13,000 Roma in Bohemia and Moravia, 90 per cent were killed during the Nazi period. In Slovak territories Romanies fared better; of approximately 80,000, 1,000 perished.(91) Most survived in harsh conditions. Nomadic Roma were forcibly settled, and settled Romanies forcibly evicted from homes near frequented roads. Following the war, the Czechoslovak government relocated large numbers of Slovak Roma to northern Czech territories to work as unskilled labourers in heavy industry, following the mass expulsion of ethnic Germans.(92)

Under communism Once communists had seized power in February 1948 they 'did not recognize the Roma as a nationality and pursued a policy meant to destroy Romany identity through social integration'.(93) Roma were to be compulsorily assimilated. Nomadism was forbidden in 1958, punishable by six to thirty-six months' imprisonment. Travel for Roma was severely restricted. Romani language and traditions were suppressed. Rom organizations established during the 'Prague Spring' of 1968 were closed in 1973. From the mid-1970s many Rom women were paid to be, or tricked into being, sterilized.(94) Unemployment was high, although relatively generous welfare benefits brought some security.(95) Many children were forcibly placed in government children's homes.

Post-1989 Following the 'velvet revolution' of November 1989, anti-Gypsy discrimination in laws and policies ceased at a national level. Rom culture and language revived; Roman; newspapers and a theatre were established; cultural centres and six Rom political organizations were created. Roma can now openly declare their Rom identity. Rom parties and organizations such as the Romany Democratic Congress were founded and have openly criticized government policies towards Roma. They suffered electoral defeat in the 1992 elections due to political apathy and lack of a united front; no Rom representatives were elected to the Czech or Slovak parliaments.

The Bill of Fundamental Rights and Liberties (January 1991) outlawed discrimination and granted all nationalities the right to use ethnic languages in official business and education. Yet discrimination remains widespread at local level. Roma do not have equal access to housing, education or public and private services.(96)

Crime and unemployment A major source of public hostility stems from the soaring crime rate, for

which Roma are partly responsible. Although only 2 per cent of the population, they account for 11 per cent of all crime and over 50 per cent of burglary and pick-pocketing.(97) Gypsy crime has increased because of massive unemployment. Unskilled and untrained, Roma were predominantly manual labourers under the communist regime. Economic reforms forced many enterprises to lay off workers. Roma became unemployed in disproportionate numbers, especially in Slovakia. From 1990 many Slovak Roma migrated in search of work to Bohemia and Moravia, Czech industrial regions, staying either in overcrowded apartments with relatives or empty state-owned flats.(98) Unemployment among Roma now reaches 40-50 per cent.(99)

Demography Rom birth-rates are very high—5.8 children per woman in 1971-80, dropping to 4 per woman in 1986-90. Four-fifths of Roma are under 34, compared to 55 per cent of Czechoslovaks. Life expectancy is low, comparable to that of Czechs in the 1930s.(100) It has been estimated that by 2000-2005 Roma could number nearly 8 per cent of the population of the Czech and Slovak republics.(101)

Violence The sudden influx of Slovak Roma has triggered serious anti-Gypsy violence by skinheads since early 1990, particularly in northern Bohemia. The killings of four young Roma in separate incidents (three involving skinhead aggression) in August and September 1993 led to the formation of HOST, the Citizens' Solidarity and Tolerance Movement.

In 1994 racist attacks tripled from the previous year, and nearly all acts of racial violence recorded were against Roma. Attacks by skinheads on Roma occurred in Prague, Prerov, Ostrava, Brno (one Rom was stabbed to death) and Jablonec nad Nisou (a young girl and her mother were burnt by a Molotov cocktail). Skinheads held a rally at Jablonec nad Nisou to oppose 'Gypsy terror', and at Karlovy Vary shouted 'Gypsies to the gas chambers'. Between 1990-94 skinheads murdered at least sixteen Roma; the best organized skinhead group of streetfighters, the Naziskins, demand the expulsion of all Roma and Jews from Czech soil.(102) One Rom died in police custody. In 1995 at least nine acts of racial violence against Roma occurred, including several stabbings and one murder; skinheads were involved in some of the attacks.(103)

Housing In Most (Bohemia) some 600 non-rent-paying Rom families are being moved to a new low-grade settlement of small concrete houses, with only 3 square metres allocated per person, and multiple families sharing a bath and toilet. (They had been forcibly moved to Most in the 1980s to provide labour for local industry. Unused to modern facilities, some had damaged their houses.) Other authorities are considering copying the Most project. In Karvina near Ostrava 200 Rom families have been homeless for several months, having lost their Czech citizenship in June 1994 and thus their right to state benefits. Many live by rummaging in dustbins for food and clothing.

Education At least 30 per cent of Roma are illiterate. Only 15 per cent complete primary school. Twenty per cent of Rom children are transferred to special schools for the mentally handicapped.(104) Recently new projects have been developed to train teachers of Roma children and to create preparatory classes in nursery, primary and special schools.(105)

Politics The extremist Association for the Republic- Czechoslovak Republican Party, which won nearly 7 per cent of votes in the 1992 elections, campaigns against Roma and attracts skinheads to its ranks. It has 40,000 members in northern Bohemia alone. Miroslav Sladek, its founder and leader, called on all Czech mayors, in February 1993, to expel all Roma from their territories, offering a new

car to the most successful. The party claims that Czech Roma operate a mafia. Party spokesman Jan Vik has stated: 'We will simply liquidate the [Gypsy] mafia. It is necessary to strike very forcefully.'[\(106\)](#)

Roma are politically isolated, with few notable Czech supporters. Most who work on their behalf are not themselves Czech. President Havel has condemned racism in general, but has not recently specifically named Roma as victims; nor has the Catholic Church spoken on their behalf.[\(107\)](#)

Discrimination Whereas there is widespread sympathy for non-Romany ethnic minorities (Kazakhs, Volhynian Czechs etc.), 65 per cent of Czechs are hostile to Roma.[\(108\)](#) Magdalena Babicha, a beauty contest finalist in April 1993, caused a public outcry when she expressed a widely shared wish to cleanse Czechoslovakia of Gypsies.

Roma are commonly forbidden access to pubs, restaurants and other public places. In northern regions signs saying 'Gypsies forbidden' are widespread.[\(109\)](#) In the June 1992 elections a far-right anti-Gypsy campaigner won 15 per cent of the votes. In October 1992 'death squadrons' threatened 'reprisals' against Roma unless the authorities acted against them.[\(110\)](#) Subsidies to Rom organizations were suspended by the ministry of culture in August 1993. There are unconfirmed rumours that in Prague a play called 'Romanies and Juliet', showing Roma as pimps and prostitutes, had a brief run in October 1994.

Legal discrimination In October 1992 the northern Bohemian town of Jirkov passed a decree intended to curb the growing crime rate. It ordered heavy fines for actions endangering the morals, health and security of others, immediate eviction without judicial approval and other penalties. This law was criticized as discriminating particularly against Roma.

The Law on Extraordinary Measures was proposed on 30 December 1992 by the prosecutor-general as a means of curbing 'undisciplined groups of migrants', identified as predominantly Roma. The law was intended to prevent proliferation of local ordinances such as the Jirkov decree. But Rom leaders argue that skinheads who break the law are prosecuted less vigorously than Roma, while the Republican Party has called for the chief prosecutor to be sacked on the grounds that she thinks only 'of the protection and privilege of Gypsies'.[\(111\)](#)

Citizenship laws Between 80 and 90 per cent of Roma on Czech soil in early 1994 had Slovak nationality, due to their forced mass migration from Slovakia into Czech regions after the Second World War and under communism, and to the voluntary migration for economic reasons of thousands, mostly from impoverished rural areas to Czech areas, in 1992 and early 1993.[\(112\)](#)

In 1994 the Czech government introduced a new citizenship law which was heavily criticized by the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), US senators and the international media. It met with little internal opposition, however, apart from that of the Citizens' Solidarity and Tolerance Movement (HOST) and Rom leaders, who condemned it as discriminatory against Roma. In November 1994, HOST held a candle-lit commemoration of *Kristallnacht* in Prague; invited Rom speakers condemned the citizenship law.

To obtain Czech nationality by 1 July 1994, Roma and other ethnic minorities had to prove that they had spent the last two years on Czech soil, that they could speak Czech and that they had no criminal record for the previous five years. They also had to renounce their Slovak status. Moreover, whereas Czechs could gain citizenship without problems, even native-born Roma faced barriers, including the need to produce expensive legal documents. These conditions have proved insurmountable for many Roma. Many cannot prove residence because they have stayed with relatives. Some have a criminal record simply because of the harsh penalties imposed on Roma.

Those who fail to acquire Czech nationality will receive no permanent residence permit, and therefore no entitlement to medical care or social security, housing or education. They will be regarded as illegal aliens, subject to forcible deportation to Slovakia. (The Czech government already intends to deport Rom children in Czech orphanages to Slovakia.) But many of those deported would already have renounced their Slovak citizenship in their bid to become Czech citizens, or would in any case not be entitled to Slovak citizenship, resulting, according to British lawyer Tom Gross, in Roma becoming stateless.(113)

Moreover, a November 1994 report by the Tolerance Foundation based on interviews with ninety-nine individual Slovaks and Roma living in the Czech Republic showed that nearly 50 per cent of Roma without Czech citizenship were born in the Czech Republic and were life-long residents. Ninety-three were *de facto* stateless, having neither Czech citizenship nor Slovak identification papers or citizenship. All ninety-nine were without permanent residence permits.(114) In Karvina 186 people, nearly all Roma, were stripped of their legally acquired Czech citizenship because they were accused of bribing a Czech official; their welfare benefits were withdrawn.(115)

Hopeful signs Individual projects launched in 1994-5 included local council summer camps for children (Pardubice, Kourím); adapted school curricula for primary children (Ostrava); a summer seminar for teachers on Romany education (Dobrichovice); and a theatre exchange programme with a group in Boston, Massachusetts, comparing Black and Romany experience. Across the country MENT, an educational organization, is running seminars on Romani language and culture for teachers of Romany children. Pardubice has opened a nursery to teach pre-school Romany children Czech and ' has established a fund to support the best Romany secondary school pupils. With Ústí nad Labem, Pardubice has formed an institute for the study of Romany culture. Prague University now runs a Romani course, and a Romany museum has opened in Brno.

In May 1995 the first memorial to Czech Roma interned in Nazi transit camps was unveiled at Lety. The ceremony was attended by President Havel, who admitted for the first time Czech complicity in the extermination of thousands of Roma in Auschwitz and other camps.(116) In September 1995 an international Rom festival was held in Strážnice with 300 performers and an audience of over 1,000.

Outlook Future economic difficulties are likely to increase attacks on Romanies. In 1995 train fares rose steeply, state-controlled property rents rose by between 17 and 32 per cent, and other predicted problems include rising unemployment and widespread corruption. If public discontent increases, Romanies are a ready scapegoat, particularly if, due to withdrawal of benefits, more Roma turn to petty crime.

France *Total population: 57.9 million Roma population: 280,000-340,000 (MRG)*

Due to France's traditions of cultural unity, mono-lingualism and centralized politics, Manouches and other Gypsies (Tsiganes') are not treated as an ethnic minority. As in Britain, identity is determined by nomadic life-style, not cultural or ethnic bonds. Although nomadism is a legally recognized right, successive French governments have favoured sedentarization as the best way to reduce marginalization of Gypsies. Thus the main law affecting nomads, the act of 3 January 1969, was rigorous, requiring all itinerant and non-sedentary people to carry a *carnet*, a circulation pass-book, at all times. This had to be regularly stamped by municipalities, and can still be a source of bureaucratic discrimination against Gypsies. As in other countries, nomadic Gypsies are virtually unable to vote.

Gypsies engage in a far wider spectrum of professions, trades and activities than in most European states. The vast majority, including sedentary Tsiganes, are self-employed. Press coverage is largely negative, reflecting public disquiet at periodic 'invasions' by nomadic Tsiganes.(117)

A government policy of decentralization, adopted in 1982-3, has devolved on to local authorities wide powers of decision-making. This can have negative consequences for Gypsies.(118) Local municipalities with over 5,000 inhabitants, for example, are obliged by the Besson Act of 1990 to provide short-term and long-term sites for nomadic Gypsies. But, due to local opposition, it is increasingly difficult for French Roma to find sites on which to stay. All sites are stringently regulated, thus limiting social and economic activity (few allow scrap iron or gatherings around a fire).

In March 1993 a National Consultative Committee on Travellers was set up, comprising ten elected officials, ten representatives of Gypsy organizations and ten ministerial representatives.(119)

Six refugee Roma were deported in January 1995 from Carneres-sur-Seine, where Gypsies live without electricity or water.(120) In June and July 1995 seventy-three Romanians, chiefly Roma, were repatriated to Bucharest on chartered aircraft with Romanian police aboard. The French office for the protection of refugees and stateless persons has recently placed Romania on the list of 'safe' countries; very few refugees from Romania will therefore be granted asylum, and existing Romanian refugees in France will lose their status.(121)

In May 1995 the Socialist mayor and nearly all the councillors of Saint-Priest (where Jean-Marie Le Pen's Front National had polled 27 per cent of the vote) resigned over the government's decision to accommodate hundreds of Gypsies from Romania and South Craiova.(122)

Municipalities in south-west France have been accused by Gypsy associations of discrimination for refusing them access to private camp sites, electricity, education and medical care, amounting to a policy of 'systematic expulsion'.(123)

Germany *Total population: 81.5 million Roma population: 110,000-130,000 (MRG)*

History From the fifteenth century onwards German cities and states sought to expel Gypsies, using harsh legislation, banishment, torture and hanging, Gypsy hunts and shipment to Pennsylvania. While the first research on Gypsies, including pioneering scholarship on the Romani language, was undertaken by Germans, it often reflected deep-seated prejudice. Heinrich Grellmann, who wrote the first ethnographic treatise on Gypsies in 1783, described his 'evident repugnance, like a biologist

dissecting some nauseating, crawling thing in the interests of science'.(124) Many German scholars expressed similar 'revulsion' (Widerwille) towards Gypsies.

Post-Holocaust 'revisionism' The porajmos, the Roma holocaust, has remained widely unknown and ignored outside Germany. Within Germany, it was never officially admitted prior to a statement by Chancellor Helmut Schmidt in 1982. Until recently, Gypsy victims of Nazism were neither commemorated on official remembrance days nor mentioned by politicians.(125)

Moreover, the *porajmos*, in which between 200,000 and 500,000 Roma died, has been subject to 'revisionism', as has, to an even greater extent, the Jewish Holocaust. Some authors have claimed either that concrete data are not available or that most deaths of Sinti and Roma in concentration camps were caused by typhus due partly to the Gypsies' lack of hygiene. Numerous criminologists argued in the 1950s that Nazi measures against Gypsies were taken not on racial grounds but on the grounds of the Romanies' supposedly asocial, criminal tendencies.(126) Nazi racist vocabulary (Zigeunermischling) and stereotypes of Gypsies as primitive, corrupting and criminal were used repeatedly to justify Nazi actions against them. Until 1982 Hermann Arnold, a leading expert on Roma, used Dr Ritter's materials from the Berlin Institute to publish books justifying Ritter's pro- Nazi work and perpetuating anti-Gypsy attitudes;(127) as late as 1961 he published (in the Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society) an article entitled 'The Gypsy gene'.

Similar anti-Gypsy prejudice is reflected in the matter of German reparations, particularly in Munich. Whereas Jewish victims of Nazism commonly won reparations, Romanies—with no state or lobby behind them—did not. German Sinti survivors (descendants of Roma who first entered Germany in the early fifteenth century), initially refused reinstatement of their German citizenship, eventually regained it. But the vast majority, like all Roma of other nationalities, received no reparations. Not until December 1963 did the supreme court reverse its view that Nazi deportations of Gypsies had occurred not for racial reasons but out of military and criminological considerations. Even then, forcibly sterilized Sinti and Roma receive no compensation unless they are demonstrably at least 25 per cent incapacitated for work.(128)

Official prejudice Many of the Gypsies who remained in post-war Germany live in bleak, isolated settlements for the homeless and so-called Asozialen on the outskirts of cities. Most of their children are in schools for the mentally handicapped. As surviving Sinti, they are marginalized. Since the 1970s, and particularly since the mid-1980s, tens of thousands of Roma from Poland, the former Yugoslavia and Romania, fleeing racist persecution and often destitution, have entered Germany. (Between 50-60 per cent of the 103,787 Romanian asylum-seekers who entered Germany in 1992 were thought to be Romanies.)(129) Unlike the Sinti, they were highly conspicuous, wearing different clothing and speaking Romani or other languages. The latent German dislike of Gypsies, never fully confronted after the war, re-emerged even among liberals. In 1990 Herr Schmidt, a member of the Bremen state parliament, said in parliament with reference to the Gypsy holocaust: 'It's a pity that not more of them were murdered.' In the same month Herr Heck, the chief of Bremen city council and a member of the Green Party, compared the Nazi holocaust of Roma with the disappearance of the dinosaur: 'The Romany culture is not worth protecting.'(130) In 1992 the Nordrhein-Westfalen minister of social affairs accused Roma from Romania and Yugoslavia of 'poisoning our social climate'.(131)

Pressure on Roma asylum-seekers Local authorities exerted pressure on Roma to leave by refusing to

meet their elementary needs, placing children in homes, imposing strict police controls and making arrests. Following pressure from non-Roma human rights groups (including the Lutheran Church), less harsh policies were adopted in some major cities, where programmes to integrate the immigrants were developed. But among the half-million asylum-seekers in Germany the Roma have been singled out as prime targets of government stringency and public hostility. For example, some Roma seeking asylum were forced to live rough outside the Rostock asylum centre without sanitation. In August 1992 local protests quickly grew into organized violence and riots, in which neo-fascist skinheads played a major part.

Repatriation A new policy of forcible return replaced that of integration. In December 1990 the government of Nordrhein-Westfalen withdrew a regulation allowing stateless Roma to settle there, instead offering Macedonia over DM 20 million to resettle Yugoslav Roma near Skopje.(132) On 5 March Germany was the only one of forty-three participants to vote against Resolution 62 of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, entitled 'Protection of Roma', the German delegation arguing that Roma did not constitute a minority in Germany, that they should not be the subject of positive discrimination and that Germany wished to retain its right to expel Romany refugees.(133) In September 1992 a formal agreement between Germany and Romania, becoming effective in November 1992, stated that all Romanians ineligible for asylum (mostly Roma) would be liable to forcible deportation to Romania. Since then Germany may have repatriated at least 40,000-50,000 Roma. Over DM 30 million were paid to the Romanian government.(134) Some monitoring has occurred of the fate of those forcibly returned. Thousands of Roma immigrants remain in Germany, and many still arrive. Even those -without identity papers are likely to be repatriated.

By early 1993 no Roma had ever been granted refugee status in Germany. The Federal Office for Recognition of Foreign Refugees stated in January 1993 concerning Roma refugees from Romania: 'As a result of the alien character of the Roma, their stubborn retention of alien traditions, an intensive rejection of Roma as well as deep prejudices have emerged [in Romania]. This is normal. It is also understandable that such feelings are now expressed in a violent manner.' Since persecution of Roma in Romania is not officially regarded as political, no Roma would be eligible for political asylum.(135)

Germany concluded a re-admission agreement with Poland in May 1993 which will affect many Roma. Moreover, a new refugee law came into effect in 1994, rendering it virtually impossible for any Rom to acquire a residence permit. Roma from Yugoslav territories, rendered stateless following the break-up of Yugoslavia, continued to be forcibly repatriated from Schleswig-Holstein and Baden-Württemberg.(136)

Harassment Police actions against Roma have sometimes been harsh. In April 1990 1,200 officials and police raided an impoverished Romany settlement and claimed to have found money and goods worth DM 500,000. Rom leaders and supporters claimed that all belonged rightfully to the Roma.(137)

Few attempts have been made to ameliorate the lives of Roma in Germany. The Hamburg city council established a project in 1993 with the Roma and Sinti Union to help Romany child beggars. The project's caravan was destroyed by arson in March 1994. Following the arrest of a Rom woman in Hamburg, press rumours began circulating in July 1994 that a ring of Gypsy child thieves was operating in Germany.(138)

Anti-Roma racism Roma in Germany are the object of intense racial hostility. On 28 August 1992 they were described in the *Badische Zeitung* as 'a pure disease', and in the *Hamburger Morgenpost* as a 'serious plague'. In 1994 Joachim Siegerist, who has dual Latvian/ German citizenship and leads the second strongest political party in Latvia, the People's Movement for Latvia, was convicted in Hamburg of incitement to racial hatred after distributing over 17,000 circulars in which he claimed that 'Gypsies produce children like rabbits' and were 'a seedy criminal pack who should be driven out of the country'.(139) A poll of 1,342 German university students in late 1994, conducted by the University of Wuppertal, showed that 60.4 per cent of East German and 37.7 per cent of West German students admitted disliking Gypsies, much higher than prejudice towards any other group.(140) In an arson attack on a prefabricated building housing refugees, mostly Roma, a Rom brother and sister were killed in Herford, Nordrhein-Westfalen in early 1995. Both Herford municipal council and the ministry of the interior denied that the victims were Roma.(141)

Gypsies are subject to harassment from police and civic authorities. In December 1994 Frankfurt police strip-searched a Roma woman who had reported the theft of DM 700 from her purse.(142) In January 1995 the president of the Roma National Congress, Rudko Kawczynski, was fined for organizing at the former Neuengamme concentration camp a commemoration of Roma victims of the Holocaust. The peaceful event was held to contravene the 'law on green recreation areas' which prohibits protests in state parks.(143) Pro-Rom campaigners who protested against the deportation of forty-five Roma families from Erkelenz (Nordrhein-Westfalen) to Macedonia in May 1995 were threatened with prosecution on the grounds that their banner, 'Gassed yesterday— deported today', was an 'insult to the state'.(144) Following a dawn raid by 150 police in April 1995, thirty-nine Roma women, some as young as twelve, were taken into custody in Cologne and compelled to submit to fingerprinting and blood tests (and some to gynaecological searches) after an anonymous tip-off to police that one might be the mother of an abandoned baby.(145)

Thus, fifty years after the Romany holocaust, Roma and Sinti living within Germany remain subject to intense public hostility, official harassment and murder. But there is a growing Gypsy civil rights movement, in which Roma and Sinti activists and performing artists are prominent. Today the federal government funds a staff of five people in the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma and (since 1981) a staff of eight people in the Cultural and Documentary Centre for German Sinti and Roma, both in Heidelberg. Financial support is, however, granted on the basis of a categorization of Roma as a 'socially marginalized group' and not as a 'national minority', which Roman! Rose, chairman of the Central Council, describes as a 'stigmatizing practice'.(146)

Hungary *Total population: 10.3 million Roma population: 400,000 (1990 census) (147) 550,000-600,000 (MRG)*

About 10 per cent of Roma in Hungary derive from Romania and speak archaic Romanian; 20 per cent are Romani-speaking and became sedentary under communism; about 70 per cent speak mainly Hungarian, their ancestors having arrived in the fifteenth century.

History Established in Hungary by the late Middle Ages, nomadic Roma became prized metal smiths, gun smiths, soldiers and 'castle musicians', playing even before royalty. Following the Ottoman success at Mohács in 1526, their situation deteriorated. Immigrant Roma fleeing devastation due to the Thirty Years' War (1618-48) triggered anti-Gypsy legislation, which intensified after the recapture of Turkish

territories in Hungary and anti-Habsburg riots in the late seventeenth century. Roma were outlawed from Habsburg lands; illegal re-entry led to flogging and finally execution. A 1710 ordinance decreed hard labour for anyone harbouring them.(148) All Roma found in Hungary were to be registered, and resistance was punishable by death.

Empress Maria Theresa (who reigned from 1740- 80) attempted to exile or forcibly settle nomadic Roma throughout the empire (see section on the [Czech Republic](#)). Taxes, compulsory feudal service and military service for all male Roma were imposed. Providing Roma with food was punishable by law. Roma were forbidden to own horses and wagons and, from 1774 onwards, to marry other Roma. Rom children over five were to be taken permanently into non-Gypsy families to ensure a Catholic upbringing. A policy of Magyarization and compulsory integration of Roma was strongly pursued, though with mixed success. Roma evaded it whenever possible, officials and nobles complied half-heartedly, and Hungarian scholars protested. Joseph II intensified the oppressive anti-Gypsy legislation. Smithing and trading at fairs were forbidden; Rom children over four were to be forcibly removed from their families; forced settlement continued. In the nineteenth century there was little open persecution of Roma (although until 1906 anyone suspecting a Gypsy of a petty crime could nail him to a tree until police arrived). Rom music, championed by Franz Liszt, regained prominence, and scholars explored Romani dialects and culture.(149)

Under communism Roma have historically been rejected by Hungarian society and remain so today, despite attempts under the communists to combat growing anti-Gypsy prejudice and raise educational standards and housing conditions (though Roma did not benefit from post-war land reform). Many local communities were destroyed in slum clearance programmes from 1964, and many men had to travel long distances for work, staying in hostels. In the late 1970s the government established councils of Gypsy affairs and an inter-ministral co-ordinating committee, and in 1986 ratified the formation of a (politically active) Gypsy cultural association, supporting forty dance troupes and over 200 cultural groups.

Post-1989 From the late 1980s, when the government abandoned the policy of full employment, unemployment among Roma rose sharply. Formerly over 83 per cent were employed, mainly in traditional crafts, agriculture and unskilled jobs. Now a minimum of 30 per cent are unemployed, rising in some regions to 50, 80 or even 100 per cent.(150) Most employed Roma earn below-average wages in unskilled menial or heavy work and are the first workers to be sacked. Unemployment pay is for one year only; many Roma, particularly those who have worked in agriculture on a daily paid basis, are ineligible to claim it. An estimated 80 per cent of Roma live below the poverty line.

Education Although their condition is better than that of Roma in Romania, Hungarian Roma live on the margins of society, dwelling in hovels, urban slums and rural shanty-towns. Their educational level is low: 50-80 per cent of Rom children do not complete elementary school, due partly to cultural factors (Romani as a first language, early marriages, lack of parental encouragement), and partly to poverty and the overriding need to contribute to the family's livelihood (under 2 per cent of Roma adolescents attend a secondary school).(151) Despite attempts to improve Romany education in the 1970s and 1980s, by 1985 36 per cent of children in schools for the mentally handicapped were Rom; 15.2 per cent of all Rom schoolchildren were in such schools; 42.9 per cent of Rom fathers and 50.9 per cent of mothers had received no schooling whatsoever.(152) Yet Hungary has virtually no educational programmes specifically designed to assist Rom schoolchildren.

Ill health and crime Rates of infant mortality and physical disability are high. Average life expectancy is low; estimates vary from 32 to 55/60 years.(153) Poor living conditions (up to twelve in a room), smoking from an early age, excessive drinking and the prevalence of major diseases, including tuberculosis and cardiac and rheumatic illnesses, are contributory factors. Due to unemployment, homelessness, extreme poverty and a large number of dependants, many Roma live in permanent fear of destitution and famine. Petty crime has markedly increased among them. (Budapest police estimate that Roma commit 80 per cent of burglaries and 95 per cent of pocket-picking.) Over 50 per cent of the prison population are Roma. The Council of Minorities chairman in Ózd, a town with nearly 90 per cent Rom unemployment, stated: 'People are stealing because they are hungry.'(154) Roma convicted of crimes often suffer harsher penalties than non-Gypsies.

Gypsy organizations In 1989 new Rom political organizations were created, including Phralipe (Brotherhood), the Democratic Alliance of Hungarian Gypsies and the Hungarian Gypsy Party. Hungary's two largest political parties began to incorporate some Rom concerns into their own programmes. By 1993 nearly 1,000 national or local Rom organizations existed, parliament having set aside 80 million forints in 1991 for distribution to Gypsy bodies. But, according to Martin Kovats, there was no increase in the political strength of Roma between 1990 and 1994.(155) In 1995 a fifty-three-member national Romani Council was elected, the first of its kind in Eastern Europe, and was given \$500,000 by the government to fund Roma development projects and to lobby government institutions on behalf of Roma.(156)

Legal protection In 1979 Hungary granted the Roma people ethnic group status, but did not recognize them as a full minority with the attendant financial and legal benefits. However, constitutional changes introduced in mid-1990 resulted in the Law on the Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities in July 1993. This explicitly gave Roma legal protection against discrimination, the right to use Romani in the courts and elsewhere, potential provision for funding education and media in Romani, and limited self-government where concentrations of Roma were high. But the new law disappointed some Rom leaders, who had been hoping for the granting of national minority status with stronger rights. According to Zsolt Csalog of the Raoul Wallenberg Society, the new law 'would not go far enough to protect Gypsies, who often find police unwilling to investigate crimes against them'.(157)

Anti-Gypsy prejudice Such legal protection is vitally important. Prejudice against Roma, always latent in Hungary, increased during the 1980s. Anti-Gypsy graffiti and newspaper articles appeared. A hard rock band sang the lyrics: 'We want to remove all bad things. All evil should disappear. A shotgun is the only weapon to achieve this. I want to kill every Gypsy, little or big.(158) Among the causes of this intensified hostility were ignorance of Gypsy life apart from one television programme highlighting Rom crime; fear of high Roma birth rates (it was estimated that the Roma population was doubling every twenty to thirty years);(159) and resentment against government measures to assist Roma at a time of high inflation.

Violence The early 1990s saw a huge influx of tourists and foreigners. Skinheads, with whom (according to a welfare ministry report of 1994) 40,000 young Hungarians fully and 190,000 partly identified, gained prominence.(160) Numerous skinhead attacks against Roma occurred. Forty-three skinheads were prosecuted following the ravaging of the Roma settlement Eger in September 1990.(161) In Miskolc and other settlements numerous Roma were injured in attacks by skinhead mobs during the autumn of 1990. In September 1992 Roma homes were burned or destroyed and their

inhabitants injured in Kétegyháza. In Tura two Roma were killed by a farmer while picking pears, and in November 1992 another Rom was killed.(162) Despite a government clamp-down against the far right in 1993, persistent skinhead violence and fire-bombings against Roma continued, including a serious petrol bomb attack in Gyöngyös (November 1994).(163) According to Zsolt Csalog, such violence 'heightens the Roma's feeling of exclusion from society'.(164)

Official prejudice Some commentators argue that 'though skinheads have been important in creating a climate of fear, intimidation and exclusion for the Roma, it is the violence and discrimination meted out by the state authorities which is of greater political significance'.(165) In August 1992 Istvan Csurka, vice-president of the Hungarian Democratic Forum, blamed some of Hungary's problems on 'genetic causes', interpreted by some as 'an allusion to Gypsies'. In September 1992 Aladar Horvath, chairman of the Roma parliament and deputy in the Hungarian parliament, argued that the government 'completely disregards the interests of the Roma minority'. In August 1993, after the recognition of Roma as a full minority, Interior Minister Peter Boross was accused by Rom organizations of encouraging skinhead and police actions against Roma.(166)

New developments Yet there have been positive developments, including the creation of the dynamic Roma parliament and other umbrella bodies. In December 1994 elections took place for Romany representative councils with consultative status in Hungary's 519 municipal and district councils. The councils, each with between three and five members, will be consulted on general issues and have a veto on measures of specific concern to Roma.(167) (Due to the poverty of Roma, all Rom organizations are dependent on government funding, which may penalize groups critical of government policies.)

With full legal status, increasingly articulate representatives, greater access to public funding and more awareness of the dire financial and educational plight of the Hungarian Roma, their situation should gradually ameliorate. Moreover, there are signs that skinhead activity lessened in 1994-5. But the economic situation for ordinary Hungarians has worsened substantially since 1994, with high inflation and large wage cuts, increasing the danger of Roma being used as scapegoats by a discontented population. The large income differentials between Roma and other Hungarians need to be tackled, as do public hostility and police harassment. In 1995 there were major attacks on Romanics. On 7 April in Kalocsa fifty non-Gypsies beat up a group of Roma, causing serious injury. Racist attacks on Roma occurred in April and May in Gyöngyös, Veszprém and Kecskemét. In May in Kalocsa, skinheads bearing the slogan 'For a white world, kill all the Gypsies' attacked twenty-two Roma, seriously wounding seven, including children.(168)

Italy *Total population: 57.9 million Roma population: 90,000-110,000 (MRG)*

Italy's Rom population comprises some 50,000 descendants of the first wave of immigrants in the fifteenth century, together with some 15,000 Sinti who migrated from France and Austria in the nineteenth century. Later immigrant Roma include 3,000-5,000 Kalderash and other tribal groups and some 30,000 recently arrived Roma from the Balkans. Most Italian Roma, even if sedentary, maintain a pattern of winter settlement and summer nomadism.(169)

Italian Roma commonly experience marginalization and discrimination, particularly in the justice system. For the general public they provide ready scapegoats. While the ministry of the interior has

repeatedly forbidden the prohibition of stopping rights as unconstitutional, local authorities—frequently hostile towards Roma—have instead prohibited the caravans themselves.(170)

Anti-Roma attacks in Rome in 1992 were linked to the Movimento Politico neo-Nazi skinhead organization.(171)

Nationalism and anti-Gypsy prejudice Professor Gianfranco Miglio, chief ideologue and key figure of the right-wing Lega Nord until June 1994, condemned racist violence in Germany in a 1994 interview with *Stern* magazine, but stated that he readily understood frustration at 'the onslaught of these waves of immigration flowing from the East, especially the Gypsies'.(172)

Increased nationalism acts as a catalyst for expressions of hostility to incoming Roma among officials and the Italian public. In August 1994 Forza Italia MP Umberto Cecchi attacked 'nomads' in the Florence daily *La Nazione*. Describing travellers' camps outside Florence as 'a gathering of thieves and prostitutes, muggers and rapists', he called for Roma to be prevented from entering or travelling through Florence. A local campaign against travellers' camps attracted 22,000 signatures and support from the mayor, Morales. Local authorities promised to expel 1,000 Roma from camps at Olmatello and Poderaccio and all 'nomads' without refugee status by September 1994.(173) Police at Valcannuta closed down a Romany camp in August 1995, expelling fifty Roma.(174)

In Rome residents of Via Purgatono blocked a street to a small convoy of Roma. The *Allianza Nazionale* staged a festival opposite the site of a proposed camp for Roma,(175) having earlier issued a pamphlet urging that Roma be assigned to campsites on the outskirts of cities so that 'everybody may live in dignity and free of harassment'.(176)

Violence Violence against Gypsies seems to be escalating. In Padua an eleven-year-old Rom boy, Tarzan Sulic, was killed when trying to escape from a police barracks in 1994. After a *carabiniere* was given a one-and-a-half years' suspended sentence for the manslaughter, fifty lawyers and the mayor of Padua protested against the light sentence, but no appeal was granted.(177) Gangs attacked a Romany camp outside Turin several times in early 1994.(178) When in early 1995 four Bosnian refugee babies, almost certainly Roma, burned to death on an illegal site in Milan, the Lega Nord mayor, Marco Formentini, said: 'If only we had cleared them [Roma] out of here, it would never have happened.' In the spring of 1995 a Rom boy was shot and killed in the Milan railway station.

Rom children have been given letter bombs disguised as toys. In January 1995 a five-year-old boy in Pisa was wounded by a bomb hidden in a book of fairy tales. The White Brotherhood sent a letter to the mayor of Cascina (a province of Pisa) claiming responsibility for the attack and threatening to assassinate him for being 'a friend of Gypsies'. In March 1995 two Romany children from Yugoslavia who were begging on the Pisa-Florence motorway were permanently disabled by a bomb concealed inside a doll.(179)

Poland *Total population: 38.5 million Roma population: approximately 30,000 (180) 50,000-60,000 (MRG)*

History Poland's Roma, like those of other countries, are heterogeneous. The oldest, established since

the sixteenth century, are the originally nomadic lowland Polska Roma and the highland Bergitka Gypsies, the latter being the poorest 'Gypsy proletariat',⁽¹⁸¹⁾ hut-dwelling and subsisting by breaking stones, begging, blacksmithing and working at the Nowa Huta steelworks. Vlach clans arrived later—Kalderash tin-smiths in the mid- nineteenth century and Lovari smiths and musicians from Russia after the Second World War.⁽¹⁸²⁾

Before 1989 Under the communist regime, private trading by Roma was banned in 1952; nomadism was outlawed and forced settlement decreed in 1964. Roma could be prosecuted and fined or imprisoned for minor offences such as lighting bonfires, not registering a change of address, itinerancy or the failure of their children to attend school. As a result, 10 per cent of Roma men today have a criminal record. When co-operatives were broken up, Roma remained landless. They were sometimes refused ration cards and were not served in shops. Although hostility to Roma was suppressed under communism, it sometimes emerged, as during the pogroms in 1981 in Oswięcim (Auschwitz), Konin and Katy. Two hundred Roma were forced to flee Oswięcim for Sweden and from Konin to Germany. They were granted asylum because of Poland's undemocratic nature.

Post-1989 Since 1989, Romany cultural life has flourished. Music groups are encouraged and subsidized, a Romani newspaper was founded in 1990, and books on Roma have been published. In 1991 the Association of Romanies in Poland was created; it organized a commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Gypsies massacred in Auschwitz, attended by 3,000. The government formed an Office for National Minority Affairs in 1992. A 'gadjo' (non-Gypsy), Adam Bartosz, has become a prominent pro-Rom spokesman.

Public prejudice Yet life for Polish Roma is deeply insecure. In April 1991 the Demoskop Research Agency published the results of a public opinion survey of racial prejudice in Poland. It demonstrated widespread prejudice against Roma: 72 per cent of Poles preferred not to have a Rom for a neighbour; 48 per cent would have refused Roma a seat in the Sejm (parliament); 43 per cent believed that Rom behaviour provoked hostility.

Emigration and repatriation In 1991 a serious pogrom in Mfawa, and lesser ones elsewhere, caused many Roma to flee to Sweden. This time they were refused asylum and repatriated to Poland. Flight became almost impossible after the large-scale immigration of Romanian and Bulgarian Roma into Poland in 1991. The ultimate destination of these immigrants was Germany. Germany, however, repatriated tens of thousands of Roma, and in October 1992 demanded that Poland impose visa requirements on all Romanians, and tightened Polish-German border controls. Polish Roma are now seeking asylum in Britain; some have already been repatriated.

Violence Open racism against Roma has surfaced since 1991. In 1993 the neo-fascist Polski Front Narodowy (National Front of Poland) circulated pamphlets urging that all '90,000' Polish Roma should be banished.⁽¹⁸³⁾ Fly posters have borne slogans such as 'Death to Gypsies' 'Hang the Gypsies' and, in Oswięcim (Auschwitz), 'Gas the Gypsies'. In 1992 and 1993 there were attacks on Roma in numerous Polish towns. At least two Roma were killed in 1995, and the editor of the Polish Rom magazine Rromp-o Drom warned of a 'new wave of violence against the Romany population of Poland'.⁽¹⁸⁴⁾

Romania Total population: 23.3 million Roma population: 430,000 (official statistics) 1.8-2.5 million (MRG)

A history of enslavement Romanian Roma form the largest Rom community in Europe. Their history has been the most tragic. Their presence in Wallachia and Moldavia was recorded in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, possibly following their capture during Tatar raids or through their debts to landlords.(185) They experienced five centuries of slavery and utter destitution. Apart from a few free musicians and the heroic Netotsi (runaway slaves who fled to precarious near-starvation in the mountains) all Roma were chattel slaves, regarded by their owners, primarily feudal lords and Orthodox churches and monasteries, as a permanent work force of indispensable artisans.(186) Recaptured runaway slaves were tortured. Even Roma without a master automatically became slaves of the crown, owing an annual tribute.

Roma slaves were engaged primarily as artisans in specialized trades, above all in smithing. Conditions were brutal. Whereas Roma could be tortured for a trifling offence, no non-Gypsy is known to have been executed for killing a Rom. Women could be possessed sexually by owners and their guests. 'The slaves owned by the monasteries and boyars were absolutely at the disposal of their masters and possessed no personal rights. They and their children were chattels who could be sold, exchanged or given away; a Rumanian man or woman who married such a Gypsy became a slave too'(187)—as did their children in perpetuity. Entire families were broken up through sale; mothers were permanently separated from their children, resulting in deep psychological trauma and widespread loss of the (forbidden) Romani mother- tongue. Conditions for Roma slaves were as inhumane as for African slaves. Kogalniceanu, a politician who campaigned for the emancipation of Roma, wrote:

In my youth I used to see in the streets ofjassy human beings with chains on their hands and feet, some of them even with iron rings about their heads and necks. Cruel floggings, starvation and exposure to smoke, being cast naked into the snow or frozen river; this was the treatment meted out to Gypsies . . . Neither humanity nor religion, nor the law had any mercy for these hapless human beings.(188)

Emancipation Moves towards emancipation, begun in the 1830s with princely emancipation, led to the final abolition of slavery in Moldo-Wallachia in 1864, prompting a gradual and massive exodus from Romania of Roma fearful of a future re-imposition of slavery. Those who stayed 'remained deeply impoverished social outcasts',(189) prey to exploitation by the traditional landlords, often landless and lower in the social hierarchy even than the wretched peasants, who revolted in 1907. Following the First World War, strong Roma organizations were established and Roma newspapers published. Roma leaders pressed the government for educational and other reforms to ameliorate conditions. This process was halted by the Second World War, during which several thousand of Romania's Roma perished.

Consequences of servitude The consequences of prolonged slavery are still apparent today. Marcel Courtiade, writer and linguist, argues that servitude has produced among Roma psychological traits including: resignation, fatalism and aggression; deep shame at being Rom; profound lack of confidence in the future; and a lack of a feeling of responsibility towards third parties.(190) Lying became a necessary survival mechanism in the face of brutal owners, one aspect of a process of what Yugoslav Rom leader Rajko Djuric calls 'animalization by slavery'.(191) Among the non-Gypsy population, racist hatred and contempt for today's Roma are the result of centuries of disdain towards Roma slaves and outlaws and the degrading conditions in which they were forced to live.

Under communism During the People's Republic from December 1947 onwards and under the

Ceausescu regime (1965- 89), all national minorities (guaranteed complete equality in 1945) were treated with hostility. The Roma—the second-largest minority after Hungarians—were no exception. As Romanian nationalism intensified, Roma language and culture, including Gypsy music, were suppressed. Romani was banned in churches and the printing and circulation of Romani bibles forbidden. In order to absorb Roma into the majority population, some nomads were forcibly settled, private Rom farmers were collectivized and traditional handicrafts were abandoned. Under Ceausescu some attempts were made to improve Roma education and increase employment, though with little success. Many communities were destroyed as Roma were forced into urban tenements or collective farms. Roma remained on the margins of society, some operating in the black market, engaging in street-cleaning or begging. Few had regular jobs. Roma were frequently a target of police violence, while gold ornaments worn by some made them easy prey of the *Securitate*.

After Ceausescu Following Ceausescu's downfall, many Roma hoped for a change of fortune for their people. Some major developments did occur. Article 6 of the Romanian constitution (8 December 1991) 'recognizes and guarantees persons belonging to national minorities the right to conserve, develop and express their ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity'. The constitution guarantees the right of national minorities to representation in parliament. The Democratic Union of Romanian Roma was founded in 1990, and Romania's first Romani newspaper since before the Second World War, *Satra libera* (Free Camp), and other Romani publications, were produced. Numerous Roma political organizations have been created, many reflecting tribal or occupational interests. Rom cultural life has begun to flourish, with a Romani- language theatre established in Timisoara.

Anti-Gypsism and violence The new freedom of speech has rekindled long- standing contempt for Roma. As David Crowe has written, 'the Gypsies became the national scapegoat for Romania's immense problems.'[\(192\)](#) The nationalistic Partidul Romania Mare (Greater Romania Party), for example, publishes a weekly paper, Romania mare (circulation 600,000), in which Roma are attacked. Radu Sorescu, leader of the xenophobic Partidul Dreapta Nationala (Party of the National Right) said on the radio: '[A]ntisemitism is old hat—these days we must fight against Gypsies and immigrants.' The party advocates sterilization of Roma women and compulsory transfer of Roma to reservations.[\(193\)](#)

Such hatred has unleashed a wave of violent anti- Gypsy incidents among the civilian population, in which a number of Roma have been murdered. In early 1991 two dozen Roma families were evicted forcibly by 1,000 villagers in Bolintin Vale.[\(194\)](#) Between January 1990 and September 1995 thirty similarly brutal mob attacks against Roma occurred across Romania, often involving the lynching and permanent expulsion of Roma and the torching of Roma homes,[\(195\)](#) as at Hadareni in September 1993, when three Roma died. Few perpetrators are prosecuted and victims receive no compensation. Amnesty International issued in May 1991 a nine- page 'catalogue of injustice' suffered by Roma since 1991, arguing that 'a nationwide pattern of inadequate police protection . . . encouraged further acts of racist violence against Gypsies'.[\(196\)](#)

There is evidence of tacit local government support for anti-Roma violence, related to rising nationalism and consequent intolerance of non- ethnic Romanians. In June 1990 10,000 miners, called into Bucharest to end anti-government demonstrations, attacked the city's Rom quarter, ransacking homes and assaulting many Roma. Romanian state television described protesters as Roma 'dregs of society'; the head of television claimed that the television studios had been destroyed by Roma.[\(197\)](#)

The press and broadcast media still commonly portray Roma as criminals.

Rom leaders are dismayed at increasingly open expressions of hatred. Nicolae Gheorghe, spokesman for the Ethnic Federation of Roma, said: 'Before the revolution the violence against the Gypsies was the monopoly of the police. Now it is more democratic, the people on the street can do it too ... To be a Gypsy is not just an ethnic identity but also a stigma.'[\(198\)](#)

Socio-economic conditions The economic condition of Roma in Romania remains very poor. Until 1989, 50 per cent were employed in agriculture. When land was redistributed to farmers, most Roma lost their jobs. A survey in 1992 found that 80 per cent of adult Roma were unskilled and that over 50 per cent of those interviewed were unemployed.[\(199\)](#) Overcrowding is endemic—over 3 per room, compared to the 1.5 per room among non-Roma; in over 10 per cent of families between five and twenty persons share one small room.

Education Educational levels remain low. Twenty-seven per cent of Roma have never been to school; only 4.5 per cent have attended secondary school. Most children leave school aged nine; only 51.3 per cent of children under ten attend school regularly. Between 40 per cent and 80 per cent of children in orphanages are Roma. Among the adults, 79.4 per cent have no professional training and only 16.1 per cent have modern professions. Only 22.1 per cent of Roma adults are in regular employment, and 45 per cent have no employment at all.[\(200\)](#)

Emigration of Roma Since 1990 tens of thousands of Romanians have fled to Germany via Poland, seeking to make use of Germany's liberal asylum laws. Over half the would-be immigrants were Roma. In September 1992 the Bonn-Bucharest Accord was signed, enabling Germany to repatriate 50,000 Romanians, mostly Roma. The Romanian government was given DM 30 million to help with repatriation. Since then Germany has pursued a policy of repatriation and adopted legislation to deter political refugees from entering Germany. There is evidence that returning Roma are resented by the Romanian population.

Anti-Gypsy legislation New racist legislation has been introduced. In May 1995 Romanian Roma were reclassified as 'Tsigani', officially in order to avoid confusion with ethnic Romanians. For Roma to call themselves 'Roma' is now forbidden. Roma leaders lodged a strong protest during a government-sponsored conference on tolerance in Bucharest in May 1995.

Hopeful signs Rom organizations are involved, with increasing success, in local conflict resolution and mediation between villagers and Roma. There are signs that the authorities are tackling anti-Rom violence with greater urgency. When a mob of 1,000 villagers looted and burned nine Gypsy homes in Racsa, police reacted forcefully and brought charges against forty villagers. Satra Mare province gave money to rebuild the Romany homes, 'a signal that anti-Gypsy violence now carries a penalty'.[\(201\)](#)

Conclusion The overall situation of Roma, former slaves and outcasts, remains extremely bleak. As human rights advocate Smaranda Enache stated in the autumn of 1993: 'Gypsies are generally persecuted by the police, humiliated by local authorities and made to live on the margin.'[\(202\)](#) Roma are hated in Romania with a greater venom than elsewhere in Europe, as Isabel Fonseca's recent book testifies.[\(203\)](#)

Russia *Total population: 147 million Roma population: 262,015 (1989 census) 220,000-400,000 (MRG)*

History Roma entered Ukraine and Lithuania during the fifteenth century and by the eighteenth century had migrated as far as Siberia. Tsarist policies were aimed at strict control and limiting nomadism. Roma were forbidden entry to St Petersburg from 1759 to 1917 and subject to special taxes and passport regulations from the late eighteenth century. Measures taken in the 1830s for their compulsory settlement were never fully implemented.

Many Roma remained nomadic; virtually all were poor, but a few attained remarkable prominence. Count Orlov's late eighteenth-century Gypsy choir performed at aristocratic soirees, the first of many Rom choirs and orchestras patronized by the nobility. Some Gypsy musicians attained fame and fortune. The romantic image of the free Bohemian inspired Russian composers (e.g. Rachmaninov) and many writers (including Pushkin, Lermontov, Tyutchev, Gregoriev, Blok and Leo Tolstoy, whose brother married a Gypsy). Literary preoccupation was underpinned by serious scholarship on the Roma and their rich ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity.

Under communism Under the Bolsheviks, Roma, like other minorities, enjoyed a cultural renaissance. In 1925 the All-Russian Union of Gypsies was founded and Roma were given nationality status. Literacy in Romani was promoted by a Romani magazine, adult primers and literary texts. In the 1930s several Romani schools and clubs were opened. Romani teachers were trained at the Moscow Institute of Education and Roma entered medical school in Smolensk. In 1931 the Theatre 'Romen' opened in Moscow; created by Roma and assisted by members of the Jewish theatre, it was partly intended to 'fight against anti-Gypsism'.[\(204\)](#)

Yet primers and texts contained propaganda designed to encourage Rom assimilation. Decrees issued in 1926 and 1928 urged Roma to abandon nomadism and settle on state land. Under Stalin, from the mid-1930s onwards, all cultural initiatives disappeared; from 1937 until 1989 there were no Romani publications. Romani schools, clubs, theatres and troupes were closed, with the exception of Theatre 'Romen'. Many Roma were killed or exiled to Siberia, Rom collective farms were disbanded and Roma were forcibly settled with non-Roma.

During the Second World War the USSR proved a relatively safe haven for indigenous Roma and refugees from further west. Roma were compulsorily registered in the post-Stalin era. Nomadism was banned in the 1956 decree 'On Reconciling Vagrant Gypsies to Labour'. While most Roma remained illiterate, a small Gypsy intelligentsia gained prominence in the performing arts and some professions. Crowe identified a new Gypsy renaissance under Gorbachev from the mid-1980s; it was evident in new scholarship on Roma, television programmes and films featuring Romani life, and increasing affirmation by Roma of their Rom identity.[\(205\)](#) Yet Roma remained politically isolated and culturally impoverished.

The contemporary situation Since 1989 the situation for many Roma has worsened, despite the publication of the first Russian-Romani dictionary in 1990, the creation of some Rom organizations and the granting of permission to Rom delegates to attend the Fourth World Romani Congress in Warsaw in 1990. The Gypsy Cultural Section of the Soviet Cultural Union, created in 1989, has remained without funding, premises and publications.[\(206\)](#) Little is done to eradicate Rom illiteracy.[\(207\)](#)

Anti-Gypsy racism has intensified and is now expressed openly. Roma, many of whom operate in the black market, are a convenient scapegoat for the rise in crime and deterioration in living standards since 1989.(208) In July 1991 hundreds of local youths attacked, and demanded the expulsion of, the Rom community in Alapaevsk. In August 1992 two Gypsy women were murdered near Volgodonsk; Cossacks demanded the banishment of all local Romanies. In August 1993 an anti-Romany article in Troed reported the expulsion of Roma from a district in the Novgorod region.(209)

There is 'growing prejudice in Russia towards "chorniye" (Blacks) or "churki" (wood chunks) from the Caucasus'.(210) Gypsies have been arrested in Moscow and elsewhere in anti-crime campaigns following the violent events in Moscow? in October 1993. In December 1993 Vladimir Zhirinovsky described Romania as an 'artificial state' populated by 'Italian Gypsies'. In the same month the Falcons, the youth section of Zhirinovsky's Liberal Democratic Party, demanded at a news conference in Perm the expulsion of 'all Gypsies, Transcaucasians and Vietnamese' from the region.(211)

Slovakia

Total population: 5.3 million Roma population: 253,943 (local authority estimates 1989, i.e. 4.5 per cent of population)(212) 480,000-520,000 (MRG)

In nearly half of Slovakia Roma account for 10 per cent of the population, and in some parts for 12.5 per cent. Some villages in eastern Slovakia are almost entirely Rom, partly as a result of expulsions from towns during the Second World War.

History See section on [Czech Republic](#) for earlier history of Roma in Slovakia.

Under communism Nomadism was unconditionally prohibited in 1956 and in the bill entitled 'Permanent Settlement of Nomadic Persons' of October 1958. Many Romany communities were forcibly relocated to new settlements, often in border areas or near mines, where Gypsies became workers. Councils were often unable to provide housing and employment, although required to do so by law. In the late 1980s many settlements were destroyed, their occupants being placed in flats, but many remain in very poor housing. Voluntary sterilization of Romany women for payment was a common practice, as in the Czech lands. An official report of the Slovak government committee on the 'Gypsy problem' showed that in 1986 one-third of all Rom under-fives were in government children's homes. The report urged that all 'Gypsy children with criminal tendencies' should be placed in such homes from an early age. Fifty-seven per cent of all children in Slovak homes and borstals were Roma.(213)

Post-1989 There have been some positive developments. Roma were recognized as an ethnic minority in 1991. A state-financed Romani theatre and a secondary technical school for Roma, specializing in music, art and crafts, have been established in Kosice. The government financed a conference to explore ways of including Gypsy history in the school curriculum. It is proposed that the Romani language should be used as a supporting language in kindergartens and elementary schools, conditional upon regular school attendance by Roma children. The Department of Romany Culture in Nitra provides training for teachers of Roma children.

Despite these substantial developments and full governmental commitment to equal rights for Roma as

a recognized national minority, significant problems remain, particularly those of prejudice. On a visit in September 1993 to Spiská Nová Ves, a town with a large Rom community, Prime Minister Vladimir Meciar expressed concern at the large number of defective children born to very young and near-menopausal Rom mothers. He demanded a reduction in family welfare payments to lower 'the reproduction of socially unadaptable and mentally retarded people' and described Roma as 'antisocial, mentally backward, unassimilable and socially unacceptable'.(214)

Meciar's remarks were stimulated by the pyramidal age structure among Roma, with 43 per cent of the population being of pre-reproductive age compared to 26 per cent of the general population.(215) But they provoked an outcry among human rights organizations in Central Europe; Simon Wiesenthal pointed out that such language reflected the thought-patterns of Nazism.(216) Official denials of racism by Meciar included criticism of Rom life- styles and behaviour (217) and reflected popular resentment against some Roma who were receiving child benefit for numerous children at a time when living standards were falling for many employed Slovaks.(218)

Open anti-Gypsy violence has occurred since 1990, the authorities taking few steps to curb it. Some villages followed the example of Spiske Podhradi, whose mayor imposed a night curfew on Roma and other 'suspicious people' in July 1993.(219) Several young Roma were badly hurt and a seventeen-year-old Rom was burned alive in July 1995.

In education Roma children are commonly segregated from 'white' children. In March 1993 the ministry of culture suspended subsidies to the major Roma organizations.

Early in 1995 the Slovak ambassador to the Netherlands, Stefan Paulny, protested against a day of action in connection with racist attacks on Roma by stating that Roma in Slovakia 'prefer to avoid working, are engaged in criminality . . . are molesting their surroundings and disregarding the rule of law'. In a letter to a Dutch anti-racist organization, he wrote: '[N]othing can be done to improve the fate of the Roma'.(220)

The British Know-How Fund and the MRG, together with the Slovak police authority, held seminars in June 1994 in four towns with Roma leaders to discuss the main problem areas (including education, unemployment, housing, delinquency and coexistence) and possible solutions.

Spain

Total population: 39.2 million Roma population: 650,000-800,000 (MRG)

The Spanish Gypsy (Gitano) population is large, amounting to about 2 per cent of the population. At least 300,000 live in Andalusia (4.3 per cent of the total population). It is highly differentiated (with an increasing number of Gypsy professionals) and prominent in cultural life, particularly in flamenco and *canto jondo*.

Successive post-war governments have adopted policies of assimilation, recently resisted by Gitanos with increasing political activism. (The Gypsy Federation of Aragon, for example, is petitioning to have Gypsy marriage rites legally recognized.)

Relatively few Spanish Gypsies are still nomadic. Infant mortality is high at 61.1 per thousand, compared to 14.1 per thousand among non-Gypsies. Life expectancy is significantly lower (only 4 per cent reach the age of 60) and the birth-rate much higher than among the non-Gypsy population. A total of 49.2 per cent of Gitanos are aged under 15, compared with 22.8 per cent of the non-Gypsy population.(221)

Many Gitanos live in sprawling slum barrios in large cities (67 per cent of Andalusian Gypsies live in cities of over 100,000 inhabitants (222), eeking out a living in manual work and petty trading, commonly socially marginalized and poor. Some male Gitanos spend periods as 'guest worker' migrants to Germany and Switzerland and then return.

Public hostility Despite evidence of some working-class solidarity with Gitanos, public hostility is widespread, including among the middle classes. This takes many forms, including racist remarks. In January 1995 the president of Torregrossa football club argued that some Gypsies were 'worse than a gang of vandals'.(223) In 1994 many complaints were made against the police relating to unjustified expulsions of Gypsies.(224) The 1994 report on *Political Extremism and the Threat to Democracy in Europe* stated that Roma were often subject to physical harassment; violent attacks against Roma camps were usually locally inspired and did not involve national political organizations.(225) Sporadic violence occurs. In 1993 a lynch mob of 1,000 attacked a Gypsy home in Valencia following the death of a youth whose motorcycle had collided with a caravan.(226)

Evictions are not uncommon, people increasingly refuse to let flats to Gypsy families, and housing problems are acute. Civic authorities contribute to housing problems. In May 1994 the Madrid city council forced fifty-six families to leave a shanty town, which was then destroyed. The Roma were transferred to housing near a municipal rubbish tip, where trucks carrying rubbish arrived at a rate of three a minute. Many of the children had diarrhoea. Madrid's mayor ordered a wall to be constructed so that the Roma could not be seen.(227) Eighty more families soon joined them.(228)

Gypsy organizations While the claim that 250 Spanish Gypsy associations have a total of 900,000 members between them sounds inflated,(229) it nevertheless reflects the reality of increasing Gypsy organization and self-confidence. The opening of the first Gypsy congress of the EU in Seville in May 1994 was attended by Queen Sofia, who later opened the Biennale of Flamenco Art there in September. Gypsy political leaders are gaining more prominence, negotiating with local authorities in conflict situations with some success. Gypsy associations are taking useful initiatives; in 1995 the Federation of Andalusian Gypsy Associations organized for the first time summer schools for Gypsy children aged four to fourteen.

Pro-Roma projects Absenteeism from school, drug-taking and associated delinquency are serious problems among the marginalized young, particularly in urban slums where traditional Gypsy culture and values have been lost. They are being tackled by joint projects between Gypsy organizations and local or national authorities (the government devotes part of each annual budget to Gypsy development programmes). Absenteeism among Cordoba Gypsy children, for example, has dropped from 56 to 28 per cent as a result of such co-ordinated projects.(230) Numerous seminars and education programmes are run for and by teachers of Gypsy children.

United Kingdom

Total population: 58.4 million Roma population: 90,000-120,000 (MRG)

'The present-day Gypsy population of the United Kingdom can be divided into five main groups, each with its own cultural heritage': some 50,000 Romanies or 'Romanichals' in England and South Wales, descendants of 'Egyptians' who arrived in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; Roma from Eastern Europe, including Kalderash, who arrived earlier this century; perhaps 8,000 Irish travellers; some 300 Kale in North Wales; and some 2,000 Scottish travellers.(231)

Legal restrictions on travelling and settlement The 1960 Caravan Sites Act 'made it difficult for Gypsies to buy small plots of land and winter on them'.(232) Proof of earlier occupation by a caravan or planning permission had to be shown; both were hard to obtain, and even successful sites could be compulsorily purchased and their occupants evicted. Hundreds of families were turned off their own land or off private unauthorized sites.

Life became increasingly hard for Gypsies and travellers following the 1968 Caravan Act. Under this legislation it was mandatory for county councils and London boroughs to provide sites for Gypsy caravans in 'designated areas' and it became a criminal offence to park anywhere in those 'areas' other than on vacant pitches on those sites. (Such 'areas' included entire counties such as West Sussex and Dorset.) The net effect was to compel many Gypsies to abandon travelling and settle on local authority permanent sites. Sites provided are often inadequate and unhealthy, usually in undesirable locations, and always so stringently regulated that they cause a radical loss of freedom and deterioration in life-style (families and friends can no longer stay together, work cannot be done on site, pets are forbidden). Moreover, not nearly enough sites were created, due largely to public opposition and council resistance. Only half of Gypsy caravans were legal at any one time,(233) resulting in many, often violent evictions from unauthorized sites.

Contemporary problems Today about 20,000-30,000 live in houses. At least 40 per cent of nomadic Gypsies (nearly 4,000 families) still have no legal resting place, cannot receive post and their children can have little schooling. Many have health problems. Most traditional stopping places and empty pieces of land are now permanently barred and inaccessible. Simultaneously, many former ways of earning a living have been lost, forcing some settled Gypsies to draw social security for the first time. In 1990 Donald Kenrick wrote: 'Gypsies are again at a crisis point, where their survival as an ethnic group is being challenged on all sides . . . Although harassed as a minority, they have not, in practice, had the protection which the law should afford to minorities.'(234)

The new legislation and its consequences The enactment of the 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act has further intensified pressure on Gypsies. The 1968 act has been repealed and local authorities are no longer required by law to provide camp sites suitable for Gypsies, some of whom have since been evicted from existing sites. 'The powers previously available [under the 1968 act] in designated areas have been strengthened and will apply to the whole of England and (Wales)'.(235) 'Considerable numbers of children who currently live on unofficial sites will face eviction.'(236)

Since 1988 Romanies have been protected by race relations laws, but Gypsies are not recognized as a specific ethnic minority group, despite a growing Gypsy civil rights movement. Legal definitions of 'gipsy' relate to life-style, not ethnic identity. In 1967 the high court defined a 'gipsy' as 'a person leading a nomadic life, with no fixed employment and no fixed abode', in 1968 as any owner of an

illegally parked caravan. (Gypsies who have settled are thus no longer legally defined as 'gipsy'.)

In 1994 Lord Justice Millett ruled that to qualify as a 'gipsy' one must travel in a group (thus again 'depriving settled Gypsies of their historical identity')—yet the new act has made it harder for Gypsies to travel in a group. For changes in the law regarding mass trespass have affected Gypsies adversely. Formerly, twelve vehicles constituted a mass trespass. Now, six or more constitute mass trespass. Legally, a vehicle is anything, with or without wheels, capable of carrying a load, or anything attached to a vehicle. So an extended Gypsy family with two lorries, two caravans, one trailer and a wheel-less van-cum-toilet is technically committing 'mass trespass'. Gypsies accused of mass trespass must either leave immediately or face three months in prison. Numerous families have already been evicted.

The deteriorating situation of British Gypsies results partly from the proliferation of 'New Age' travellers; the more draconian measures in the Criminal Justice Act are aimed primarily at them, yet make life much harder for traditional Romanies. Peter Mercer, president of the Gypsy Council for Education, Culture, Welfare and Civil Rights, said: 'The Act amounts to genocide. It is an attempt to destroy our culture and everything that Gypsies do. They are seeking to exterminate us.'[\(237\)](#)

Despite the circulation of numerous vicious anti-Gypsy pamphlets in recent years, the refusal of entry to Gypsies at some public houses, dance halls and shops, and discrimination by employers, no prosecution has ever been brought on behalf of Gypsies by the Attorney General under the Public Order Act, and very few by the Commission for Racial Equality.

Harassment British nomadic Gypsies today suffer poverty and many injustices, including harassment by the police and bailiffs. Their public image is overwhelmingly negative and contributes to their sense of powerlessness. Many British Gypsies feel intense loss; one warden of a permanent site said recently: 'They've taken our language, our culture from us ... I miss the travelling, the freedom, the fresh air. The young Gypsies don't know nothing about it, they've lost it all.'

Some municipal councils exert pressure on Gypsies. Licenses at fairs at which Gypsies traditionally gather (e.g. Yarm and Horsmonden) have been withdrawn. The Epsom Derby has been moved to coincide with Appleby fair; there have been legal moves to prevent Gypsies from staying at traditional Appleby sites and at Stow-on-the-Wold. These are serious developments, since both nomadic and settled Romanies need regular meetings at fairs where Gypsies can meet, exchange news and maintain cultural life and social contacts.

Education Since the 1970s Britain has, like Italy, pioneered projects for Gypsy education, and now has some 200 specialized teachers for Gypsy and other travelling children, though the number of teachers is diminishing due to economic cuts. Only a third of Gypsy children attend school regularly; those who do commonly encounter marked hostility.

Asylum-seekers Several hundred Polish Roma refugees have sought asylum in Britain in recent years (139 are currently in the London Borough of Camden). A total of 350 Gypsies fled to Britain from persecution in Turkish Cyprus. Most are likely to be repatriated, together with several hundred Bosnian and Serbian Roma.

Former Yugoslavia

Total population: Bosnia-Herzegovina: 4 million Croatia: 4.6 million Serbia-Montenegro: 10.6 million Roma population: Bosnia-Herzegovina: 40,000-50,000 (MRG) Croatia: 30,000-40,000 (MRG) Serbia-Montenegro: 400,000-450,000 (MRG)

Cursed is the land from which the Gypsies flee. Old Serb proverb ([238](#))

Pre-1989 In 1981 Yugoslavia recognized Roma as a distinct national group (although only Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro fully recognized Roma as a nationality rather than as an ethnic minority). In the 1981 census, the number of those identifying themselves as Roma doubled. Census numbers were still deceptively low; ethnic identification is voluntary and, because of widespread anti-Rom prejudice, many Roma conceal their identity. Roma were scattered throughout the republics, the largest concentrations, according to the census, being in Serbia (57,140) and Kosovo (34,126).([239](#)) This increase may reflect the attempts of Tito's government during the 1970s to help ethnic minorities.

Concrete fruits of this policy included the publication in 1980 of the first Romani grammar in Romani script and orthography, and in 1981 an anthology of Romani poetry. Several radio stations broadcast daily programmes in Romani, and eighty Gypsy associations were established.([240](#)) Today Rom musicians are still widely respected and play at local festivities. There are Romani associations in main Croatian towns and elsewhere.

Yet even before the recent ethnic warfare, Roma were the 'poorest of the poor',([241](#)) which partly explains emigrations of Roma to Western Europe from the mid-1960s onwards. In the 1980s infant mortality rates could still reach 50 per cent, most Gypsy children did not complete primary school and in Serbia less than one in sixty attended secondary school. There were few Rom intellectuals or professionals. An unemployment rate of 90 per cent was not uncommon; most employed Roma had jobs with extremely low wages. Many lived in shanty dwellings in urban slum areas. By 1983 ten primary schools used Romani in infant classes, but few other initiatives were undertaken to help Romanies.

Post-1989 Antipathy to Roma, already intensifying during the 1980s, increased under post-communist nationalism. In 1990 several Roma were murdered in suspicious circumstances in Serbia, and a leading Yugoslav Romany activist, Rajko Djuric, was forced into exile.([242](#)) During the ethnic warfare many of the rights granted to Roma (use of Romani in public life, Rom organizations etc.) have disappeared, especially in the war zone. Many Roma—particularly those in border areas—have been victims of ethnic cleansing; some have been forcibly evicted from settlements in Bosnia, some have been murdered in concentration camps, many others have become refugees. Eleven Catholic Roma were massacred in the Bosnian village of Torjanici on 11 November 1991, probably by Serb irregulars. In Banja Luka Roma were forced to cross mine fields to test for mines, and elsewhere compelled to dig front-line trenches.([243](#)) Roma were forced by Serbs into front lines during the battle of Vukovar, and violence against Roma has occurred in Mostar (August 1991), Kazarisi and Torjanici (November 1991), Belgrade's Zemun district (April 1994), Zrenjanin (July 1994) and Gilane (September 1994).(244)

Macedonia (estimated Roma population: 200,000) has undertaken new initiatives to help Roma. President Gligorov has stressed their full citizenship, Romani-language teaching is planned for grades 1-8, and Skopje University opened a department of Romany studies.(245) Yet in February 1995 a Romany house was burnt down in Titov Veles. Twenty per cent of Macedonian Romanies have no passport, and have to pay \$600 (a small fortune) to acquire one.

In Macedonia and Kosovo an unusual development has recently occurred. Over 10,000 people, believed to be Roma, have registered their identity as 'Egyptians' and belong to the Egyptian Association, formed in 1990. Most had identified themselves as Albanians in 1981, being mostly Muslim and Albanian-speaking. Now that Kosovo is under Serbian rule and Albanian autonomy abolished, Albanian identity can be a liability, while Rom identity can confer social stigma. The declaration of 'Egyptian' identity may be a survival mechanism.(246)

It seems that Roma in Serbia are currently treated well, highlighting perhaps their ill-treatment elsewhere in many parts of former Yugoslavia. A 'Gypsy Day' meeting was held in St Mary's Church in Belgrade on 8 April 1995, attended by the bishop, in order to commemorate Roma victims during the Second World War. But apart from such gestures, the outlook for Roma in Yugoslavia remains grim. Many ex-Yugoslav Roma have sought refuge in Western Europe, particularly in the Netherlands and Germany. But The Netherlands appears to be pursuing a policy of encouraging Roma with Yugoslav passports to cross into Germany where, increasingly, they are forcibly repatriated back to Yugoslavia.

57 *O Drom*, September 1994. 58 Auzias, 47-8. 59 Auzias, 49; *O Drom*, September 1994. 60 *O Drom*, September 1994. 61 *Etudes Tsiganes*, vol. 1, 1993, 69. 62 *Ibid.*, 70. 63 *Romano Centro*, vol. 8, March 1995. 64 *IRR European Race Audit Bulletin*, 13 April 1995. 65 The interior ministry estimated the Roma population in 1989 as 576,927, over 6 per cent of the total population of just under 9 million; the Democratic Union of Roma (ROMA) puts the figure at 800,000-1,000,000. 66 Crowe, 2. 67 *Ibid.*, S. 68 *Ibid.*, 11. 69 *Ibid.*, 16. 70 Quoted in Kenrick and Puxon, 130-1. 71 Crowe, 25. 72 *Ibid.*, 28-9. 73 Helsinki Watch Report, *Destroying Ethnic Identity: The Gypsies of Bulgaria* (Helsinki 1991), 17. 74 *Ibid.*, 19. 75 Jaap Tanja, *O Drom*, April 1990. 76 Bulgarian radio, 5 May 1993. 77 BBC Summary of World Broadcasts (SWB), 11 May 1993. 78 Crowe, 27. 79 *Political Extremism and the Threat to Democracy in Europe: A Survey and Assessment of Parties, Movements and Groups* (London: Institute of Jewish Affairs, 1994 for CERA). 80 IRR European Race Audit, November 1995. 81 *Ibid.*, 9 July 1994. 82 *Ibid.*, June 1995. 83 *Ibid.*, December 1994. 84 *Ibid.*, 13 April 1995. 85 BTA News Agency Sofia, 20 April 1995. 86 *Ibid.* 87 Tom Gross, UNHCR Prague Liaison Office, Monthly Update 1, October 1994. 88 Josef Kalvoda, 'National minorities under Communism: the case of Czechoslovakia', *Ukrainian Quarterly*, vol. 45, no. 4, winter 1989, 426. 89 Rachel Tritt, *Struggling for Ethnic Identity: Czechoslovakia's Endangered Gypsies* (New York and London: Helsinki Watch Report, 1992), x. 90 Tritt, 5-6. 91 Kenrick and Puxon, 183. 92 Sebkova/Zlnavova, 'Lcs Roms de Tchecoslovaquie', in Auzias, 53. 93 Tritt, 11. 94 R. Pellar, 'La fécondité n'est plus en vente', in Auzias, 66-70; Tritt, 19-35. 95 P. Ofner, *O Drom*, April 1990, 34-5. 96 Tritt, 9-10. 97 Jiri Pehe, 'Law on Romanics causes uproar in Czech Republic', *RFE/RL Research Report*, February 1993 19 98 *Ibid.* 99 Jan Obrmann, 'Minorities not a major issue yet', *RFE/RL Research Report*, December 1991, 11. 100 L. Kalibova, 'La situation demographique de la population tzigane en Tchecoslovaquie', in Auzias, 57-65. 101 Obrmann, 10. 102 *Political Extremism and the Threat to Democracy in Europe*, 19. 103 *IRR European Race Audit*, November 1995. 104 *O Drom*, 1990. 105 CDMG, 10. 106 *Political Extremism and the Threat to Democracy in Europe*, 19. 107 Gross, UNHCR Monthly Update

1. 108 *Guardian*, 7 April 1993. 109 *Independent*, 13 January 1993. 110 *Le Monde*, 22 January 1993. 111 *IRR European Race Audit*, November 1995. 112 *O Drom*, September 1994. 113 Gross, October 1994. 114 Ina Zoon, *A Need for Change: The Czech Citizenship Law* (Prague 1995). 115 Gross, UNHCR Monthly Update 1. 116 *Prague Post*, 13 May 1995. 117 *Etudes Tsiganes*, vol. 1, 1993, 150-2. 118 Jacqueline Charlemagne, 'Les Tsiganes en France: face aux normes sédentaires', in Patrick Williams (ed.), *Tsiganes: identités, évolution* (Paris 1989), 187-95. 119 CDMG, 23. 120 *IRR European Race Audit*, 13 April 1995. 121 *Ibid.*, November 1995. 122 *Observer*, 11 June 1995. 123 *Romnews*, no. 33, 11 April 1995. 124 Quoted in Hancock, 58. 125 *O Drom*, April 1990. 126 Hohmann, 187ff. 127 *Ibid.*, 198-203. 128 *Ibid.*, 195-7. 129 Reyniers (quoted in CDMG, 19). 130 Roma National Congress, 'Roma in Germany', January 1993, 4. 131 Mark Braham, *The Untouchables: A Survey of the Roma People of Central and Eastern Europe* (Geneva: Office of the UNHCR 1993), 104. 132 Braham, 106. 133 Roma National Congress, 'Roma in Germany', 4. 134 *Regards*, June-August 1993. 135 Roma National Congress, 'Roma in Germany', 4. 136 *IRR European Race Audit*, 12 March 1995. 137 *Die Zeit*, 7 September 1990. 138 *IRR European Race Audit*, July 1994. 139 *Searchlight*, November 1995. 140 *IRR European Race Audit*, 13 April 1995. 141 *Ibid.*, March 1995. 142 *Ibid.*, 13 April 1995. 143 *Romnews*, no. 30, 7 February 1995. 144 *IRR European Race Audit*, September 1995. 145 *Romnews*, nos. 34/35, 16-23 April 1995. 146 Romani Rose, 'Sinto and Roma as national minorities in the countries of Europe', *OSCE ODIHR Bulletin*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1995, 45. 147 Martin Kovats, 'The Political Development of the Hungarian Roma', MA Dissertation, School of Slavonic and East European Studies, Eondon, 1994, 8-9. 148 Crowe, 73. 149 Cf. Gyorgy Meszaros, "'Tsiganologie" et politique en Hongrie', in Williams (ed.), 111-127. 150 Braham, 35; Crowe, 103. 151 Braham, 36. 152 Crowe, 95. 153 Braham, 42. 154 Crowe, 103. 155 Kovats, 19. 156 *IRR European Race Audit*, June 1995. 157 Crowe, 105-6. 158 *O Drom*, April 1990. 159 Crowe, 98. 160 Welfare mini try statistics cited in Kovats, 10. 161 *Political Extremism and the Threat to Democracy in Europe*, 52. 162 Braham, 39-40; Crowe, 104. 163 *IRR European Race Audit*, March 1995. 164 Kovats, 11. 165 Crowe/Kolsti, 11. 166 *BBC SWB, Eastern Europe Report*, August 1993. 167 *IRR European Race Audit*, March 1995. 168 *Ibid.*, September 1995. 169 *Etudes Tsiganes*, vol. 1, 1993, 44. 170 MRG, 13. 171 *Political Extremism and Threat to Democracy in Europe*, 58. 172 *Ibid.* 173 *IRR European Race Audit*, March 1995. 174 *Ibid.*, November 1995. 175 *Ibid.* 176 *IRR European Race Audit*, December 1994. 177 *Ibid.*, June 1995. 178 *Il Manifesto*, 7 May 1994. 179 *IRR European Race Audit*, June 1995. 180 Braham, 89. 181 Jerzy Ficofski, 'The Gypsies in Poland: history and customs', in *Poland: History and Customs* (Yugoslavia [n.d.]). 182 Jetske Mijs, *O Drom*, April 1990. 183 Braham, 92. 184 *IRR European Race Audit*, June 1995. 185 Crowe, 108. 186 Fraser, 58; Courtiade, 14. 187 Fraser, 59. 188 M. Kogalniceanu, *Esquisse sur l'histoire . . . des Cigains* (Berlin 1837), quoted in Kenrick and Puxon, 54. 189 Crowe, 121. 190 Courtiade, 16. 191 Quoted in Auzias, 17. 192 Crowe, 146. Essential reading on Roma in Romania is the Helsinki Watch Report, 'Destroying Ethnic Identity: The Persecution of Gypsies in Romania' (Helsinki 1991). 193 *Political Extremism and Threat to Democracy in Europe*, 84-5. 194 *The Times*, 30 August 1992. 195 'Lynch law: violence against Roma in Romania', *Helsinki Watch*, vol. 6, no. 17, November 1994. 196 *IRR European Race Audit*, September 1995. 197 Crowe, 146. 198 *Guardian*, 30 August 1992; *The Times*, 30 August 1992. 199 Survey by E. and C. Zamfir, 1992, cited in CDMG, 7. 200 *SWB, Eastern Europe*, 12 April 1993. 201 Elisabeth Sullivan, *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 21 May 1995. 202 Quoted in Crowe, 149. 203 Isabel Fonseca, *Bury Me Standing: the Gypsies and Their Journey* (New York 1995). 204 Crowe, 179. 205 *Ibid.*, 192ff. 206 *O Drom*, September 1994. 207 Leksa Manus, in Auzias, 44. 208 Nadezhda Demeter, in Auzias, 43. 209 *O Drom*, September 1994. 210 Crowe, 194. 211 *Ibid.* 212 Pehe, 18. 213 *O Drom*, April 1990. 214 Liz Fakete and Frances Webber, *Inside Racist Europe* (London: IRR

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6/ Roma, European institutions and NGOs

Gypsy organizations and cultural development With the emergence of a new Gypsy political elite, Roma have created many bodies to represent their interests in recent years. In 1967 the Comité International Rom was founded; in 1971 it held the first World Gypsy Congress in London. Its central theme was the Rom proverb 'sa e Rroma phrala' (All Roma are brothers). By 1987 its successor organization, the International Romani Union, had offices in twenty-seven countries and had held three international congresses. (It was given full UN consultative status in March 1993 and now, as an NGO, negotiates actively with national governments and with the EU, CE and OSCE.) In April 1990 the Fourth World Gypsy Congress was held in Warsaw, including for the first time representatives from Eastern Europe, while in September 1991 an international colloquium of Gypsy studies met in Rome. EUROROM (the European Romani Parliament), created by the Hungarian Roma Parliament together with other Roma in Central, Eastern and Western Europe, was established in November 1990 and met in August 1992 in Budapest.(247)

Romani-language journals and newspapers are now published. Moves are afoot to create a standardized Romani orthography. Pan-Gypsy awareness among European Roma is growing. (British Gypsies have been sending aid lorries to help Bulgarian Roma.) Ian Hancock, a leading Rom academic and activist, expressed this revitalized sense of Rom international solidarity: 'We were one people when we came to Europe, and . . . we must be one people again.'(248) Yet although the Roma, numbering at least 1.2 million within the EU, form one of its largest minorities, 'the Rom people are not organized in such a way as to assert their rights and defend their fundamental freedoms within the society in which they live'.(249)

Roma and European bodies in the 1980s Without the protection of a nation-state, Roma are dependent on international organizations to express their concerns. Until the early 1980s European bodies were primarily concerned with their legal status and problems of migration. The Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (SCLRAE), for example, recommended in 1981 that stateless Gypsies and other nomads be enabled to acquire identity papers and travel between member states.

But Roma remained on the fringes of the EU political agenda until the emergence of new initiatives in Roma education during the 1980s, including: correspondence courses; intercultural programmes; seminars on the training of teachers of Gypsy children; a CE handbook on Gypsies and Travellers (1985) and a survey by the Commission of European Communities of Gypsy schooling in Europe (1986), both by Professor Jean-Pierre Liegeois.⁽²⁵⁰⁾ As a result of these and later measures, many pilot projects, publications and inter-school exchanges were developed.

Post-1989 developments Moves to assist Roma intensified from 1989, due partly to pressure from the German government, fear of mass Rom immigration (made potentially more possible by the 1985 Schengen Agreement guaranteeing removal of border controls and free movement of peoples between signatory states), the likely future expansion of the EU and increasingly effective lobbying by Roma organizations. In May 1989 the EU, in an important resolution stressing the integral nature of Roma culture and language to the European heritage, called for European schools to include provision for Gypsies and the multi-cultural teaching of Romany history, culture and language. In July 1989 sixty-five European Community (EC) educators attended a seminar on improving assistance to Roma communities. The OSCE (formerly the CSCE) recognized for the first time 'the particular problems of Roma/Gypsies' at its Copenhagen summit in June 1990, while its follow-up Minority Rights Conference in Geneva in June 1991 discussed the problems of Roma among those of other non-territorial minorities.

Following the Gulf War, which focused concern on the plight of the Kurds, and the development of the concept of a 'new world order' in the spring of 1991, UN and European bodies devoted more attention to the protection of minorities. The UN granted the Roma permanent consultative status in 1979, urged member states to ensure protection and equality for all Roma in August 1991, adopted Resolution 1992/65, 'On the protection of Roma (Gypsies)', in March 1992, and recognized Roma as an official minority in September 1995.

1992-93: Roma on the European agenda In May 1992 European Roma and OSCE held an international seminar parallel with the Helsinki CSCE, discussing the political situation of Roma in Eastern Europe, their legal situation in Western Europe, Roma refugees and Romani language rights. In June the CE finally signed a Charter of Regional or Minority Languages, adopted in 1988, recognizing Romani as a minority language. Gypsy issues were discussed at other specialist seminars and conferences, including a European Colloquium on Gypsies held in Czechoslovakia in October 1992, and organized by the SCLRAE.

In February 1993, against a background of mounting skinhead anti-Gypsy violence, the EU Parliamentary Assembly adopted Resolution 1203 'On the situation of Roma in Europe', which stressed the vulnerability of Roma and the urgent need for member states to implement previous proposals: '[A]s one of the very few non-territorial minorities in Europe, Gypsies need special protection.' In April

1993 the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities was mandated to report on the situation of Roma in member states.

1994: New Romany organizations in Europe Simultaneously, Gypsy organizations were being strengthened. In May 1994 the first Romani Congress of the EU was held in Seville, led by a Gypsy MEP. The Standing Committee on Co-operation and Co-ordination of the Romani Organizations in Europe was formed under the auspices of the CE, holding its first meeting in August 1994 in Oswiecim, following a commemoration in Auschwitz of the Gypsy holocaust. Its aims included providing an institutional base for permanent action within the CE and CSCE, creating a Roma-run office and establishing a Romani rights charter to define the legal position of Roma within Europe.

The Standing Committee recommended appointing a mediator on Gypsy matters to work within Eastern Europe and the CSCE, modelled on Nicolac Gheorghe's role in Romania, where non-Gypsies have sometimes rebuilt Gypsy houses following persuasive mediation. Gheorghe himself attempted to persuade the International Romany Union and other Rom bodies to create one unified organization to receive international funding, on the pattern of the World Council of Churches.

1994-95: Europe's growing concern over persecution of Gypsies Until recently Romany affairs were discussed only at fringe meetings of EU and CE institutions. That changed in 1994. In July of that year 130 visitors from sixteen countries attended a hearing organized by the SCLRAE entitled 'Towards a tolerant Europe: the contribution of the Gypsies'. Alexander Tcernoff, chairman of the SCLRAE, pointed out that most Roma in Europe were now worse off than in 1991. Discussions of the problems of Gypsies and other nomads in Strasbourg, Amsterdam, Budapest, Bologna, Marseilles, Dublin, Pardubice (Czech Republic) and Ploiesti (Romania) highlighted problems of housing, freedom of travel, employment and education. The SCLRAE will urge greater consultation with Roma and publish case studies of successful local initiatives; in 1995 it created networks of municipalities most involved with Roma.(251)

Josephine Farrington, vice-chairman of the SCLRAE, emphasized Roma persecution: 'There is no group in Europe which is so systematically attacked and humiliated as the Gypsies.' Fears were expressed for their ultimate safety. Peter Leuprecht, then CE General-Secretary, stated: 'Just as in the 1920s and 1930s, there is a trend among intellectuals and scientists today towards the irrational and the instinctive . . . The victims pre-war were the Jews . . . We must take care that something similar doesn't happen to the Gypsies now.'

In September 1994, the CSCE and CE jointly held a major Human Dimension Seminar on Roma in Warsaw. It strongly recommended appointing a mediator to prevent violence against Roma, arguing that anti-Gypsy violence ultimately threatens relations between states (because of its potential for triggering mass migration). The conference proposed that the mediator should be funded by the EU and should work closely with the CE on information, the EU on matters of education within its own states, and with the CSCE on security. No mediator has yet been appointed, due to lack of funds, but an office has been established in Warsaw to collect information on both positive and negative developments.

In November 1994 the Committee of Ministers adopted the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and opened it for signature, though without naming Roma (or any other ethnic group) as a national minority. As the Czech Republic, Finland, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and

Slovenia have during the 1990s recognized Gypsies as a national or ethnic minority, the Framework Convention should further support their legal status.

1995: New European initiatives to protect Roma The Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the OSCE was involved, together with other European bodies, in setting up the Contact Point for Roma Issues in March 1995, designed to circulate information about Roma, encourage Roma organizational capacity and address discrimination and violence against Roma. In April 1995, at a meeting of foreign ministers of the ten-member Central European Initiative in Cracow, representatives of the governments of Poland, Italy, Bosnia, Croatia, Macedonia, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary agreed to form a joint working party on the situation of Roma in their countries.(252)

In May 1995 the CE's European Committee on Migration adopted the text of a report on 'The situation of Gypsies (Roma and Sinti) in Europe', taking into account proposals from the September 1994 Warsaw seminar and other CE initiatives on Roma.

International aid projects for Roma Some international foundations, including the Carnegie Foundation, have created specific programmes to aid Roma. George Soros has established the Soros Roma Foundation; recent projects include backing a campaign to use Romani as a literary language in Lithuania and developing literacy materials in Burgenland in Austria. The Heredia organization aims to teach Spanish Gypsies to adapt to modern technologies. The British Know-How Fund has created a Community Policing Initiative within the Bulgarian police force using specialists within the Metropolitan Police; projects such as this are valuable in training local 'first contact' police officers who foster close relations with Gypsy communities. Some projects run by PHARE have been criticized by Hungarian Roma leaders because participants must provide 40 per cent of the funding.(253)

Increased public awareness of Romany issues Europe's Gypsies are no longer alone, at least in theory. In addition to increasing support from the EU and from international aid foundations, other bodies are concerned with their plight. In 1992 the Regional Bureau for Europe of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 0 0 (UNHCR) commissioned a short-term survey by Mark Braham on the condition of Roma in Central and Eastern Europe, and its recommendations were published in March 1993.(254) Helsinki Watch has published several monographs devoted to the suffering of Gypsies in Eastern Europe. Increasingly, television programmes in Britain, Germany and elsewhere have begun to highlight Romany issues, and press coverage of their plight has dramatically increased since skinhead attacks on Roma in Germany in the early 1990s.

Current developments Practical action, particularly at the local level, is crucial. Numerous initiatives under way in several countries include: the development in police forces of rapid reaction teams to prevent or minimize local anti-Gypsy violence; EU-funded Combat Poverty programmes; the training of police, social workers and teachers in cross-cultural awareness specifically related to Roma; the creation of local mediation offices;(255) the involvement of UNICEF and UNESCO in educational projects.

Among pan-European developments in 1996, an international Workshop on Violence against Roma was held by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (January); the Council of Europe's Specialist Group on Gypsies/ Roma met for the first time in Strasbourg (March); the Office

for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights published the CPRSI newsletter in Romany for the first time (June); a Round Table on Romany and Sinti issues was held at the European Parliament in Brussels on the initiative of the Green Group of MEPs (July).

On a national level, initiatives undertaken in 1996 include the following: the Croatian Ministry of Education and Sport sponsored a conference on education in Knzevcima at which invitees included representatives from the Ghandi High School for Romanies in Pecs (Hungary); the Hungarian Ministry of Culture allotted 2 million forints to the museum of Romany culture in Pecs; in Bulgaria, for the first time, courts indicted police officers for assaults on Gypsies; in Austria, the sedentary Romany population of the Burgenland found that their recognition as an ethnic group led to an improvement in their situation; the European Union has financed the programme Euroma and in Sofia a course for young Romanies on radio journalism was organized; following a decision by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, a fact-finding group visited Bosnia and recommended, *inter alia*, that the Romanies in that country be recognized as a national minority in both parts of Bosnia (Republica Srpska and the Federation); the Slovak Ministry of Culture sponsored a Gypsy film festival in Klenovec.

The picture is, of course, by no means all positive. During 1996 there have been reports of physical attacks on, and harassment of, Roma in Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Ukraine and the United Kingdom. In March the UK's Office for Standards in Education reported that 10,000 children of secondary age were not even registered with a school and that a disproportionate number were apparently being 'excluded' from school for disciplinary reasons. In England and Wales the situation for Gypsies still living in caravans worsened following an adverse decision by the European Court of Human Rights in the test case of a Mrs Buckley. Other than in exceptional circumstances, Gypsies are barred from living in large areas of the country, classified as, for example, Green Belt and Special Landscape Areas. This has been confirmed by the court decision. A May 1996 survey on education in the Czech Republic confirmed that less than 25 per cent of Romanies complete basic compulsory education. In September a report published in Bulgaria by the Human Rights Project revealed a similar picture. At least in theory, all relevant international bodies are now in favour of supporting the Roma. It is essential for Roma themselves to be involved in the planning and implementation of all programmes to assist their people. Only 'Gypsy autonomy and participation in the control of their own destiny'(256) can ensure that the Roma receive justice and the amelioration of their situation with dignity and without forfeiting their identity or culture.

The new international awareness of the Gypsies' plight and new national and local initiatives to ease that plight offer some hope. So, too, does the essential character of the Roma people themselves, as Jean-Pierre Liegeois has stressed: 'Gypsy communities are still strong. . . . Their dynamism, their flexibility, their adaptability and their originality, the importance they attach to social life and their desire to maintain it. . .'(257)

With their unique history and identity, Roma have much to contribute to the new Europe, as the German novelist Gunter Grass recently pointed out in an essay on right-wing German nationalism and anti-Gypsy violence: *Let half a million and more Sinti and Romanies live among us. We need them. They could help us by irritating our rigid orders a little. Something of their way of life could rub off on us. They could teach us how meaningless frontiers are: careless of boundaries, Romanies and Sinti are at home all over Europe.*(258)

247 Braham, 51. 248 Quoted in Tong, 267. 249 *Official journal of the European Communities*, 9 May 1994. 250 *La scolarisation des enfants tsiganes et voyageurs* (1986) (English translation, *School Provision for Gypsy and Traveller Children*, Commission of the European Communities, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Documents Series (1986)). 251 Hawes, 147. 252 Electronic mail message from Ian Hancock. 253 Braham, 45. 254 *Ibid.*, 51. 255 Cf. Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe: Hearing of 11 July 1994: Towards a Tolerant Europe: the contribution of Gypsies. 256 Tong, 255. 257 Liégeois, *Gypsies and Travellers*, 161. 258 Gunter Grass, 'Fosses', trans. Michael Hofmann, *Granta* 42, winter 1992, quoted in Tong, 263.

7/ The persecution of Roma/Gypsies in contemporary Europe: policy recommendations

The problem of racist violence, racial discrimination and disadvantage experienced by minority ethnic groups across Europe has been subject to considerable attention in recent years, by policy-makers and academics. But the contemporary experience of historically persecuted groups such as Roma, and other Gypsy communities, has been relatively neglected. The neglect is significant in the light of the extensive evidence of anti-Gypsy violence and hostility presented in this paper, and the evidence of discrimination and severe disadvantage experienced by Gypsy communities. It is timely, therefore, to propose recommendations for policy intervention to combat the problems faced by Gypsy communities and to serve as the basis for discussion by the institutions of the European Union, Member States, and governments in other European countries, in consultation with representatives of Gypsy communities. Furthermore, as it has in the case of Jewish victims of the Nazi regime, the German government should enter into negotiations with Roma/Gypsy communities with a view to reaching agreement on reparations/compensation for the genocidal measures inflicted on Roma/Gypsy communities by the Nazi regime. Finally, as the European Union's Social Affairs Commissioner, Pdraig Flynn, has recently argued, 'I do not believe that we can credibly claim to support the concept of a Citizen's Europe which, for example, sets welfare standards for farm animals but remains utterly silent on the subject of racism.' (259) **Violence and hostility** As the paper shows, numerous extreme incidents of anti-Gypsy violence have occurred in many European countries in recent years. Understanding the processes behind racist violence and harassment is arguably essential to the formulation and targeting of appropriate policy measures. The European Parliament has recently produced wide-ranging policy proposals for action by the European Union institutions and member states, based on the diagnosis that racist violence is symptomatic of racism and prejudice in general. It is notable, though, that few of these measures will be implemented, due to opposition in some Member States. But they provide a comprehensive guide for policy implementation, and inform some of the policy recommendations in this paper. The prevalence of anti-Gypsy prejudice, as demonstrated by this paper, necessitates a role for education authorities to intervene in the processes behind racist violence and harassment. **Education authorities** The European Parliament's Consultative Commission on Racism and Xenophobia recently advocated a number of educational measures aimed at the hearts and minds of Europe's young people, with the aim of fostering 'basic ideas of humanity and democracy, stressing equal rights and obligations for all'. (260) Some of the more tangible proposals provide a basis for policy measures relevant to prejudice and hostility towards Gypsies:

Education authorities in all countries should ensure that attention to anti-Gypsy prejudice and hostility is incorporated into a broader framework of multicultural and anti-racist education, and

implemented by educational institutions, such as schools, colleges, and universities. More specifically:

Multi-cultural teaching should incorporate understanding of Gypsy culture and history.

Anti-racist teaching should address processes of anti-Gypsy prejudice and hostility.

The role of teachers is critical in countering prejudice among young people. Appropriate training should be provided-within existing training arrangements, or through additional in-service training-to provide teachers with the appropriate skills for focusing on the experience of Gypsy communities, within the broader framework of multicultural and anti-racist education.

Appropriate materials should be developed and collected to provide teachers with the resources for this work.

Education authorities should ensure that teaching institutions establish measures to prevent and manage anti-Gypsy violence and harassment, as part of broader policies dealing with racist harassment in and around schools.

The recommendations for teaching curricula and teacher training should be established in consultation with specialists and representatives of Gypsy communities.

As the paper shows, violence and hostility towards Gypsies is not confined to the EU Member States, and in some countries the problem is more acute. Anti-Gypsy violence appears to have been escalating since the late 1980s in former communist states and other countries in Central and Eastern Europe.

Under communism, open displays of anti-Gypsy hostility were suppressed to some extent, but extreme cases of violence still occurred. With the collapse of communist regimes, a climate has emerged for previously suppressed Roma ethnic identity and culture to begin to flourish again, and the political organization of Gypsy groups is growing. But the less authoritarian climate with fewer restrictions on freedom of expression has also provided fertile ground for historic enmity against Gypsies to re-emerge with a new virulence. The policy recommendations are therefore relevant to governments of all European countries. But the European Union has an additional role to play:

The European Union should ensure that countries seeking membership are required to establish the above policy measures as a condition of their entry to the Union.

The proposed measures for Education Authorities provide a long-term strategy against anti-Gypsy prejudice and hostility. More immediate measures should be incorporated into criminal justice provisions of all European countries. **Criminal justice** Immediate action should be taken to respond effectively to anti-Gypsy violence and harassment. The status of Gypsies as an ethnic group should be explicitly acknowledged by criminal justice provisions, affording protection to Gypsy communities. The measures should provide:

inclusion in the criminal law of a clear prohibition of incitement to racial hatred;
penalty enhancement in cases of racially motivated crime;
prohibition of demonstrations, publications -including news media-and other public forms of expression, which incite racial hatred;
the establishment of a specific offence of 'racially motivated crime'.

In addition:

consideration should be given to legal prohibition of the activities of neo-fascist and racist groups;
training of the judiciary should address processes of hostility against Gypsies, in the broader framework of anti-racist training.

Some of these measures have already been established by EU Member States. Steps should be taken to

harmonize criminal justice provisions for racist violence across the European Union, explicitly acknowledging Gypsies as an ethnic group to be protected by the provisions. The recommendations are relevant to all European countries but membership of the European Union should be conditional upon their implementation. **Policing** The paper shows that in a number of European countries policing practices have been inadequately sensitive to violence and hostility towards Gypsy communities. There is also evidence that in some countries the police themselves have been implicated in racist attacks. Whilst police forces in some countries have begun to respond constructively, it is to be expected that all countries should implement measures to effectively deal with violence against Gypsy communities as part of their policing of racist violence and harassment in general. Specifically:

Data on the number and distribution of racist attacks are essential to the effective targeting of policy initiatives in particular localities. Police forces should monitor and collect data on the ethnic group of victims of racist attacks, acknowledging Gypsies as one of the ethnic group categories to be included in the monitoring statistics.

It is difficult accurately to compare the incidence of racist violence and harassment across countries, due to variation in monitoring procedures-where they exist. Steps should be taken by the European Union to standardize monitoring procedures across Member States.

Police forces should liaise with Gypsy representatives, and other relevant agencies at the local level, to intervene effectively in localities where violence against Gypsies occurs.

Attitudes of police officers are integral to sensitive policing of racist violence and harassment.

Training of police officers should therefore incorporate understanding of Gypsy culture, and understanding of the processes behind violence against Gypsy communities, as part of a broader framework of multicultural and anti-racist training.

Asylum

Gypsies who have fled persecution and violence in some countries should have their status as refugees fully granted in the countries to which they have fled.

Discrimination In common with other minority ethnic groups across Europe, the paper shows that Gypsies are discriminated against when they seek employment, housing, access to educational facilities, and the use of other public services. But discrimination against Gypsies is often more blatant compared with that against other minority ethnic groups, reflecting the strength of prejudice and hostility towards Gypsy communities. The discrimination experienced by Gypsies, especially in employment, housing, and education, contributes significantly to the severe disadvantage and deprivation that many Gypsy communities suffer. Legislative measures should be taken, therefore, to ensure that Gypsies are protected against discrimination. **Legislation** In addition to providing a means of redress to those who suffer discrimination, and also perhaps serving as a deterrent to discrimination, the legislation will serve an important symbolic function by unequivocally declaring that discrimination against Gypsies is unlawful. Specifically:

All European countries should ensure that they explicitly outlaw discrimination against Gypsies within the broader framework of 'race' discrimination legislation-according to the definitions and guiding principles of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. In each country, Gypsies should be explicitly acknowledged as an ethnic group to be protected by legislative provision.

The European Union should take steps to harmonize such provisions across all Member States.

Legal assistance should be provided in all countries to support complaints of discrimination.

In countries where agencies have been established to monitor and review 'race' discrimination legislation, discrimination against Gypsies should be given priority on their research agendas, and investigative activities.

Responsibilities of public authorities

Public housing authorities in all European countries should ensure that Gypsies are not discriminated against in housing allocation, and in terms of the quality of housing offered.

The particular housing needs of Gypsy communities should be acknowledged by all local authorities, by the provision of authorised caravan sites with a high standard of services.

Disadvantage The paper shows that Gypsy communities throughout Europe suffer extreme disadvantage and deprivation. They are one of the most marginalized minority ethnic groups in terms of access to employment and economic opportunities. Participation in economic activity is essential for a person's well-being and quality of life in general. Because of their economic marginalization, many Gypsies, as the paper shows, experience extreme poverty, suffer from poor health and low life expectancy, and live in degrading housing conditions. Such marginalization has an impact upon the educational participation of children from Gypsy communities, with consequent high levels of non-attendance and illiteracy. All European countries should acknowledge the severe disadvantage experienced by Gypsies, and take immediate remedial measures in consultation with specialists and representatives of Gypsy communities. ***Education***

Provisions should be made for pre-school and support classes for Gypsy children.

Outreach educational measures should be provided in consultation with representatives of Gypsy communities.

Educational provision should be established with due recognition to the informal education provided within Gypsy communities.

Health

Health authorities and services should acknowledge the particular health care needs of Gypsy communities and take outreach measures in consultation with community representatives.

Employment

To counter the economic disadvantage, all European countries should establish affirmative action training schemes utilising the skills and resources of Gypsy communities to assist their integration into the labour market and economic activity in general.

Cultural activity A community's cultural activity provides a mechanism for asserting community aspirations and demands, and for facilitating community relations. Support should therefore be provided for the cultural activity of Gypsy communities. Specifically:

Where appropriate, the Romani language should be introduced as an optional school subject for children of Gypsy communities, in consultation with parents.

Programmes of vocational training in practical crafts and skills should be provided for Gypsy children of secondary school age, in keeping with the cultural and occupational activities of Gypsy communities.

Provisions should be made for Gypsy cultural centres and exhibitions, to provide support for Gypsy cultural activity, and foster cross-cultural understanding.

Representation Many of the policy recommendations in this paper propose consultation with informed

representatives of Gypsy communities. To enable effective consultation, further measures should be established:

The proposals by the OSCE/IRV/ODIHR for a Romani Rights Information Centre should be implemented.

Mediators from Gypsy communities should be established at national and local levels, and support provided for Gypsy organisations and consultative bodies.

Specialist advisers should be appointed to provide expert advice to the European Union Council of Ministers, and other institutions.

International co-operation in exchange of expert knowledge and examples of innovative and successful practice in education, training and community relations for Gypsy communities, should be encouraged.

Persecution and genocide: reparations/compensation The Federal Republic of Germany has accepted its obligation to make some amends for the Holocaust perpetrated by the Nazi regime, and has paid reparations/compensation to the Jewish people as well as to individual Jewish victims. In a similar spirit, the government of the Federal Republic of Germany should enter into negotiations with representatives of Roma/Gypsy communities with a view to reaching agreement on reparations/compensation for the genocidal measures inflicted by the Nazi regime and its allies on the communities concerned during the Second World War. We propose that part of any proceeds be used for the establishment of a development fund in order to finance the implementation of the recommendations.

259 Press release 19 January 1995, 'commissioner Flynn calls for European legislation to combat racial discrimination'. 260 European Parliament (1995), Committee on Civil Liberties and Internal Affairs, *Consultative Commission on Racism and Xenophobia - Final Report*, DOC EN\CM\274\27486

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