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ABOUT THE GYPSY (ROMANI) RENAISSANCE IN THE SOVIET UNION (1925–1938) AND ITS SUCCESSORS

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Rezumat

Despre renașterea țiganilor (romilor) în Uniunea Sovietică (1925–1938) și succesorii lor

Acest articol încearcă să examineze principalele repere în educația romilor în istoria Rusiei. Țiganii și populația baștinașă au stabilit o relație de încredere încă de la prima întâlnire din 1697. Curând țiganii au fost împărțiți în 2 grupuri: urbani și de șatră. Treptat, țiganii urbani au cucerit aristocrația rusă cu performanțele lor muzicale. În consecință, reprezentanți ai unor familii aristocratice precum Golitsyn, Obolensky, Tolstoi și alții s-au căsătorit cu țigani și țigance. Revoluția din octombrie, apoi războiul civil a distrus stilul tradițional al vieții țigănești. În 1925, la Moscova a fost creat Consiliul țiganilor din Rusia, care a început să promoveze un mod de viață socialist. Țiganii erau implicați în toate sferile vieții statului sovietic: școlile de țigani asigurau educația copiilor și adulților; țiganii erau angajați în toate ramurile industriei și agriculturii (ferme colective de țigani). Dintr-o dată, școlile romilor au fost închise ca urmare a unei decizii secrete a guvernului sovietic din 29 august 1938. După război, numeroase cereri au fost trimise lui Stalin pentru a redeschide școlile de romi, dar toate au rămas fără răspuns. Mai târziu, în 1963, proeminentul poet țigan N. Satkevich a reușit să deschidă o școală pentru țigani în Irkutsk. În anii 90 exemplul său a fost urmat de J. Neilands (Letonia), N. Belugina, L. Manush, L. Cherenkov (Moscova). Autorul articolului și-a adus contribuția continuând această tradiție la Londra, precum și în satul Mikheiki, regiunea Slutsk din Belarus. Bogata moștenire literară din perioada așa zisei Renașteri a țiganilor inspiră noile generații să urmeze acest exemplu unic.

Cuvinte-cheie: alfabetizarea romilor, literatură romani, școli de romi, Renaștere, patrimoniul romilor.

Резюме

О цыганском (ромском) Возрождении в Советском Союзе (1925–1938) и его преемниках

В настоящей статье предпринята попытка рассмотреть основные вехи образования цыган (ромов) в истории России. Цыгане и не цыгане установили доверительные отношения с момента первой исторической встречи после 1697 г. Вскоре цыгане разделились на 2 группы: городские и таборные. Постепенно городские цыгане музыкальным исполнительством покорили российскую аристократию. В брачные союзы с цыганками и цыганами вступали представители таких аристократических семей, как Голицыны, Оболенские, Толстые и др. Октябрьская революция, затем Гражданская война разрушили привычную структуру жизни цыган. В 1925 г. в Москве был создан Всероссийский Совет цыган, который стал пропагандировать социалистический образ жизни. Цыган вовлекли во все сферы жизни Советского государства: цы-

ганские (ромские) школы давали образование детям и взрослым, цыгане были заняты во всех отраслях промышленности и сельского хозяйства (цыганские колхозы). Внезапно все цыганские школы были закрыты в результате секретного решения советского правительства от 29 августа 1938 г. После войны Сталину направлялись многочисленные просьбы восстановить цыганские школы, но все они оставались без ответа. Позже, в 1963 г., видный цыганский поэт Н. Саткевич смог открыть цыганскую школу в Иркутске. В 90-е гг. его примеру последовали Я. Нейландс (Латвия), Н. Белугина, Л. Мануш, Л. Черенков (Москва). Автор данной статьи также внес свою лепту, продолжив эту традицию в Лондоне, а также в поселке Михейки Слуцкого района Беларуси. Богатое литературное наследие цыганского Ренессанса вдохновляет новые поколения последовать этому уникальному примеру.

Ключевые слова: ромская грамотность, литература, ромские школы, Возрождение, ромское наследие.

Summary

About the Gypsy (Romani) Renaissance in the Soviet Union (1925–1938) and its successors

This article attempts to summarize the main landmarks of the Gypsy (Romani) Educational History in Russia. Gypsies and non-Gypsies established good relations following their first encounter in 1697. Shortly afterwards Gypsies were separated into urban and camp Gypsies. The urban Gypsies were integrated into high society since their musical performances captured the minds of the Russian aristocracy to a significant extent. Consequently they started to intermarry including in such noble families as: the Golitsyns, the Obolenskis, the Tolstoys, etc. The October Revolution followed by the Civil War destroyed the traditional way of life for the Gypsies. The Pan-Russian Gypsy Union was founded in 1925, in Moscow. It started to promote the ideas of a Socialist way of life. The Gypsies were involved in all spheres of life of the Soviet State: Gypsy (Romani) schools taught children and adults. The parents were involved in all branches of industry and Socialist agriculture (Gypsy collective-farms – 'kolkhozs'). Suddenly the schools were closed in August 1938 by a secret note of the Soviet Government. After WWII many Gypsy wrote letters imploring Stalin to reopen schools, but there were no replies. Later the notable Gypsy poet Nikolai Satkevich managed to open a Gypsy school in Irkutsk (Siberia) in 1963. His example was followed by J. Neilands (Latvia), N. Belugina, L. Manush and L. Cherenkov (Moscow) while the author continued this good tradition in London and the Miheiki settlement (Slutsk region, Belarus). The versatile literature of the Romani Renaissance left a remarkable legacy about the Romani Renaissance and it inspires other generations to follow this unique process.

Key words: Romani literacy and literature, Romani schools, Renaissance, Romani legacy.

The majority of Gypsy children have always hated school. Firstly, they did not see any point in education; secondly, it took away their freedom because they hated being restricted; thirdly, their parents did not support them on the presumption that reading and learning facts from non-Gypsy books would undermine their Gypsy (Romani) customary code, traditions and culture.

As we know, many attempts were made by some countries to assimilate Gypsies by forcible schooling: Germany, Austro-Hungary, Spain, and Finland – which turned out to be a failure.

Success in this direction was achieved by the Soviet state in the period from 1925 to 1938, which became unique, receiving the name of the *Gypsy (Roma) Renaissance*. To understand why this happened, we will have to take a short historical excursion.

Gypsies were first recorded in Russia in 1697 in the collection of the Rumyantsev House, St. Petersburg, in “Azbukovnik” (Kalinin 2005: 26; Kalinin 2010: 43).

The Moscovite State (Moskoviya) and its successor, the Russian Empire¹ from 1721, accepted Gypsies relatively late compared to Western Europe. The first documentation of Gypsies was recorded only in 1721 in the Siberian city Tobol’sk (Crowe 1996: 154).

Let us consider why this successful phenomenon with the Gypsy education took place in the Soviet State (the former Russian Empire), which more than a century before, was the first state to integrate Gypsies socially after 1774 when Count Alexei Orlov-Chesmensky (1737–1807) organised a huge choir led by Ivan Sokolov (1730–1813)². This, in turn, gave birth to the Russian Romani School of Singing and Dancing. Gypsy music and mystique captured the imagination of the Russian public and became an integral part of Russian music, literature, and theatre.

The Russian Empire was an enormous state full of contrast. There were highly educated aristocrats, who spent their luxurious lives in Nice, where they introduced famous Roulette (‘Ruletkă’) gambling places, while by contrast the great majority was very poor peasant people, who were mostly illiterate. A similar contrast was applicable to Gypsies. On one hand, *urban gypsies* were mainly participants of the Big Choirs in cities and educated in gymnasiums, while, on the other, their compatriots, *camp gypsies*, led the nomadic way of life and were almost illiterate. The educated Gypsies intermarried with the Russian gentry: the Golitsyn, Obolenski, Tolstoy families and others.

The Tsar, Nicolas I (1796–1855), tried to give Gypsies a new way of life: the Governor-General of Novorosiya and Viceroy of Bessarabia Region (19 May 1823 – 5

November 1844). Prince M. Vorontsov (1782–1856)³ worked out a programme for Gypsies (approved by Senate in 1828) to transfer nomadic Gypsies to a settled way of life. In a while, two settlements, Faraonovka (Pharaoh’s) and Kairo (Cairo) were built in 1836 and 1839 for Gypsies who were guarded by Cossacks. The authorities gave the new settlers pieces of land totalling 10 400 hectares. They also set up a professional school for Gypsies training them to become millers, carpenters, wood-carvers and stonemasons. There was also a primary school with an Orthodox Sunday school, where the Russian Gypsy priest Polyakov ministered. The Gypsy girls were taught sewing, cooking and gardening skills.

In the beginning, a few Gypsy families ran away from the settlements; the majority stayed and prospered until late 80’s. Unfortunately, a devastating fire destroyed everything (Kalinin 2005: 31-32; Druts 1990: 5-6).

In 1862 the famous Russian poet Apollon Grigorjev (1822–1864) in collaboration with his Romani friends, created the famous Romani dance “Vengerochka”. This laid the foundation for Russian – Gypsy singing called *Romance*. Camp Gypsies kept their traditional trade of horse-dealing, while singing, dancing and playing music was their hobby.

After the October Revolution of 1917 everything changed. The Bolsheviks could not stop the Civil War from breaking out. It raged like a storm across the open domain of the former Russian Empire for almost four years.

Gypsies participated in the Civil War on both sides but the majority of them were on the side of the Red Army. The fighting calmed down in November, 1920 and left the former Russian Empire in ruins and the people in a state of starvation.

After the Civil War in the Proletariat State the habitual structure of the Gypsies’ way of life was destroyed. The state policy of liquidation of the private sector severely affected chorus singers and musicians. They remained without any income due to the closure of restaurants/cafes. They couldn’t return to the nomadic way of life of their ancestors as did not have any knowledge of how to survive as nomads. The horse markets where Gypsy horse-dealers used to make money had also been closed down. Sadly for the Gypsies, nobody could pay for the Gypsy music and nobody wished to have their fortune told.

After a while Gypsies once again returned to cities looking for jobs in factories.

Now let us draw our attention to Moscow where some educated Gypsies started to get together in Petrovski Park and searched for a new way of life. They founded the *All Russian Union of* on 24 July 1925. The former Red Army commander, communist Andrei

Taranov (1896–1967) (a Gypsy man from Ekaterinburg) became its *Chairman* and the famous actor and playwright Ivan Rom – Lebedev (1901–1991) became its *Secretary*.

Initially the Gypsy Union included 23 people. The political situation was favourable and newspapers supported the idea, including a long article in the leading newspaper “*Izvestiya*”. As it has been defined in its founding statute, the Union of Gypsies had to work in two directions:

- cultural work among the Gypsy population
- organizing employment among Gypsies.

There was a unique time for Gypsies, particular in 1925/26 when the former Soviet Union recognised Gypsies (Roma) officially. The Romani people won recognition not as a national minority, but as equals alongside 62 other nations of the Soviet Union with rights to be educated in the Romani language.

Thus, (during 1925–1938) after the movement of the Soviet Government, the *Gypsy Renaissance* swept over the expansive domain of the Soviet Union. In 1926, a year after the creation of the All-Russian Gypsy Union, the leading newspaper *Izvestiya* (News), 31.01.1926, published extracts from the book “About the Gypsy written language” written by N. Pankov and N. Dudarova’ (the Baltic Romani language, the Northern Gypsy dialect, mainly Moscow subdialect, which was taken as a basis for the written Gypsy/Romani language). Later the head of Education A. Lunacharski (1875–1933) published decree No 1053, 10.05.1927 “*On the creation of the alphabet of the Gypsy language*”. The majority of the textbooks and elementary books were created during this period by a small group of Gypsies [N. Pankov (1895–1959), N. Dudarova (1902–1992), O. Pankova (1911–1991), A. German (1893–1955) and N. Rogozhev (?–1938) and non-gypsies T. Ventzel (1903–1989), a Russian German by origin, and a Russian erudite, Prof. Mikhail Sergiyevski (1892–1946)].

As a result a total of 51 schools/departments, classes and clubs delivered education to young and adult Romani people in majority of subjects in the Northern-Russian Baltic Romani language (*Romanes*).

292 different publications and translations all came out at that time including plays, novels and poetry.

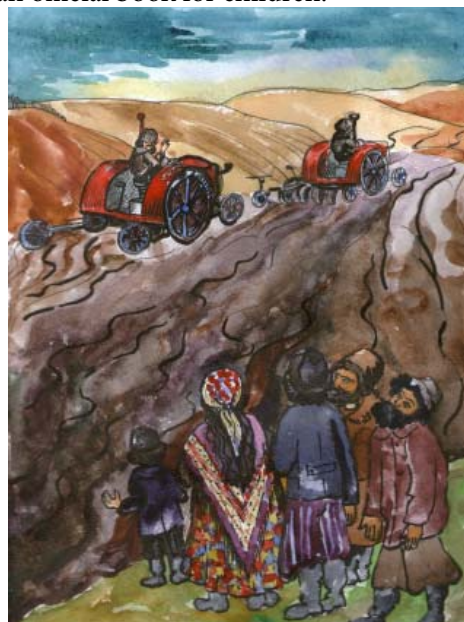
On 1 October 1926, the Presidium of the USSR approved the Decree “On measures for aiding the transition of Nomadic Gypsies to a working and settled way of life”. Thus, the choice was offered to Gypsies for the first time to declare their national identity in their passports “*tsygan/tsyganka*” (gypsy man/woman) – male/female”.

The Communist regime gradually gained a momentum and soon another Decree “On the Allotment of Land to Gypsies”... was issued. Gypsies be-

came more incorporated in the Soviet economy. They worked in the food, chemical, textile and furniture industries. In the collectivized agriculture of the USSR during this period, 52 communes and collective farms (kolkhozes) operated for various periods of time. The history of Gypsy Collective Farms is extensive and would need special attention and consideration.

The beginning was very encouraging: in 1926, in Moscow 4 schools were opened for Gypsies where the Gypsy language was taught as a subject from hand-written texts of teachers: N. Dudarova, M. Bukarevich (?–1954), N. Pankov and others. The school in *Marjina Roshcha* (Marya’s Grove) was an experimental one [the head teacher E. N. Byleeva (?–?)]: teaching of the curriculum was differentiated in two groups: illiterate and literate children. Illiterate were engaged in ABC-books, and literate – in the program of the elementary school. Preparation of slogans, drawings and posters in the Gypsy language, and also public work was a compulsory element of the program like: visiting of Gypsy families and camps with the purpose of involving children to learn at Gypsy schools.

So, in 1927 in a newly created Gypsy literary language all kinds of literature began to be printed – educational, fictional and political. The first Gypsy ABC-book by N. Dudarova / N. Pankov⁴ came out in 1928 and soon it became adopted as a book for studies. Another ABC by N. Pankov / N. Dudarova “*Dzhidy Buty*” (A Vivid Work) was published in 1930 and became an official book for children.



Imag. 1. Roma marvelling at their compatriots operating tractors. Illustration by S. Gnutova⁵

In 1930 *Narkompros*⁶ created the *Gypsy group* in the Central Scientific Research *Institute of Nationalities* which began theoretically to help to compile reg-

ular textbooks for elementary schools: ABC-books, books for reading for the first and second classes, the books in the native language for their further revision and completion, approbation and publishing by the Institute of Methods for school work (Kalinin 2005: 47, 55). Then Moscow Department of National Education ran a pedagogical exhibition of children's works from the Gypsy classes of four schools in Moscow.

The first fiction publication of Gypsy literature appeared in the magazine *Nevi Zoria* (New Dawn, No 1, 1927), with the story *Romano Beng* (Gypsy Demon) by I. Rom-Lebedev.

Eighteen young Gypsy writers joined and participated enthusiastically in existing forms of literary life at that time. In 1929 at the literature association "Smithy", a separate Gypsy literary group *Romano Lav* (Gypsy Word) started its creative activity. It included A. German, N. Pankov, I. Rom-Lebedev, and Georgy Lebedev (1900–1969). Later on such poets as I. Khrustalev (1913–1994), O. Pankova, N. Dudarova, E. Orlova (?–1964), M. Polyakova (1904–1976), A. Pankov, I. Bezljudsky, M. Ilyinski (1882–1962) and the writer and translator Leksa Svetlov (1897–1961) joined them.

On September 7th 1930, the great son of the Indian people Rabindranath Tagore met representatives of Gypsies in Moscow. The poet Georgy Lebedev chaired the meeting. Rabindranath Tagore was told about the contemporary life of Gypsies in the USSR and was handed a complete set of all 5 books of the so-called *Gypsy Language Library*⁷.

Sets of books for mass library "Smiths" included 5 names of books in the Gypsy language in the form of short stories, sketches, and poems.

In 1935, the Union of Soviet Writers⁸ experienced one more reorganization, National Bureau of USW of the USSR appeared with a section of the Gypsy literature.

The Gypsy theatre "Romen" which was inaugurated in Moscow in December 1931 began to perform plays of Gypsy authors. The gifted poet Georgy Lebedev became the first director who was shortly toppled by the Communist elite of the theatre allegedly on financial grounds.

In 1934 the First Congress of the Union of Soviet Writers was recreated. At this Congress Maxim Gorky repeatedly mentioned in his report Gypsy writers, underlining a huge shift in Gypsy education and culture. A. German and L. Svetlov (1897–1961) became members of the Union of Soviet Writers, and a little bit later the writers N. Pankov and I. Rom-Lebedev were accepted too.

In 1932–1938, 47 titles of works of fiction in the Gypsy language were published. However, the majority of these books were translated from the Russian

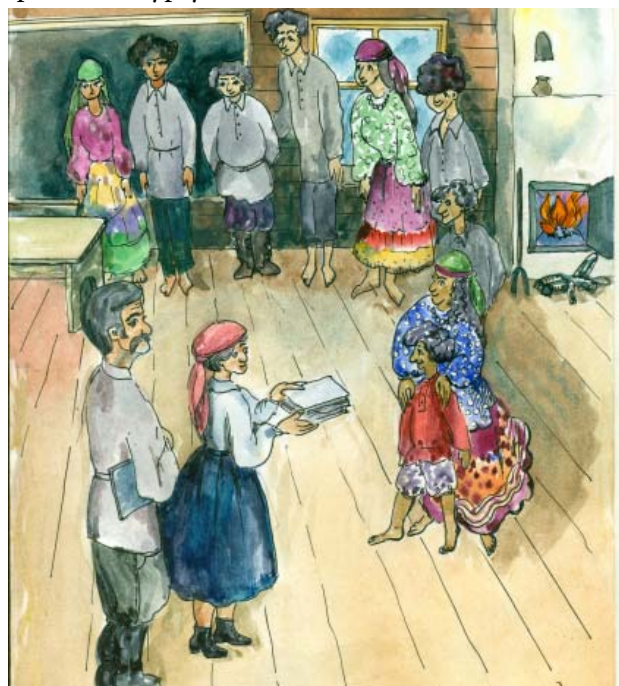
and world literature. In 1938, a "Gypsy-Russian dictionary" by M. V. Sergiyevsky and A. P. Barannikov (1890–1952) under Nikolay Pankov's edition came out.

In 1937 a post-graduate student of professor M. Sergiyevsky, T. V. Ventsel (1903–1989), and the well-known Gypsy poet, writer, playwright and bibliographer A. V. Germano published the textbook "Lylvari piro romany chib" (The Textbook of the Gypsy language) which was the thirteenth and the last one in the period 1925–1938.

It is also important to refer to the role of Prof. M. Sergiyevski, a well-known scientist who started to attend meetings of the All-Russian Gypsy Union on his own initiative. Gypsies would thank him for the praise worthy part he played in the formation of this movement during the unique period of the *Gypsy/Romani Renaissance* (1925–1938). Thanks to him the Gypsy alphabet, grammar, textbooks for children and adults, and a Gypsy-Russian dictionary were published.

In total, from 1926/1938, 51 schools, departments and classes in the Gypsy language worked in the USSR at various times and with different duration in the Gypsy language (*Romanes*) operated in the USSR. At the Gypsy collective farms amateur performances were run, reviews and even Olympic Games of amateur performance art with the participation of Gypsies took place, for example, in 1934 in the city of Nikolaev.

The Russian Gypsies and the Northern-Russian Baltic Gypsy [Romani] dialect dominated in all spheres of Gypsy life.



Imag. 2. Enrolment into the Romani school. Picture by S. Gnutova

The Romani Teachers Training College named after K. Timiryazev (later Industry-Pedagogical College) was opened in Moscow in 1933 and it trained about 120 teachers for the urban and kolkhoz Gypsy schools before its closure in 1938.

In 1932 in the seventh issue of the magazine *Nevo Drom* (New Road) the appeal to recruit and direct young Gypsy men and girls from collective farms, artels and co-operative societies for *Pedagogical Courses* for a period of six months at the expense of the sending organizations was published.

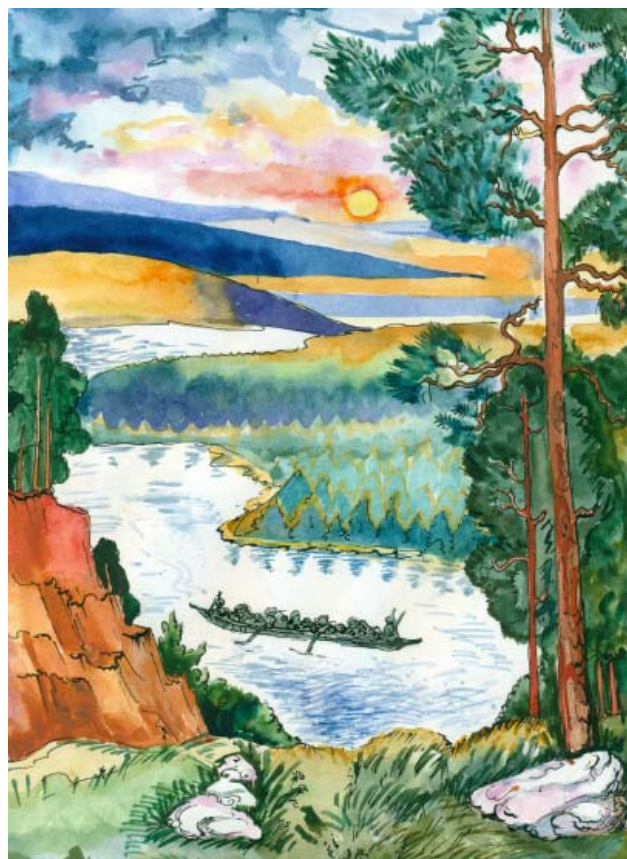
In Smolensk there was a Medical College with a Gypsy section. Near Smolensk, in Serebryanka, the Romani Boarding (seven-class) school was opened which supplied this Teachers Training College in Moscow with its graduates.

The Gypsy movement to a settled way of life and education reached its peak in 1936. Reports of that period ambitiously emphasize that “settling and familiarizing Gypsies with work went on successfully”. These reports referred to Gypsy collective farms, enterprises, cooperatives, clubs, schools and nurseries.

We omit to say about the experiments on Gypsies in the settlement “Romanistan” and on the river Chulym, as it is not the aim of our research. We will confine ourselves to illustrations.



Imag. 3. Roma escaping from the Romani experimental settlement “Romanistan”, Siberia, 1937. By S. Gnutova



Imag. 4. Roma being delivered to the experimental settlement on the Chulym River, Siberia, 1937. By S. Gnutova

Unfortunately, on the 29th of August, 1938, the central Committee of the Communist Party issued a secret note to the local authorities (which they had prepared in January 1938) to close some national schools and classes, which had no administrative body (territory) within the State of Soviets and in the light of that time “to combat Nationalism”, and all 12 national schools and classes (Jewish, German, Polish, Latvian, Finnish, Assyrian, Uyghur, Greek, Bulgarian, Kurdish, Korean and Gypsy [Romani]) were closed down, while some emerged with other schools in the local community language schools.

The spark of the Romani Renaissance enthusiasm did not die out immediately. Gypsies who attended Gypsy classes (parents, elder siblings) tried hard to pass on their sophisticated level of Romanes to their younger siblings and then to their children. As these Gypsies became the older generation, they took the initiative to invite the younger generation to bigger houses, where they spoke about their teachers, told school life stories, fairy-tales; read out poems and stories, which they remembered from attending Gypsy schools. Usually they met during long winter evenings and nights.

The initiative group was led by Nikolai Pankov, his former student, journalist Vasily Burluckij (1916–1989), former Chairman of the All-Russian Gypsy (Romani) Union, Andrey Taranov, who worked after

the war as leader of the 'kolkhoz' in the settlement Rezina, Moldova; former Gypsy activist and poet Mikhail Bezliudzki (who worked as head of the personal department in Rostov). They started writing individual and collective letters to Stalin, later on to Nikita Khrushchev (1894–1971) and his subordinates asking for help in re-opening Gypsy crèches, nurseries and schools. Nobody received a positive reply.

When N. Pankov died in 1959, his work was continued by N. Menshikov (1920–1988), a heavily-wounded former Red Army commander, and N. Pankov's two daughters: one being a chemical scientist, PhD Natasha Pankova (1924–1991) and the other a biological researcher, PhD Liubov Pankova (1925–2019). In due time, non-Gypsy/Gypsy linguists joined this group: Academician, Prof. Paul Ariste (1905–1985) (Tartu University, Estonia) and Prof. Janis Loja (1896–1969) (Riga University, Latvia).

In Russia, as a rule, everything started in Moscow; in 1990 Moscow Teachers' Training college No 4 started a unique programme: to prepare teachers and tutors for Romani crèches, nurseries and primary schools of the Romani language [teachers: Leksa Manush (1942–1997), his wife Nadya Belugina, Moscow native Romani (1942), and Lev Cherenkov (1936–2016)].

Moscow secondary school No 1650 introduced the Romani language and literature as an optional subject where the same teachers taught these subjects before its closure in 1993.

In a while, Nadya Belugina started to teach Romani language and literature at the school-studio "Gilori" (Song) together with Ganga Batalova (1955) in the period 1997–2001.

In 1997, the Latvian Romani activist Janis Neilands (1919–1999) managed to implement the Romani ABC book at the night school in his native town Ventspils, Latvia (Manuš, 1996).

In the long run, the author of this article also succeeded in teaching Romani language on the basis of the *Romani Renaissance* tradition only in London in the period 1997–2009. We were compiling our own Romani ABC book while preparing teaching materials for every session in the lesson plan (Kalinin 2012). After the lesson was delivered, specific changes were endorsed to the lesson plan based on the performance of the pupils. These plans resulted in the book "*Javente rakiras Romanes / Let's speak Romanes*". It included ABC lessons with pictures, grammar guide and vocabulary.

These sessions of the Baltic Romani language were continued at Saturday schools in Camden borough of London mainly with Romani children from Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Slovakia. The last ones worked very hard not to lag behind as their Romani dialect is not a Baltic Romani one.

When the Baltic Romani Bible⁹ came out of print in Minsk (Belarus), in 2014, we, myself, and our Christian Romani and non-Romani believers set up the Baltic Romani Missionary Society (BRMS) with a Romani language school in Miheiki, near Slutsk for children and adults to help Roma for whom Romanes is a mother's tongue: *to assist in worship and fellowship in Romanes, to widen the Christian Romani Culture*.



Photo 1. From Miheiki Romani Bible Language school in Belarus' run by V. Kalinin

Conclusions

We tried to touch upon the main aspects in the development of the education of Gypsies based on Romani language literature from *Romani Renaissance* period (1925–1938) to nowadays.

We include some poems by Romani poets from different periods who followed the Gypsy national culture and traditions of the *Romani Renaissance*. These might give you a general idea about what inspirations led the Baltic Romani people to write poetry in different time periods: the Soviet Union era and nowadays (Appendix 1 and Appendix 2).

It was impossible to add any information on the experimental settlement "Romanistan"¹⁰ near the station Taiga, Kemerovo region in 1937 in relation to education: archives of Russia are not open anymore without special permission.

Unfortunately, we have omitted the experience of the Bears' Academy in Smorgon¹¹, Belarus', in 1722–1866 when the Gypsy instructors trained bear-handlers for the whole Europe using the Romani language patterns for training bears.

We could not find out any specific information about the education of Gypsy people in the experimental settlements Faraonovka and Kair¹² in 1836–1897 (nowadays Ukraine), this is outside the scope of our research.

Unfortunately, we only mentioned in passing the blessed period of the Gypsy choirs in Russia (1774–1917) where older participants of these music groups used Romanes to teach the younger performers to

write songs in Romanes and even worked out its Romani choir jargon: *peresa* (with a tummy): “all together, by the whole group”.

We hope that our article may compensate the shortage of information on this topic and inspire Gypsies and non-Gypsies to teach Gypsies and friends of Gypsies to conduct lessons on the Romani language and culture.

We also call on Gypsies not to oppose vehemently to people (Roma and non-Roma) who endeavour to give a hand to help them with education!

We also dream that this publication may encourage more men and women to get involved in reading necessary books (like the Baltic Romani Bible) and other literature in Romanes on this topic.

May God bless you in your attempts to keep the Romani language and culture afloat!

Notes

¹ The Russian Empire (1721–1917).

² More details see: Baurov N. Repertuary tsyganskih khorov starogo Peterburga. St Petersburg, 1996, s. 6; Newspaper ‘Novoye Vremia, of 18 January, 1877; Pankov N. Zapiski tsygana o tsyganskih khorah. Moscow, 1958.

³ On 7 May 1823 he was appointed governor-general of New Russia, as the southern provinces of the empire were then called, and “namestnik” of Bessarabia. More details see: Prince Woronzoff. In: The Gentleman’s Magazine, and Historical Review. Vol. 202, January, 1857, p. 107. Or, Blanch Lesley. The Sabres of Paradise. London: John Murray, 1960.

⁴ Dudarova N., Pankov N. Nevo drom. Bukvaro vash bare manushenge. Moskva: Tsentrizdat, 1928. 98 s.

⁵ Gnutova Svetlana (born 1959) – artist from the city of Vitebsk (Belarus). She is friends with gypsies. At one time she taught at the School of Fine Arts No. 13 in Vitebsk. She makes dolls, sews gypsy costumes, handbags for the stage and for the Moscow circus.

⁶ Narkompros – The People’s Commissariat for Education (or Narkompros; Russian: Народный комиссариат просвещения, Наркомпрос) was the Soviet agency charged with the administration of public education and other issues related to culture.

⁷ Kalinin V. Zagadka baltiiskih tsygan. Minsk: Logvinov, 2005, s. 47–55; Shapoval V. Syr Alisa Popeya ka Chudengiri Phuv, Everocype, p. 29–30; Shapoval V. Kratkoye rukovodstvo po tsyganskomu yazyku (kelderarskiy dialekt). St. Petersburg, 2008, s. 12–13 and other.

⁸ Union of Soviet Writers, USSR Union of Writers, or the Soviet Union Writers Association (Russian: Союз писателей СССР, in transcription: Soyuz Sovetskikh Pisatelei) was a creative union of professional writers in the Soviet Union. It was founded in 1934 at the initiative of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (1932) after disbanding a number of other writers’ organizations: RAPP, Proletkult. More information see: Garrard, John; Carol

Garrard Inside the Soviet Writers’ Union. London: Tauris. 1990, p. 15.

⁹ Библия пэ Балтитко Романи чиб (Романэс) / Bible (Baltic Romanes), published by DCL, Bielefeld, Switzerland. Printed by InterCorp, Minsk, 2014.

¹⁰ The late writer Nicolay Bessonov was told in 2003 that there are archives on “Romanistan” when he applied to the Smolensk FDR (firmer KGB) but he was never allowed to come back to work with the materials.

¹¹ More information about “The Bear Academy in Smorgon” see at: <https://vetliva.com/tourism/what-to-see/pamyatnik-medvezhey-akademii-v-smorgoni/> (vized 12.08.2020).

¹² More information about Faraonovka / Kair see: Lemon A. Between Two Fires: Gypsy Performance and Romani Memory from Pushkin to Post-Socialism. London: Duke University Press, 2000, p. 2.; Bibliografiya o tsyganakh: Ukaz. kn. i st. s 1780 g. po 1930 g. / A. V. German; vstup. st. M. V. Sergiyevskiy. M.: Tsentrizdat, 1977, s. 29.

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Appendix 1

Йди (Рйзы) И1

Чхин кхарибэна дрэ патрыка и рйпир лэн (Пйсын лавá (назвáнии) дрэ тетрáдка).



Чхин кхарибэна дрэ патрыка и рйпир лэн (Пйсын лавá (назвáнии) дрэ тетрáдка).

Тйони, рйшля, шалнйро, баёнгиро, кáпци, пэрхэзы, цурули, зандирорй, шкóрни (чэвйки/тревйки), тревйки, упралáйтко (цóха), сáквa, чорáпи (санэ-гэрйтка), штрймфи, калчúня, куна (унта), вастáрька, тырдыно.

Appendix 2

Aleksei Sinitsyn (b. 1980, Saint Petersburg)*

Škola

School

Progeja lynaj ,sare dre škola džana

Summer passed, everybody goes to school

I man dro piervo klaso otdene,

I was fetched into form one,

Me na kamam tedžav, zor'jasa man lydžana

I don't want to go, but I am forced to walk

So manca te keren kamen tyme?

What do you want to do with me?

Sajekh profesorosa na kamam me te javav,

I don't want to become a professor,

Savo me somas, dasavo javava,

I will stay as I have been,

Bare love ghara džinom me teginav

I mastered counting money

I bi školakiro romnia me peske láva.

In addition, I will marry without schooling.

Karik tedžav, me nikones doj na džinav

Where am I going, I don't know anybody

Saren me piervo molo udykhava,

I will see them for the first time,

Gadienge lava cvety telydžav

Should I carry flowers to non-romani women

'Sapes dro per', fedyr me len biknava.

'A snake to their tummy', I'd better sell them.

Ma nakamjom tedžav, palso že me gejom

I didn't want to go, why on earth I came

Džindiom so nacind'jas mange tedžav,

I knew how painfully I felt when I went,

Pal jekh dyves trin fenštry rozmardiom

Three windows I smashed during one day

I raklores mamjom corjasa tečinav.

And I was close to knifing a boy.

Adadyves direktoro ke pe khardia dades

The head teacher called my father to come

Phendia, sob man ciupniasa temarel,

And he told him to beat me with a whip,

Čorav mardý-karje me dáva les

I will steal a gun and shoot him

Mek dava vixro peske temarel.

Let the storm strike him.

Me až dro klaso pe uroko bagadiom gilja

I sang songs during the lesson

I pe raklende syr me grende jezdiñdiom,

And I took a ride on other boys' backs,

I man gadi opiat' javri vytradyja

A woman teacher chucked me again out

Ke rat dro venglo me proterdjiom.

And I stood in a corner till night.

Na džava me butyr-tumen mangava

I won't come again – I beg you

Fedyr dre škola man tenameken,

Please do not force me,

A na patiana, me tumenge sovloxava

I will swear, if you don't believe

So nakamen dre škola romane čaven.

That romani kids are not welcomed at school.

(4 August, 1999 St. Petersburg)

(transliterated from Cyrillic

* We have no other information about him

into Latin and translated into English by V. Kalinin) 16.12.2017

Valdemar Kalinin (b. 1946)*

Mihasióske

To Mihas'

Bari balvál phurdél pir Siebiahi,

A stormy wind blows over Siebiahi,

Odój mro maloró dživéla,

Where my childhood buddy

Mihásio les saré kharén,

lives,

Styknál jov manušen kaméla.

Everybody calls him Mihas',

Who since childhood loves people.

Kon na poddžála pal vari-so,
Godý i vast uraz jov délas,
Syr sys ternó, zaterdijá,
Pal manuśniáte, so darélas.

Jov léla kisti de vastá,
Makhtíá jov gren, syr
čaravéna,
Odoj tel bergi manuša,
Kodój čhajá paš jag kheléna.

Tradás, Mihásio, pal fóro,
Odój, kaj tu psirdián
čhavénca,
Ozióry, i vešá baré,
Kharén amen te džan
gherénca.

I kaj te las phurénge zor,
Perás pe phuv ame mujénca,
Šunása phuv, kaj isyn xor,
Barjakirdiá amen beršénca.

Mro parkuró uraz otdžála,
Mro fóro svencynélape
jagénca,
Me risiováva, miro pšal, ke tu,
Xoc' tu i tóska sykadián
jakhénca.

V. Kalinino, Vitebsk/London,
Augustone, 2017.

* Poet, writer and
Bible translator. Born in
Belarus in 1946, lives in
London

Olga Samulevich (1941– ?, Saint Petersburg)*

Roma, roma, bare murša!
Tume ž Devlseskre manuša!
Pe so tume rosparudepe?
Karik, graja, Devel, kerde'pe?

Mašýny, šmaty, biknybé,
Narkotiki i meribé.
Saro, saró, pirikerdiápe,
Ne, xaj, Devel sajékh atiápe.

Vsajékh Romén Devél kamél,
Bute' bidéndyr Jov rakhél.
Terné čhave', terne čhaja'
Karik čhurde'n peskre zorja'?

Whoever asks him to help,
He rushes to give a hand,
He nearly laid his life for a
woman,
Who was in a deadly situation.

Taking brushes with paint in his
hands,
Grazing horses at once
appeared,
With people standing by
hillside,
On another picture dancing
Romani girls.

Let's, Mihasio, go out of the
town,
Where you walked barefoot,
Blue lakes, dark forests,
Beckon us to go to them on
foot.

Where to find strength for old
people,
Let us fall to the earth for a
helping hand,
Let's listen what comes out of
its depth,
From this earth which brought
us up.

My train is about to depart,
With my city lit up radiantly,
I will return to you, my brother,
Regardless of the sadness on
your face.

(Self-translation, assis.
A. Green)

Roma, Roma, daring men!
You are the God's people!
What have you exchanged
yourself for?
Where did horses, God vanish?

Cars, clothes, flogging,
Drugs and death.
Everything, everything
changed,
But God remained the same.

God still loves you,
He keeps you safe from many
hardships,
Young lads, damsels
Where do you apply your
strength?

Lové, xabé tume rodéna
I pal dava sar' otdéna.
Karik ž Beng tumen tyrde'la?
I Jov tumen te shal kaméla.

Beng shála zor, šukaribé,
Jov roskušél terné ile',
Beng sare sém'I rozmaréla,
I bare bídy pokeréla.

Jekh džiiipé dynó Devleste,
I so skerdián, dová kerdíán,
Niči palé na riskirésa,
Karik Devléste tu naše'sa?

(Saint Petersburg, 1978)

* Olga Samulevich worked
as a textile engineer and also
conducted many Roman
folklore groups as a free-lance

Ilona Makhotina (b. 1984)*

Katyr tyre xasja javle,
Devtestyr spuč.
Risjola ke ame pale
I fuj, i kuč.

Našena dyvesa kale,
Phurjola muj.
Risjola ke ame pale
I kuč, i fuj.

Vastendyr xal i na darel
O kamlypen. Syr na polesa?
Xasjona amare šere,
Ilo marelpe čiriklesa,
Na urikirna pašvare.

* Ilona Makhotina was
born in Tver', Russia,
she defended the unique
dissertation "Roma in the
Russian folklore"

Pasija o jivoro,
Čamudyja kale jakha,
I zarundja o čavoro,
Na kinena tyraha.

Pasija o jivoro,
I o sabe sy barvaleske,
Ne ko sabe li dromoro
Pirangeske, pirangeske?

You see money, nice food
And you give up everything in
exchange,
Where on earth Devil pulls
you to?
For He wants to devour you.

The Devil eats up your
strength, beauty,
He tears to pieces your hearts,
The Devil destroys families,
And He causes big troubles.

God grants you one life,
Whatever you did, you did,
You won't restore anything,
Where will you escape from
God to?

(transliterated and translated
by V. Kalinin, 2017)

Where did your troubles come
from,
Ask God.
Everything comes back,
Bad and good.

The dark days are running away,
The face is getting old.
Everything comes back,
Good and bad.

Without fear the love is eating
Out of our hands. Don't you see?
We are doomed,
The heart beats like a bird,
The ribs can't hold it.

Viktor Shapoval*

Snow was falling,
Kissed black eyes,
And a Romani boy started to
cry,
For none buys him boots.

Snow was falling,
And there is fun for the rich,
But what kind of fun on the
road,
As someone is barefoot?

Pasija o jivoro,
Syr parnyne gava dromenca!
Ne hasija o čavoro
gilorjenca, gilorjenca.

* PhD of philology, born in Siberia in 1958, lives in Moscow

Snow was falling,
Villages and roads whitened,
And the boy perished
With his songs.

(Self-translation)

Yury Železinski (Tarasevich)*

В который раз цыганской
песней
Душа наполнилась сполна.
Цыганской скрипки
звук чудесный,
Поёт гитарная струна.

И «Невечерняя» звучала
И «Шэл мэ версты»
хор певал,
«Ванёнок» душу колыхала.
Я сердцем слушал и писал.

How many times do I hear this
My soul is full with the Gypsy
song
So many times a lovely sound of
the gypsy violin
Comes upon a guitar string

This time it won «an evening
show»
and the chorus sang «one
hundred versts»
and «Vanionok» tune touched
my soul
I heard and wrote with my
heart.

Я стих писал под звон гитары,
Под пенье хора и под пляс.
Песни цыган в душе пожары
Моей зажгли в который раз.
23.07.2017

I wrote a poem after guitar's
sound.
After chorus' singing and
dancing
Gypsies songs sparked a fire
How many times in my soul.

* Born in Kazakhstan in 1978,
lives near Kirovograd, Ukraine

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