



Local History and Minorities (with special reference to the Gypsy minority)

Spisská Nová Ves (Slovak Republic), 14-17 September 1994

Seminar Report

Council for Cultural Co-operation
CDCC Teacher Bursaries Scheme
in collaboration with project
"Democracy, Human Rights, Minorities:
Educational and Cultural Aspects"

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**COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL CO-OPERATION (CDCC)
TEACHER BURSARY SCHEME**

**Teacher Training Seminar
on the theme**

"LOCAL HISTORY AND MINORITIES"

(with special reference to the Gypsy minority)

Spisská Nová Ves (Slovak Republic), 14 - 17 September 1994

General Report

by

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I. INTRODUCTION

This is a report of a Seminar held in Slovakia in September 1994 for history teachers and others involved in the education of Gypsy children. The main intention of the Seminar was to set up a network of teachers from different countries who would carry out a practical programme exploring the local history of Gypsies. In fact many wider issues were explored in the contributions of the invited speakers and the discussions which will interest anyone working with Gypsies and in the education of minorities.

This Seminar is just one part of a larger Project entitled "Democracy, Human Rights, Minorities: Educational and Cultural Aspects" which is described in an Appendix.

NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY :

Gadjo (plur.Gadje) Non-Romany.

Gypsy A general term which covers Romanies - whether nomadic or sedentary - and nomadic groups of non-Romany origin.

Rom (plural Roma) The word used by the Romanies for themselves in the Romani language. Where it was used by the speaker it has been replaced in this report by Romany (plural Romanies) except in the phrase 'Roma and Sinti' where it distinguishes two branches of the Romany ethnic group.

Romany A member of an ethnic group originating in North India. It is derived from the word 'Rom' (see above).

Romani The language of the Romanies.

When the contribution was delivered in English or Slovak, we have used the same terms as the speaker (or the interpretation).

When the contribution was made in French the term 'Tsigane' has been translated as 'Gypsy'.

II. REPORT OF THE SEMINAR

Wednesday 14 September

The participants arrived and there was a formal welcome by Rastislav JACÁK, the Mayor of Spišská Nová Ves, and Dr Lubomír PAJTINKA (Teaching Materials Specialist) on behalf of the Ministry of Education. Jacques CHEVALIER also welcomed the participants on behalf of the Council of Europe.

2. Thursday 15 September

2.1. Opening of the Seminar

After introductory remarks by Dr Silvia MATUSOVA (Head of the National Institute for Education), Dr Lubomír HARACH (Minister of Education and Science) and Dr Emil KOMARIK from the Ministry of Education welcomed the participants.

- Dr Harach

Dr Harach spoke of the situation in the Slovak Republic. He said he had been pleased to agree to the Council of Europe project. In the Slovak Republic there are many minorities. Under Paragraph 34 of the Constitution they have the right to learn both the state language and their mother tongue. There is no discrimination in education and there is respect for the minorities. There are for example over 400 nursery schools with Hungarian mother tongue. There are also schools where Ukrainian, German and Rusinian are used. The state and church schools are open to all Romany children who attend Slovak or Hungarian-language schools. There are some 450,000 Romanies in the Slovak Republic of whom one third live in villages. Up till now there has not been much information about the Romany life style in courses for the professions such as social workers. The Ministry hopes to have some experimental schools where the Romani language is used to bridge the gap between the mother tongue and Slovak and a Romani grammar book is being published. Slovak society is transforming from socialism to free enterprise and the Romanies are suffering unemployment as a result. The Government wants to introduce Romany classes in the primary schools and train young Romanies to teach these classes. There is a need to improve the results of the primary school. 20% of Romany children do not complete the primary school course. A Chair of Romany Culture has been set up at Nitra University and a Secondary Arts School in Košice for talented young people. Also there is a Technical Secondary School for the revival of crafts such as iron work. There is a need for the history of the Romanies to be taught and for changes in the methodology of teaching history. He wished the seminar every success.

- Jacques Chevalier (Council of Europe)

This seminar is an activity of the CDCC project 'Democracy, Human Rights, Minorities: Educational and Cultural Aspects'. It is the result of fruitful collaboration between the Council of Europe, the Slovak Ministry of Education and the Centre de Recherches Tsiganes in Paris. It is one of many projects of the Council of Europe concerned with racism and intolerance and is the first stage of a pilot project which will be carried out in three phases:

(i) a training phase which brings together practitioners who will in turn, with their pupils, explore into the local history of Romanies using iconography, archives and the memories of older

people;

(ii) an experimental phase in the field;

(iii) a synthesis and dissemination phase at the end of which there will be a final colloquium and a monograph incorporating the results of the action-research. This monograph will be published as a methodological guide.

It is hoped to then transfer what has been learnt to work with other minorities.

- Mr Frantisek GODLA welcomed the participants on behalf of the Romany Community which he represents.

He said: I am a member of the Romany community and teach history in a secondary school. I have not found any mention of Romanies in the history textbooks. There cannot be a nation without a history. There are a large number of Romanies in the world, no-one knows the exact figure. Romanies themselves know little about their background. The History of Europe and of Slovakia should include the History of the Romanies. I am pleased to participate in this seminar. It should not be a one-off occasion but a beginning. Romanies need to know and be proud of their history. History teaches us how to live.

2.2 Presentation of the Seminar and the Project

- The Background of the Seminar - Dr Donald KENRICK (United Kingdom)

The long term objective of the Project is that all history curricula should include the history of minorities and that history textbooks should cover the minorities.

Why should we introduce the history of minorities?

- Firstly, to make history complete. To quote Professor Bernard Lewis (Professor of History at London University).

'Some of us may prefer to forget history or to rewrite history to serve some present purpose; the facts of the past cannot be changed and the consequences of those facts cannot be averted by ignorance or misinterpretation., History is the collective memory of our society. Without it we are like blundering amnesiacs. Even the marketing of a commodity or the running of a business requires some knowledge of and therefore some research in the recent past. Even a balance sheet is a historical record - useful if true, fraudulent if not'

- Secondly, to make our history lessons contribute to combat prejudice amongst majority children and to raise the consciousness of the minority children. Prejudice against minorities is everywhere. Looking at the pictures from the Balkans and Africa on our television screens we can see what prejudice against minorities can lead to. If we don't put forward a positive image of Gypsies, pupils will get a biased view from their parents and from reading.

A survey in England showed that out of ten standard works for teachers of history and geography all ten mentioned Afro-Caribbeans (West Indians), six Jews and none Gypsies. Fiction too often gives a false picture of Gypsies.

In the short term as part of the larger project we hope that those of you who are teachers are going to introduce the modern history of one minority - the Gypsies - into at least one class for at least one school year. This may be a class of Gadjo or Gypsy children, or a mixed class. If you are an Inspector or Trainer of Teachers then it is hoped you will inspire teachers to take up the ideas of the project and be directly or indirectly linked into the Project.

We are a pilot project and we will want to know what went well and what did not go so well, so that we can build on your experience for the next project.

During the seminar you will get some of the tools for this job in the plenary sessions and we hope you will contribute your ideas during the workshops.

- **The Concept of the Project** - Herbert Heuss, Coordinator of the project (Germany)

The aim of education is to prepare for individual and social life. Teaching history means dealing with identities of groups - majority and minority groups. Identity is part of a whole - past and present. The framework of the Pilot Project is given by the Council of Europe and includes the following recommendations:

- the history of the formation of minorities and information on their cultural identities must be integrated and presented in history curricula;
- truth must be restored in history textbooks and history teaching as a means of overcoming manipulative stereotypes;
- history teaching must refer to various perspectives and no longer used for ideological, or nationalistic purposes;
- the teaching of history does not only constitute an aim in itself but should also contribute to the building of the identity of everybody;
- A national programme dealing with minorities in the teaching of history cannot be limited to just one minority but has also to deal with the relations and interdependence between majorities and minorities;
- teaching the history of minorities has to take into account the function of minorities in helping majorities or nations to understand themselves;

There should be textbooks with Gypsies in them but also books where Gypsies can express their viewpoint. Those aspects ignored or forgotten by textbooks should be worked out by pupils and teachers. To achieve this, they could use interviews, archives, libraries, music, pictures...

With the pilot project we want to develop new ways of understanding and teaching history by adding the teaching of the history of Roma and Sinti reported without bias. The teachers involved should develop a project to explore the local history of Roma and Sinti.

Sources which were produced by members of a majority obviously reflect the perspective of that majority. This mechanism is valid in all situations. Even when someone tries to imagine 'being a Gypsy' he is projecting his own stereotypes, either negatively or positively.

During the project we have to work with two categories of sources:

- a) One - from the majority;
archives, literature, newspapers, music, pictures, fairy tales.
- b) And another from members of the minority, the Roma and Sinti themselves.
With important oral history from parents and grandparents, literature, fairy tales, music and pictures.

It is simply not possible to teach the history of the Roma based only on sources of the first kind. Teaching with such sources means only teaching the stereotypes of these sources. There is no evidence that it is possible to demonstrate stereotypes first and thereafter reflect and overcome these stereotypes.

We need to be aware of the different ways of thinking about the phenomena of minorities rather than the description so far offered by historians. The history of persecution is also important as there is prejudice everywhere. In Germany the word 'Zigeuner' is pejorative and the term 'Roma und Sinti' has been introduced at the request of the minority and reflects a positive image. Members of a minority can express themselves in a different way from a member of the majority though this may be negative if the members of the minority have a negative feeling about themselves.

The pilot project must help combat discrimination. We must also see however what majorities and minorities have in common.

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The morning concluded with an open discussion.

pm

2.3 Plenary session

- **The Oral History of Romanies** (presentation by Dr Milena HUBSCHMANNOVA (Prague) assisted by Matej SARKOZY and Ilona FERKOVA

The relationship in Europe of the Gadjó majority compared to the minority Romanies can be compared with the relationship of White Americans and American Indians or White and native Australians. In many countries the Romanies live separately from the Gadjé. Non-Gypsies never go into the Gypsy quarter except for administrative reasons.

The situation has of course changed. In the past people were punished for speaking Romani and could have their tongue cut out as a punishment. But the language survived and many children come to school only speaking that language. And now authors are writing in Romani.

Studies about the history of the Romanies have always been based on non-Romany sources, chronicles, laws, decrees, police documents etc. Do we realize that we are unaware of the feelings and attitudes of the Romanies? That information about the real life of the Romany

community is denied us? Only in recent years have the journals and newspapers edited by Romanies and literature written by Romanies contributed to the database of the Romanies' history.

One very important source, however, has been neglected: memories, testimonies - the oral history of people who experienced and remember important events of the recent past. Events of the past 50/60 years are crucial; the Nazi attempt at genocide, the mass migration of Romanies from Slovakia to the Czech lands (Bohemia and Moravia); the 'organized dispersal' of the Romany community in Czechoslovakia (decree 502/1965) under Communism and the disastrous results of the assimilatory policy accompanied by the endeavour for emancipation as an ethnic group. Romany witnesses to these events are still alive, though fewer and fewer every year. Professor C.Necas, from the Masaryk University in Brno, has collected memories of Czech and Moravian Romanies who survived Nazi concentration camps and published them in a book (*Nasti bisteras - we cannot forget*. Olomouc, 1994).

Since 1972 my students and I have been recording similar testimonies of Romanies in Slovakia which will be published in a year or two. The information we have acquired is fascinating. Sometimes it corroborates non-Romany documents, sometimes it reveals facts which are not recorded anywhere else; Romanies fighting in a western army, in Japan, in Soviet concentration camps etc.

Oral history yields a special kind of information and the method of evaluating it is being improved. Recently (June 1994) the Milan Simecka Foundation organized a workshop on this theme in Bratislava.

I consider it very important that Romanies themselves start to collect oral history in their families and communities. In fact we, that is the Indological Institute of the Philosophical Faculty of the Charles University in Prague, where Romani and Romany Studies are being taught as a regular five-year university subject, have only just started to cooperate with Romany friends on this subject and war memories of older Romanies are being recorded.

The value of the acquired material differs and demonstrates very clearly that it is necessary to give basic instruction to the Romanies and non-Romanies who are willing to collect oral history.

- a) Basic knowledge about history in general; information about Romany history; what is oral history;
- b) the methodology of collecting oral history; what to ask, how to ask, how to carry out the interview;
- c) a minimum of technology; how to use the tape-recorder; how to write down the recordings, how to use the word-processor or computer.

The most efficient way of passing on all the necessary information would be to organize a course with a limited number of participants, maximum 10, whose commitment would guarantee that they would, in future, give some of their time to collecting oral history.

Why should Romanies be encouraged to collect the oral history of the Romanies? They know the language - Romani; they would have a sympathetic approach to members of the Romany community; they have the experience of being a Romany; they may learn to appreciate their

ROMIPEN (Romany tradition) which often they hesitate to do, as it has always been denigrated by the prestigious mainstream society; they would get a qualification from the course (experience of using a computer) which may help them to find work.

To organize a course of this kind and successfully collect oral history requires financial resources. However, I am convinced that the money spent would be an investment and repaid many times, not only in the value of the material which would be collected but also in the contribution to the history of the Romanies, and as an incentive and inspiration to Romanies to be creatively involved in their history, culture and education.

The next step is how to make the best use of the information collected. How to make it accessible to the Romany and non-Romany public. How to introduce the information into schools where up till now the pupils have been deprived of any sort of information about Romany history. There are several possibilities which could, and should, be tested. Invite those Romanies who complete the course on collecting oral history to give talks about specific periods of recent history of the Romanies to elementary high schools, pedagogical faculties etc. This could be a way to correct the distorted image of Romanies which the public has received through misinformation published in press, on TV and through ignorance and prejudices passed down in families. Another possibility is to publish the material, and distribute it to schools. Romany pupils and students of senior classes could be motivated to produce projects on various themes of recent Romany history and /or ethnology eg war experience, traditional crafts (eg blacksmithing) and services (eg music) for which the main source of information would be their grandparents and elder members of the community.

It is high time to start a dialogue between Romanies and non-Romanies at all levels in education. An education which has the intention only to teach the Romanies without a desire to learn from them will remain only a monologue - as it has always been until now. And so far it has proved to be ineffective.

2.4 Workshops (first session)

Reports on the Workshops will be found at the end of the present report.

Evening. A panel of Romany experts answered questions informally on a range of topics. The panel consisted of Dr Glovacky(Slovak TV,Kosice), Daniela Silanova (Romathan theatre and the magazine Romano Lil), Dr F Godla (a teacher) and Orhan Galjus (editor of Patrin).

Friday 16 September

3.1 am: Visits to schools

We visited two schools where the majority of children were Romanies (Gypsies). The participants were divided into two groups and we visited each school in turn where we attended classes in small groups and then had discussions with the teachers. We received a warm welcome in both schools and were impressed by the dedication of the teachers and the teaching materials. The visits reminded the participants that they were discussing real children not just theories.

pm:

3.2 Plenary session

Two exhibitions on Romany culture organised in Austria
(presentation by Dr Claudia MAYERHOFER.

In the plenary session Dr Mayerhofer gave a detailed account of a number of exhibitions that had been set up to present Romany culture and the conclusions that could be drawn from their experience. The exhibitions were very popular with Gadjo adults and schoolchildren but Romany children were not enthusiastic. They would rather look to the future than the past.

In Austria there are different groups of Romanies, one section came to the country from different parts of Yugoslavia. These Romanies live together in large social groups. Their children often attend the same school close to the area where they live and several Romany children can be found in one classroom amidst the Gorgio children. Experience has shown that the Romany children are not interested in history, at least not in the way it has been presented to them. They want to behave like modern Austrians but often their parents don't let them. Living between two cultures, they have lots of everyday problems and they are only interested in overcoming their problems. They have no capacity for dealing with historical questions.

Romany parents are appreciative when their children are taught reading, writing and mathematics in our schools but the other subjects do not appear to be of any value. Going to school regularly every day at the same time; sitting quietly on a bench; being indoors at school when it is snowing outside; these are difficult things for Romany children. The arrival of guests at home is more important to them than attending school.

Before we are able to work on history projects, children must come to school voluntarily and regularly. Perhaps we could work on history projects, which can involve the family or projects held at summer workshops. But first we would have to find out how to interest Romany children in such programmes.

In Austria cultural managers for minorities have organized five Romany exhibitions during the last five years. These exhibitions offered good information on Romany history and culture. However, the visitors to these exhibitions were Gadje. There were no adult Romany visitors, but there were Romany performers who did not inform or involve their children or grandchildren. It was the Gadje teachers who took the Romany pupils to the exhibitions. The Romany children told us afterwards they were not interested in visiting Romany exhibitions. After the exhibitions some teachers offered Romany projects to their pupils. Some of the Romany boys became so aggressive that the teachers had to discontinue the projects.

Maybe some Romany children are interested in learning something about their history and culture, we are not sure. But certainly the Romany children from the former Yugoslavia do not want to learn it from Gadje and certainly they do not want to learn it together with non-Romany pupils. That is what we discovered after many unsuccessful projects and programmes.

It is a very delicate thing to teach Romany history to Romany children. For example, if a historical film is shown about a Romany village and there is a gravel road instead of a paved one, Romany children become so embarrassed about the gravel road, that they cannot continue to watch the film. Events like this have happened many times. However, there are positive

experiences. Perhaps this is a first step in appreciating one's own history. All Romanies appear to be interested in pictures of themselves and their families. As yet, we are not sure if this interest can be expanded into a more general interest in their own history and culture.

Dr Mayerhofer made the following recommendations for future teachers of Romany children.

- They should spend a day in a Romany household;
- they should have a two-day course of information on Romanies;
- they should be obliged to use a 'Romany booklet' which would consist of some six pages with one song, some Romani words including those for family relationships, and a Romany story written by a child.

3.3 Workshops (second session)

Evening.

A number of videos and films were shown, followed by an informal discussion of the school visits of the morning.

4. Saturday September 17

4.1 Plenary Session

- Motivation: The Inevitable Precondition for the Successful Education of Romany Children (presentation by Dr Arne MANN)

(NB.Dr Mann also distributed a second paper "The History of the Romanies in Slovakia, which will be found in an Appendix)

Majority society has behaved in two ways towards its Romany minority - genocide or assimilation. After World War II in Czechoslovakia the policy towards the Romany population was one of assimilation. They were not perceived as an independent ethnic society but as a retarded social group. The whole state approach focused mostly on the solving of the social problems of the Romany population, especially in providing housing, employment or financial support to those with children who were socially dependent. But the result of the assimilation policy was a mistrust by the Romanies of the institutions of the majority including the school. Also compulsory attendance of Romany children at school was insisted upon. Various kindergartens were established with the intention of preparing the children from inadequate family environments for the first school class. In spite of many measures introduced in the area of education, every year statistics have repeatedly shown insufficient results in particular teaching subjects, frequent truancy and repeating a class. Many cases are known where a Romany boy who only reached the 5th or 6th class (in a compulsory 8-9 year attendance) was found to be partially or fully illiterate only when he started military service.

This situation is mostly caused by the incorrect educational approach to Romany children. Similarly to other areas, also in education there was found a repressive approach. Children were forced into school attendance instead of being motivated to attend. If, for example they repeatedly did not appear in school, a school director visited them directly in their community

with a police officer. Even today many Romany mothers are convinced that education is not necessary for their children, that their children are humiliated and hurt at school. They send their children only to school because they are afraid they will not get the financial support they receive for the children.

The children were not motivated for work at school. They learned a foreign language, they learned about a foreign literature and foreign writers, history as a subject taught them about foreign nations but they got no information about their own ethnicity. When they had a lesson of musical education they were not allowed to sing Gypsy songs. All this made Romany children frustrated, it increased their feeling of low esteem when compared to their non-Romany peers, it caused a general mistrust and apathy to everything they met at school. They often coped with such situations by disobedience, increased aggressiveness towards their peers and teachers, which resulted in disciplinary reprimands and receiving a bad behaviour mark.

The most significant precondition for the successful education of Romany children is their motivation. When the parents understand that education is meaningful for their children, when children attend the school with pleasure, only then can we expect more positive results. One direction of such motivation leads to the encouragement of their positive process of self-confidence - that is to know more about their history, culture and important Romany persons. The children have to be made proud of their identity. School textbooks are needed which give a positive image of the Romanies. Such a goal can be seen in the speaker's textbook of 'Romany History' which is currently waiting to be printed. This book is not only for Romany pupils and their parents, but also for non-Romany pupils who will thus be more likely to receive more information about their peers who have black eyes and darker skin. The textbooks would also contribute to breaking the mutual prejudices and to establishing inter-ethnic tolerance. Not only the schools but mainstream society, including the Church, must also change its attitude.

* Dr Nečas was unable to attend the conference and sent his report to be read. It will be found in the appendices, together with the second report by Dr Mann.

4.2 Closure of the Seminar and The Way Ahead.

- Dr Kenrick (General Rapporteur) reported on the Conference followed by Mr Chevalier (Council of Europe).

- Mr Heuss pointed out the tasks that the teachers would have to undertake during the follow up to this seminar:

The teachers who have agreed to develop the experimental strategy with their classes will carry out this programme during the school year 1994-5. They will report regularly to the Project Co-ordinator (Mr Heuss). Other schools may join the Project or work alongside it on the same lines.

It is hoped that the general principles which emerged during the Seminar will be put into practice by all the participants whether practicing teachers or not.

- Dr Elias (Director of the Department for Minority Education) addressed the conference. He thanked the participants for their work during the seminar and said that all had hard tasks in front of them when they return to the workplace. He thanked the main speakers for bringing their knowledge and experience. He hoped for future cooperation between Slovakia and the Council of Europe in the field of education, especially of our Romany citizens.

- Dr Matusova finally closed the Seminar . She said the seminar had been a good opportunity to bring people together and for us to communicate with one another.

The seminar closed at 12.30 pm.

p.m.Press Conference

The Slovak participants then departed while a coach visit to the area was arranged for the non-Slovak visitors.

III. WORKSHOP REPORTS

Three workshops were conducted during the two sessions.

1. WORKSHOP A. CURRICULUM

The participants agreed that the problem of curriculum is complex and they agreed to look only at the subject of the school programme as it affects minorities, in particular Gypsies. It was evident from the exchanges of opinion that the concept of a curriculum varies considerably from one country to another. Nevertheless programmes should have the aim of guaranteeing all children the same rights and the same access to education. The group felt that the teaching programme should be the same for majority and minority populations while recognizing their respective identities. Teaching about the minorities should be integrated into the programme for all children. It was important to respect the dignity and integrity of children belonging to minorities and encourage mutual respect. The aim of teaching should be to permit the child to acquire the skills and attitudes which they will need.

It was felt that continued links between the participants would be useful also in the field of curriculum.

2. WORKSHOP B. METHODOLOGY

At the first meeting we looked at questions arising from Dr Hübschmannová's talk. In what way can Romany history be introduced into the curriculum? At pre-school level we can use fairy tales and folk tales. TV programmes could be made and broadcast as every Gypsy family has a TV and schools can use the programmes through video.

Teachers said they have to study Romany history before they can teach it and at present there is no textbook.

There was a discussion on the teaching of the Romani language. It was said there had been a poll where Gypsy parents rejected this. The Romanies in the workshop said that the language should be taught but by Romany teachers. Gadjo teachers however should know something about the language.

At the second meeting we discussed Dr Mayerhofer's paper. The group felt that history could not be taught in isolation from literature and geography in particular. There are works by Romany writers in different languages which could be translated and used.

There was a difference of opinion over whether history could or should start with the children's own family. Teachers in any case have to be sensitive with this material. Teaching history should start before puberty as at that age children want to break away from their family traditions. Children need to see positive images of Romany adults, not just pictures of the past- of a Gypsy doctor for example. Schools could not change society but should at least encourage positive attitudes.

Finally we looked at the specific material Dr Mayerhofer had used to teach family history to Romany children in the Burgenland (Austria). She began with two historical documents, a Safe Conduct (Schutzbrief) from the year 1674 and a list of conscript soldiers from the time of

Empress Maria Theresa. The pupils had to find surnames still in use by Burgenland Gypsies. Then they went on to look at those names which related to towns or regions in Hungary and Croatia - find the places and draw arrows from those places to the Burgenland where they now lived. The following exercises looked at the evolution of dwellings.

The conclusions of the group were that history teaching should start as early as possible through games and stories. Using modern methods such as TV will appeal to older children. The teachers have to have textbooks.

3. WORKSHOP C. THE CLASSROOM PROJECT

Herbert Heuss (coordinator of the experimental phase) reported on this workshop. Most of the time was spent discussing the future project. We don't want to reproduce an image of folklore or poverty but need a new approach. We must avoid material which offends Romany pupils or their families. The classroom project cannot be decided by the teacher but the pupils must participate from the beginning. Romany children may know more than the teachers. The pupils have to collect the material while the teacher can help to clarify the issues.

(The Slovak workshop facilitators were Ms Mária Kažmirová, Dr Sergej Christenko/Dr Miroslav Pastorek, and Mrs Mária Maczejková.)

OUTLINE PROGRAMME

Wednesday 14 September Arrival late afternoon

Evening Formal reception.

Day 1. Thursday 15 September

a.m. Plenary session.

- i) Opening of the Seminar
- (ii) Presentation of the Project

p.m. Plenary session. Milena Hubschmannova. Oral History

Workshops First session

Evening Panel of Romany experts

Day 2. Friday 16 September

a.m. Visits to schools and discussion with teachers in the schools

p.m. (i) Plenary session. Claudia Mayerhofer. Creating an Exhibition of History and Culture.

- (ii) Workshops. Second session

Evening Videos and films

Day 3. Saturday 17 September

Final plenary session

- (i) Dr Arne Mann. Motivation: The Inevitable Pre-condition for the Successful Education of Romany Children
- (ii) Report-back on the conference. Where do we go from here? Launching of the Project

Closure

p.m. Departure of Slovak participants

Press conference

Visit to the region by non-Slovak participants.

APPENDIX II

PAPERS SUBMITTED

The Romanies in Slovakia

(Abbreviated from a paper submitted by Dr A Mann)

The earliest message of the presence of Romanies in Slovakia comes from the year 1322 from the region of Spisska Nova Ves. Most groups were crossing south-western Slovakia and Bohemia on their way to western and south-western Europe. In the second half of the 16th century the records say there were cities that allowed the families of the Romany metal workers to settle down in their towns. Also the families of musicians received in their settlement a help from music loving Hungarian lords. This was a significant factor in establishing the non-nomadic Romany population in Slovakia. A significant volte-face in the approach towards the Romanies resulted in the decrees issued by Maria Theresa and later Joseph II which aimed at the education and Christianization of the Romanies. The greatest tragedy for the European Romanies was World War II because the Fascists regarded them as an inferior race. Even though the Slovak Gypsies were not taken to concentration camps they were subjected to discriminatory legislation.

After the end of World War II the state policy towards the Romanies was either openly or indirectly assimilatory. In 1958 the legislation regarding the permanent dwelling of nomadic people was passed and under the legislation primarily Olassic(Vlach) Gypsies were forced to settle down in the housing provided by the state. The state policy treated the Romanies as a socially backward element of the population and it intended to eliminate Romany communities. In the mid-70s the state adopted a programme of 'minimizing the unhealthy segments of the population' and on this basis a financial compensation was offered to Romany women if they agreed with their sterilization.

Much has changed in the life of the Slovak Romany since November 1989. Various Romany political parties were formed and between 1990 and 1992 the Romanies had their own representatives in the federal (Czech and Slovak) and national (Czechoslovak) parliaments. In April 1991 the Slovak government approved the legislation that guaranteed their equal rights together with other ethnic minorities living in Slovakia, and the Romanies received an offer of cultural support in education. Romany periodicals and original literary works appeared and in 1991 a professional theatrical body called The Romathan started its activity. At Nitra College a Department of Romany Culture was opened for Romany students as future teachers at Romany schools. The November (1991) changes introduced a new aspect into the lives of the Romanies - high unemployment and the loss of social security. Hence in many Romany communities we can see rising poverty and hopelessness, which is a bad challenge resulting in deteriorating relationships between the Romanies and the majority of the population.

The History of the Romanies in the Curriculum Programmes of Masaryk University, Brno.

(Abbreviated from a paper sent by Dr Ctibor Necas who was unable to be present at the Seminar)

Among Czech universities the Masaryk University in Brno was the first to introduce Romany History as a special subject in two faculties. This happened because of an initiative by students because they knew that I had been studying the genocide of Czech and Slovak

Romanies in the time of the Nazi occupation. Therefore my students asked me to give lectures on this topic and to extend it by further chapters on Romany history in the past and present.

With validation since the academic year 1990-1 we introduced into the teaching programme of the Faculty of Pedagogy a subject called 'The Social Problems of the Romanies'. In the summer semester of the first year the subject is taught for one hour a week. In the Faculty of Philosophy we introduced into the curriculum a seminar 'The Past and Present of the Romany Ethnic Group in Bohemia'. In the summer semester of the third year two hours weekly are devoted to this subject and students completing the course are awarded a credit.

Participation in this seminar is recommended to all students of the relevant level in the Faculty of Pedagogy. However, the seminar is optional and, besides the students of history, also students of other subjects in the Faculty of Philosophy - such as ethnography and sociology - found the topic attractive. In both courses I combine lecturing with the independent work of the students.

At the beginning of my lectures I evaluate the situation and tasks of the subject and then I speak about the Romanies' original home and exodus. I give information about their gradual arrival in Europe, including Bohemia, about their persecution in the time of World War II and finally about the migration of Romanies from Slovakia to Bohemia, including the characteristics of their demographic, socio-economic, cultural and political development.

In the seminar I try to lead the students to the analysis and interpretation of various sources from the oldest chronicles that give us information about the Romanies. I give lectures on authorized safe conducts and the legislative approaches to their problems, judicial documents and the repression of the totalitarian regime (in Czechoslovakia), together with the reflections of the Charter 77 Movement that also focussed on our Romany citizens. The variety of the selected source material is deliberate because it enables us to look into the wider spectrum of the Romanies' problems in the older, new and newest aspect of their development.

The structure of lectures and seminars was brought into harmony with the textbook that was published in 1991 by the Pedagogic Faculty of the Masaryk University entitled 'Social Problems of the Romanies in the Past and Present'. The text drew interest not only from students, for whom it was mainly targeted, but also from professionals and the wider reading public who found it fascinating. Therefore the textbook had to be reprinted in the following year and in 1993 it was published in an extended form by the Faculty of Pedagogy of Palackeho University in Olomouc and it was entitled 'The Romanies in the Czech Republic, Today and Yesterday'.

* From other papers distributed at the Seminar we reprint a shortened version of one from Slovakia.

The Education and Upbringing of Romany Pupils in the Current Socialization Process.

Dr M Barsony (National Institute for Education, Bratislava)

A bio-mental unity of Romany population begins, is created and matured in an environment that is to date considerably different from the environment of the majority population. A

Romany child grows up in quite different and specific family conditions. A family atmosphere and the collective have a stronger influence on a child than the school has. Social environment and the conditions in which parents and their children have grown up result in living in the same environment wherein their parents lived, which is difficult to change. The environment thus becomes the most natural and familiar one for the children.

A Romany child has a specific status at school. A child meets a new and foreign setting of which he or she knew nothing until now, which creates confusion in the child's thinking. A child is in a new and unfamiliar collective group and from the beginning it is difficult for him or her to understand this new group. In many things a Romany child does not have the same aspirations as other children do. In a certain sense school attendance is understood as a punishment and for a parent it is an unnecessary burden.

If we compare the environment and home preparation for school with that of other pupils, we can find here a significant incompatibility. Non-Romanies have in every family a higher level of education with certificates. In Romany families the education of parents has mostly only reached the level of the basic school. The above mentioned facts cause many negative aspects (truancy, no school achievement, their behaviour is getting worse) and the most common and non-pedagogic aspect is the fact that as a result of frequent non-achievement the Romany children are placed in special schools. For example in 1987, 6,750 Romany pupils from a total of 19,700 were placed in special schools which is 34.26% and this situation is continuing even now. The evidence of incorrect placement in special schools can be seen in the empirically verified fact that the Romany children placed in special schools have the best results.

A pedagogue who wants to successfully work with Romany children must be familiar with the mental psychology of the Romany child. We can speak of differences in manners that in fact exist and by which a normal Romany child is more or less differentiated from others. The different response toward the school setting, teaching, given problems, situations and their solution, can be mostly seen in their individual judgements and reactions which are differently approached by every teacher. A teacher is either without hope or trying to solve the problem halfway or is not concerned at all and leaves the problem as being imaginary. In both cases, the teacher is solving the situation in his or her opinion. Thus, many things are not clear, attitudes are individual with reactions being displayed.

This is confirmed by the children themselves: 'I don't feel good at school', 'I don't understand subjects', 'the teacher doesn't help me.' Speaking of personality development in Romany children, pedagogic experience and tactfulness are necessary as well as extending one's knowledge from literature on the education and upbringing of Romany children. It is necessary to deliberately stimulate the awakening and developing of their needs and interests, to motivate them for school goals. A pedagogue should use many methodical and didactic motivation activities. A teacher should notice some individual preferences as well as the talent of Romany children - that is dance, rhythm, singing, music, sport, a sense for skills and plastic and painting creativity.

Alongside these pedagogic activities it is necessary to know Romany children, social family status, Romany culture, language and to develop a special approach. Therefore the most ideal teacher for Romany children should be a Romany teacher.

In the upbringing and education of Romany children a question appears - should we establish independent schools for Romany children. We mean independent classes. However this problem should be considered as having two levels .

1. There is an advantage in the status of a Romany child in a Romany class from the aspect of having an individual differentiated approach towards the teaching of the whole collective in terms of mental and psychological differences.
2. Specific subjects can be involved in the teaching process in case they can sustain and develop the Romany subject - that is to preserve Romany culture, language, Romany traditions since this is very necessary. To develop the Romany subject means to educate the Romany intellect without which a Romany is not a Romany.

For example, in most Romany families the members speak bilingually or they use three languages so even children speak the Romany and Hungarian or Romany and Slovak languages from an early age. but often all these three languages. A Romany citizen or child cannot avoid the bilingual trends due to territorial use of these languages.

Parents opinion regarding the use of the Romani language according to a survey from 1992 was that the majority were against the use of the Romani language in schools. This survey illustrates that the Romanies have not had the opportunity of ethnic and cultural aspiration.

The advantages of independent classes at schools with Romany pupils can also improve the level of good school achievement - a pupil would not retake a class but would have the possibilities to acquire knowledge from higher classes.

Only 2.5% of Romany children study at secondary (post-compulsory) level against 38% of the rest of the population. 0.95% of Romany pupils from basic schools attend secondary schools. The rest of the youth grows up by searching for occasional work or trying to be of use in collectives but having no further education. To avoid the relevant and negative phenomena it is necessary to create Romany classes in basic education schools but also secondary skill-schools focused on traditional Romany craft production.

We know from history that until the beginning of the 20th century more than 6,000 smiths, locksmiths, coppersmiths and other metal workers had been able to keep their livelihood together with 200 wood production workers and 160 textile workers. In the period between the two wars traditional Romany crafts decreased until after World War II the number was minimal At present the renaissance of Romany crafts is almost essential. One possibility of how to reestablish these crafts lies in the establishment of secondary skill-schools The creation of secondary craft production schools for Romanies would remove a considerable deficiency of our schools. Thus also the problem of high-rate unemployment could be solved, wrongdoing would decrease and thereby many of the most impressive Romany traditions which are now in the process of extinction would be preserved. We cannot disregard the increase in interest and demand also which can be mostly seen in foreign countries as the thirst for artistic handwork of functional articles that should serve as a supplement for living in an apartment setting. The present serial machine production cannot artistically compete with the smiths' artistic work or with hand products of metal In a noticeable way these crafts can enrich demands for wood production, textile, ceramic and pottery production, including the production from non- traditional materials.

OTHER ACTIVITIES DEALING WITH THE THEME OF THE SEMINAR

1) Council of Europe

1.1 The Project 'Democracy, Human Rights and Minorities: educational and cultural aspects.'

The Project was included in the CDCC's programme for a period of four years starting in 1993 - as a response to the challenges that are shaking the very foundations of our societies. It is an important response to the Vienna Summit's recommendations on the fight against intolerance. The Project seeks to develop civics, intercultural education and cultural democracy in order to produce at the end of the project guidelines for the attention of governments on educational and cultural rights.

The objectives will be approached through three strands.

Strand 1. Human rights, democracy and the management of diversity (from an intercultural angle)

Strand 2 - the cultural rights of minorities and social cohesion

Strand 3 - history, memories and heritage.

The Seminar described comes within this strand.

Under Strands 1 and 3 there is a programme of pilot projects that involves instructors and the instructors of instructors.

Under Strand 2 there is a programme of case studies of good practice in managing diversity.

There also other activities within the Project.

Each pilot project such as the present one involves a network of instructors and is conducted in three stages:

- a training phase for practitioners (ie the present Seminar)
- an experimental phase, monitored.
- a final colloquy for review and evaluation of the project.

The need to see history teaching as a priority area was given further emphasis - if this was needed - during a symposium in Timisoara in 1993 where Mrs Rousso-Lenoir analysed the textbooks of one country. She found that they did not mention the minorities living in the country, there were various examples of the glorification of the majority population, sometimes involving the falsification of history. History teaching was dominated both explicitly and implicitly, by excessive and exclusive nationalism.

At a meeting in Strasbourg in 1993 a preparatory meeting was held between representatives of the Council of Europe and the experts of the Research Group for a European Gypsy History (set up as a part of the Interface programme at the Gypsy Studies Centre in Paris).

A second meeting took place in Strasbourg in early 1994, when Slovak representatives also attended, at which the general principles previously agreed were turned into a practical programme for this seminar and the pilot classroom project.

Pilot project No.2, situated in Strand 3 answers the need for a change. Its title is 'An analysis of the question of minorities and of the possible response of history teaching and history textbooks'. One possible response can be the use of local history with classes of Gypsies and mixed classes to introduce the topic. Although initially this project is focused on the Gypsy minority the results can be applied to other minorities.

1.2 Activities of the Council of Europe concerning Romanies, Gypsies and Travellers - a brief account

In May 1975 the Committee of Ministers adopted Resolution (75) 133 containing recommendations on the social situation of nomads in Europe.

In February 1983 the Recommendation R(83)1 was adopted by the Committee of Ministers on stateless nomads and nomads of undetermined nationality.

The Parliamentary Assembly in 1969 adopted Recommendation 563(1969) on the Situation of Gypsies and other Travellers in Europe. Finally, in 1993 the Assembly adopted Recommendation 1203(1993) on Gypsies in Europe.

The Council for Cultural Cooperation (CDCC) of the CoE prepared a report on Gypsies and Travellers. This has now been published in French in a revised expanded edition (written by Jean-Pierre Liegeois) in 1994. An English translation is in preparation. The CDCC has also organized since 1983 a series of training courses and seminars on schooling for Gypsy and Traveller children.

An information document on the above can be obtained from the Coordinator for the Roma/Gypsies activities, Population and Migration Division, Council of Europe, F 67075 Strasbourg Cedex. France.

1.3 The Centre de Recherches Tsiganes (Paris)

The Centre which is part of the Universite Rene Descartes, Paris, has been developing cooperation with the European Community and the Council of Europe since the early 1980s. An important part of the Centre's work consists in ensuring the systematic implementation of measures geared towards improving the living conditions of Gypsy communities, particularly through training, information, documentation, publication etc. and in fields which are also research axes for the various teams involved in them; sociology, history, linguistics, social and cultural anthropology. The philosophy of solidity and flexibility has been outlined in a number of publications, notably the Interface newsletter. This periodical in several languages acts as a link between institutions and activists working with Gypsies and informs about projects - present and future.

The History Group works alongside the Centre and is producing a collection of 'fascicules'. The first series being compiled covers administrative and legislative measures. Another will focus on Gypsy societies and respond to the necessity of giving a long-term perspective on the lifestyles of Gypsies. Another set of titles will cover events of major significance and yet a further series will be biographies and life stories.

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