

Public Foundation for European Comparative Minority Research

A Roma's Life in Hungary

Report 2002:
A Year of Changes, Promises
and Expectations

Edited by Ernő Kállai and Erika Törzsök



Budapest

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© Translated by Tim Wilkinson

Published by the Public Foundation for European Comparative Minority Research
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© Photographs by Judit M. Horváth
© Cover design: AVARRO Graphics

Layout by MATT DTP Bt.
1119 Budapest, Etele út 32/c. E-mail: mattbt@mail.datanet.hu

Printed by Reprotá Kft.
1037 Budapest, Zay u. 1-3. E-mail: reprotá@mail.datanet.hu

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Calvary of the Roma at Bedőtanya – *István Hell*

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A history of Radio ‘C’ – *Márta Józsa*

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Abbreviations

ÁNTSZ	National Public Health and Medical Officer’s Service (<i>Állami Népegészségügyi és Tisztiorvosi Szolgálat</i>)
CSO	Central Statistical Office (<i>Központi Statisztikai Hivatal</i>)
Fidesz	Alliance of Young Democrats (<i>Fiatalkorú Demokraták Szövetsége</i>)
HUF	Hungarian forint(s) (<i>HUF 100 ≈ € 0.40 ≈ £0.25</i>)
ICGA	Interministerial Committee for Gypsy Affairs (<i>Cigányügyi Tárcaközi Bizottság</i>)
MDF	Hungarian Democratic Forum (<i>Magyar Demokrata Fórum</i>)
MIÉP	Hungarian Truth and Life Party (<i>Magyar Igazság és Élet Pártja</i>)
MSZP	Hungarian Socialist Party (<i>Magyar Szocialista Párt</i>)
NGMSG	National Gypsy Minority Self-Government (<i>Országos Cigány Önkormányzat</i>)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SZDSZ	Alliance of Free Democrats (<i>Szabad Demokraták Szövetsége</i>)

FOREWORD

The year 2002 was one of expectations and changes for the Roma community of Hungary as it was for the country as a whole.

Even before opening this booklet, readers will have some notion of what has become of the promises and changes that ensued from those expectations. *A Roma's Life in Hungary: Report 2002* seeks to survey the situation in which Roma society found itself in the year of the fourth set of free parliamentary elections to have been held since Hungary's 1989-90 change of régime.

It seems that an increasingly blatant stratification of Roma society and the keen involvement of many of its members in the political clashes of the recent past came as something of a surprise for the majority society in Hungary, though they are entirely natural outcomes of processes and events which have been taking place within society at large. Hand in hand with positive aspects of change have proceeded growing inequalities of wealth, a hardening of prejudices, discrimination and segregation, and mounting tension between majority and Roma societies.

Gypsies are ethnically distinctive. Members of the majority society all too often refer to them by pejorative terms, such as 'Brazilians', 'Indians', or 'Blacks'. Often external appearances alone make a Gypsy descent incontestable; as a result, anyone of a somewhat darker than usual skin colour tends to be regarded by those around as a Gypsy, we read in Chapter 2 of this booklet. That automatic equation is often a burden, and as a writer on a similar form of discrimination has pointed out: "the greater that burden, the more it is a reality, and though no one has a right to judge anyone, if one wishes to be freed of that burden, it does no harm to know... that there is no escaping reality, and should anyone try to escape it, that escape in itself becomes a part of reality – and the most destructive part at that" (Márton László, *The Elect and the Miscegenators*, 1989).

This recognition was presumably the main spur for the politically active élite of Hungary's Roma community who belong to three of their national bodies (the Forum of Gypsy Organisations of Hungary, the National Association of Gypsy Organisations, and the Roma Parliament), in full awareness of the influence they carry within their own community, to ally with the left-wing forces of mainstream society in advance of the 2002 elections. Hungarian Gypsies have also come to recognise that for many of them, to this day, not only is assimilation unworkable, but even integration is tough to achieve, for one can only speak about true integration if participation in public life is not restricted to involvement solely in ethnic minority issues. Since none of Hungary's minorities today – including the Roma minority – has a final say even in matters that directly affect them, it should be hardly surprising when they opt for the route of political activism.

Though an ethnic minority identity is generally perceived as a positive value, not just within the community in question but by the outside world too, in the case of the Gypsies

the point of departure is, perforce, a 'negative identity'. Consequently, despite the fact that the majority society, as noted above, throws up barriers to assimilation as an attainable goal, that often still seems an easier option for individuals who seek to avoid having to proclaim an identity in terms of their 'Gypsy status'. Nevertheless, the majority of Gypsies nowadays have no other choice than to profess that identity; at the same time, however, they have no wish to remain the major collective losers of the change in régime.

In the political arena, the importance of a pool of several hundred thousand potential voters was recognised even by Fidesz, the dominant party of the governing centre-right coalition since 1998. Given that it had been pursuing policies that were abrasively hostile to the poorer segments of society – and some 70-80% of Gypsies are poor by any measure – the announcement by Fidesz that it had entered an electoral pact with Lungo Drom, the largest political grouping in the Gypsy community, came as a considerable surprise to the general public.

Equally, however, Hungary's Roma community is well aware that its plight is the focus of much international attention. Thus, during April 2002, as noted in the 'Chronology of events' which opens this booklet, an official report by the United Nations Organization's Human Rights Commission was highly critical of the Hungarian state on several issues, not least of which was the treatment of its Roma minority. The body considered that Hungary had made substantial progress in consolidating democratic institutions, and it welcomed the development of the system of minority self-government, but it deplored the fact that no comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation had yet been put in place, and the government was urged to remedy that omission. Furthermore, despite some government measures, the situation of the Roma minority could be said to be unfavourable in every area governed by the Charter of the United Nations, and thus, in its own words, "a cause for concern".

The present *Report* aims to provide a diagnosis of these different areas. It documents the status of the Roma community with regard to the job market and distribution of incomes, changing settlement patterns and housing conditions, the disadvantaging brought by school segregation, and the way in which 'Roma affairs' are accounted for at the budget level, as well as examining more particular issues surrounding the establishment and running of the Gandhi High School at Pécs, the history of the Roma-run Radio 'C' radio station, the vicissitudes faced by a group of Roma families made homeless by the actions of a municipal authority in the south of Hungary, and the individual experiences of economic emigration within a rural community.

The reviews of these processes and events clearly show that the cause for the accelerating – and by now near-insurmountable – inequalities that attend residential segregation or ghettoisation is to be sought not just in the jarring repercussions of the change in régime but also in bad government decisions taken three decades ago, during the 1970s, in implementing misguided regional development policies. Intolerance on the part of the majority society, which party politics have only aggravated, along with a growing sense of self-

awareness on the part of an ever larger segment within Roma society (with over 5,000 candidates, for instance, being returned as representatives on some 1,000 Roma minority self-government bodies in the October 2002 nationwide local elections), has created a new situation.

It is the collective responsibility of all Hungarians to strive, at the very least, not to exacerbate tensions and, better still, to embrace consensus-building reflexes with a view to nurturing a social culture which truly functions on the principles of freedom and solidarity.

Budapest, August 2003

Erika Törzsök

I. A CHRONOLOGICAL DIGEST OF EVENTS AFFECTING THE ROMA OF HUNGARY IN 2002¹

January

Fourteen Roma organisations signed themselves up to an agreement on cooperation in the 2002 general elections that was hammered out between the government coalition parties, Fidesz and the MDF, and the Lungo Drom National Gypsy Promotional and Civic Alliance. Amongst these are the Phralipe National Independent Organisation, independent organisations for the promotion of Gypsy interests in the city of Miskolc and in Somogy, Szabolcs and Győr-Moson-Sopron counties, and the Gypsy Promotional Alliance.

In the view of Flórián Farkas, the chairman of Lungo Drom, the agreement with Fidesz and the MDF will enable more Roman politicians to enter parliament, since it allows Lungo Drom to nominate a candidate for one of the top 15 slots in the parties' joint national list, and one each in slots 16-25 and 26-35, as well as in each of seven regional lists.

The MSZP was not planning to reach a similar agreement with any Roma organisation, but it would be fielding several candidates of Gypsy origin, such as Aladár Horváth, previously a representative for the SZDSZ, on its national list. Amongst the possible candidates were Tibor Oláh, chairman of the MSZP's Gypsy section; Éva Orsós, former head of the Office for National and Ethnic Minorities; and László Teleki, deputy chairman of the National Gypsy Minority Self-Government (NGMSG). As a result, Teleki might be the sole Roma politician amongst the members of the NGMSG who would not be included on the Fidesz national list but on that of the MSZP.

The life and situation of the Gypsies of Hétes, a village just outside the S.W. Hungarian town of Kaposvár, have been chosen as the subject of a doctoral thesis by Paris-based sociologist Véronique Klauber. One of the aims of the study will be to demonstrate convincingly that this community is often stigmatized groundlessly.

For complicity in a recent case of fraud and forgery of official documents that caused substantial losses, the Veszprém County Court sentenced János Kozák, chairman of the local Roma minority self-government in the western Hungarian town of Pápa and a representative in the National Gypsy Minority Self-Government, to 16 months' imprisonment and also banned him from holding public office for two years. The court upheld the charge

¹ Items selected from a search of the on-line database maintained by the *Népszabadság* daily newspaper

that a sum of HUF 2.2 million nominally granted in social support to a relative had been unlawfully utilised by János Kozák for purposes of mending the roofing of his house in Pápa. Kozák, who has no prior criminal record, had pleaded innocent to the charge and has lodged an appeal against the sentence.

Almost one year ago Prime Minister Viktor Orbán announced that a HUF 300 million house-building programme was to be launched under the supervision of the National Gypsy Minority Self-Government (NGSMG), yet not one house had been completed to date, claimed the Roma Press Centre. László Teleki, deputy chairman of NGMSG, stated that the money had not yet been transferred to that body's account. On the basis of an agreement reached between the Ministry for the Economy and NGMSG in May 2001, HUF 20 million had been earmarked for maintenance work on buildings, HUF 80 million for setting up a production line for the manufacture of unburned mud-bricks, HUF 70 million to fund organisational work involved in the building programme, whilst the remaining Ft 130 million was to have provided social support for two hundred families with large numbers of children to put down the deposit required for construction. According to the Roma Press Centre's news report, the Szociális Építő Kht (Social Construction Non-profit Organisation) set up to implement the programme had been dissolved due to insolvency, and thus in late 2001 the economics ministry and NGMSG had been obliged to modify their agreement.

Csaba Hende, under-secretary of state for the Ministry of Justice, provided a detailed review of measures that had been taken on behalf of the Roma community. He emphasized that the government was willing to listen to criticisms from expert opinion, but not to views which flatly denied that any results had been achieved. Compared with the previous legislative session, the sum of money budgeted for Gypsy affairs had been increased several times over. Thanks to educational scholarships, a real "good-to-study fever" was now perceptible amongst Roma students. These monthly bursaries of several thousand forints represented a significant source of income for many Roma families, with Gypsy students often filling a role as breadwinners for their family. Hende had even heard of instances where Roma parents would berate or punish children who were doing badly at school, as under-performers would lose scholarship money.

Professor Dominique Rosenberg, a French expert in the Council of Europe, commented in connection with the group of Roma from Zámoly who have applied to Strasbourg for refugee status: "a very roundabout legal has been resorted to in order to send out a political warning message to all countries seeking accession to the European Union." Professor Rosenberg, who previously has herself strenuously criticized the Hungarian government for the policies it has pursued towards Gypsies, asserted that such criticisms were often exaggerated and unfounded.

Members of the state legal-aid network set up for Gypsies have been consulted by close to two hundred Roma complainants over the past three months. According to an analysis commissioned by the Ministry of Justice, the largest number of complaints were connected with residence permits, but many applications had also been received over discrimination in treatment under the criminal law, social provision and employment. Lawyers employed by the network had undertaken to provide legal representation for Roma complainants in twenty-two cases to date.

February

Trailing somewhat behind the police and waitresses, Hungary's Roma community organised its first national beauty contest this weekend in Budapest. A jury panel of 14, which included the Indian ambassadress, the deputy managing director of Hungarian State Railways, a Pest County police officer, and restaurant-owner Dezső Csámpa, made their choice from a group of 26 contestants.

Viktor Orbán referred to 2001 as a breakthrough year in his state-of-the-nation address, held at the Vigadó Concert Hall in Budapest. He placed particular stress on the fact that there had been a thirteen-fold increase in the number of Gypsy students receiving scholarships during 2001 for, as he noted, the path towards advancement for the Roma population lay through work and education.

The MSZP promised that, in the event that it should win the general elections, it would provide the Roma populace with new jobs and greater support than hitherto on residence permits, as well as, amongst other things, making racial hatred a criminal offence. Péter Medgyessy, who will be running for the post of prime minister, announced that six Roma politicians would be placed on the party's national list. If the MSZP were to gain power, its intention was to engage more Roma in the government's work and to improve the conditions under which local minority self-governments operate. The MSZP would seek to criminalize incitement to hatred against minority communities and put in place legislation that guarantees equality of treatment for every Hungarian citizen and prohibits unfair discrimination.

The leaders of several local Roma minority self-governments in Somogy County would be organising a nation-wide rally in March, said Mrs Imre Ignácz, leader of the minority self-government for Nagyatád and district, which is one of the parts of the country most densely populated by people of Roma descent. She declared that all requests addressed to Flórián Farkas, chairman of the National Gypsy Minority Self-Government (NGMSG) had so far been fruitless: no responses had been forthcoming. They were therefore looking for other ways in which their interests might be furthered. According to Mrs

Imre Ignácz, Roma minority local government councils had been provided with neither financial or operational terms on which to function. She said it was intolerable that leaders of local Roma minority self-governments had been carrying out their duties for years without remuneration. She regarded it as damaging that it had proved impossible to change the practice whereby smaller local government councils received state support on an equal basis, rather than in proportion to the size of their populace. In 2001, Nagyatád and district had attempted in vain to secure support for cultural programmes, for preservation of traditions or job creation; each of nearly twenty requests had been turned down.

Tensions have risen in the village of Halmajugrán, near the town of Gyöngyös in the north-eastern county of Heves, following a ruling by the Court of Labour which reinstated the previously dismissed director of the local general (elementary) school in her post. The headmistress had been dismissed by the parish council in 2001 because the local Roma minority self-government had accused her of racism. Since then the school has been run by a substitute director. Eighty per cent of pupils at the school, which serves a settlement of 1,200, are of Roma descent. Last year's dismissal of the headmistress had divided the locals: some parents took her side but the majority approved of the local authority's decision. After the Court of Labour's ruling, many are now saying that if the headmistress should return to her post, they will organise a protest and refuse to allow their children to attend school.

A boarding school to nurture Roma talent, supported by the European Union's PHARE restructuring programme, is due to open this September in the town of Ózd. Run by the county self-government of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén, in the north-east of the country, the institution is intended to lay the foundations for higher education for secondary-school students of Gypsy origin. Preliminary estimates suggest that 70-75 students will apply for places at the school, which is to be created within the currently inappropriately utilized Endre Ady College. The main aim of the teaching staff, who will supply both top-up and special training needs, is to prepare students for further education at the tertiary level.

Fidesz and Lungo Drom were promising opportunities for work and further education – that was the message being relayed after a meeting between Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and the chairmen of the main government party and the leading Roma political organisation. Following the discussion, Zoltán Pokorni declared that Fidesz would undertake, as part of its electoral platform, that in the next parliamentary session all young Gypsies who wish to study will have a chance to enter higher education; no obstacles or limits would be set on this by the number of available scholarships. It was also necessary to elaborate a system for aiding, tutoring and nurturing the talents of Roma children who were in the upper years at general school. A basis for this had already been created by the János Arany talent-promoting programme. The other major goal, Pokorni considered, would be to offer a job for every person who seeks work. The state needed to create workplaces in the more

poorly developed regions through deliberate targeting of industrial investment. In tandem with the Ministry of Family Affairs, they would set up a Bureau for Roma Integration, which would also have a point of reporting within the Prime Ministerial Office. The Bureau's work would be subject to semi-annual review during the term of government by the head of government and the chairman of Lungo Drom.

March

Flórián Farkas proposed that job creation be supplemented by development of local districts and the elimination of slum areas and hovels. According to the chairman of the NGMSG, the Roma population needed long-term employment, not just seasonal jobs on public projects. Roma unemployed would need to be helped back to the jobs market by training and retraining courses.

The chairman of the Roma Parliament of Hungary called on the country's Roma population to support the MSZP, rather than Fidesz and the alliance that it was fostering with the Hungarian Truth and Life Party (MIÉP), as in his opinion the Socialists were prepared to adjust their policies to actual Roma needs. That was disputed by Béla Osztokján, vice-chairman of the NGMSG, in whose view the leaders of the government parties had made it quite clear that they had no wish to cooperate with István Csurka's MIÉP.

There is a risk that the Roma electorate, through the votes given to Lungo Drom, might land themselves with a government that supported MIÉP – that was the message of an open letter signed by more than 40 leading Gypsy intellectuals. The letter calls on Roma to “vote for the democratic party that you find most congenial. No one, however, should vote for the right-extremist MIÉP or for those parties and organisations which do not categorically rule out the chance of political cooperation with MIÉP. We call upon the leaders of Lungo Drom to show their true colours by declaring that they will not assist an anti-Gypsy party into power through the votes that are cast for them.”

The Hungarian government has, by and large, respected the civil rights of its citizens, but there are serious problems in a number of areas, concludes the US State Department in the section on Hungary in this year's report on the situation of civil rights around the world. Anti-Semitic and racial discrimination were still persisting in Hungary. During the past year numerous racially motivated attacks had been reported, especially those directed against the Roma populace. Social discrimination against the Roma remained a grave problem.

The Ministry of Health has commenced a representative national survey in order to reveal, amongst other things, the health status of the Gypsy populace and their relations to the institutions that provide health services. The research would cover sixty settlements

and 1,200 families; evaluation of the primary findings was still in progress. ÁNTSZ general census data indicate that in Hungary there are close to five hundred (483 to be exact) shanty settlements which present a hazard to the populace from a public health standpoint. Estimates suggest the number of Roma living in such shanty settlements or shanty-like housing conditions may be as high as one hundred thousand. Citing earlier research, the Ministry of Health stated that the health status of the Roma populace, for a complex of cultural, social and lifestyle reasons, is on average worse than that of the non-Gypsy populace.

The general life expectancy for Gypsies is very much worse, being on average 10-15 years shorter. In its press briefing material the Ministry refers to the Roma population as “an ethnic group under threat from infectious diseases and epidemics”. A majority of this populace eat unhealthily, consuming cheap foods rich in fats and carbohydrates, and are undernourished or starving. Emphysema and chronic bronchitis are the most prevalent diseases, whilst addictions are very common. The situation is exacerbated by the invidious discrimination that is manifested against Gypsies in the provision of health services.

A course in social and training administration for unemployed Roma, sponsored by the Galilei Fund, has taken place at the Pécs Regional Centre for Manpower Development and Training. Financial assistance for running this has come from the European Union’s PHARE programme, job centres, the Soros Foundation, the United Kingdom’s Know-how Fund, the National Gypsy Minority Self-Government, the Gandhi Public Foundation, and the Office for National and Ethnic Minorities. Of the fifteen participants in the experimental programme, ten obtained the secondary-school diploma (*érettségi*), four gained vocational certificates, whilst one completed all ten classes. All participants have been promised help by the job centres in finding employment, but some will be applying to read Roma Studies at the University of Pécs.

April

The Hungarian government will need to take more effective measures to promote a culture of comprehensive human rights and to crack down on violence against women, concluded the United Nations Organisation’s Human Rights Commission. This body took Hungary to task on several points. On the basis of testimony supplied by the Hungarian Helsinki Committee, it considers that Hungary has made significant progress in the domain of strengthening democratic institutions, and it welcomes the build-up of the system of local minority self-governments. On the other hand, it deplores the absence of comprehensive legislation to tackle discrimination and requests the government to take steps to set this in place. The situation of the country’s Roma minority was a cause for concern as, despite governmental measures, this situation could be said to be disadvantageous in

all areas subject to the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights. Discrimination against the Roma population in employment, residence rights, education, social provision, and participation in public life was especially worrying. The commission drew attention, amongst other things, to the maltreatment of Roma individuals whilst under police custody and the existence of segregated Gypsy schools. Beyond the further legislative steps couched in the recommendations it had formulated for the Hungarian government, training of those in positions of authority, especially the police, as well as a campaign designed to alter public attitudes towards the Roma would also be desirable.

In the first round of the general elections, an overwhelming majority of the Roma populace gave their support to the MSZP on the national list; within individual constituencies, however, votes were more divided between candidates for the government coalition and opposition parties, pronounced László Teleki, deputy chairman of the National Gypsy Minority Self-Government and a parliamentary candidate for the Socialists, with reference to the feedback he had received from twelve counties and his own observations. The Roma politician thought that many more Gypsies in the registered electorate had voted – an estimated 200,000 – than had been predicted before the elections. He suggested that the overriding intention of the Roma electorate had been to prevent the possibility of the right-extremist MIÉP from entering into government. Teleki hoped that this electorate would turn out in similar numbers for the second round of voting.

Four Roma politicians have won seats in the new National Assembly. No Roma candidate had previously entered the legislature under the Fidesz flag, but now three have done so in a single swoop. The ranks of MSZP members now include a single Gypsy representative. Previously, neither Fidesz nor the MDF have made efforts to ensure that voices speaking for the Roma populace would be able to take part in the work of parliament, but in December 2001 the two government parties struck an agreement with Lungo Drom, the country's largest Gypsy political organisation, under which they undertook to include ten Roma candidates on the national and regional lists. As a result, three of those candidates have gained parliamentary seats: Flórián Farkas, leader of Lungo Drom and chairman of the National Gypsy Minority Self-Government (NGMSG); József Varga, leader of the Public Foundation for the Gypsies of Hungary; and Mihály Lukács, chairman of Lungo Drom's steering committee. Six Roma candidates were included on the national list for the MSZP, but only László Teleki, deputy chairman of the NGMSG and leader of the National Association of Gypsy Organisations, stood a realistic chance of election. The forecast odds were borne out: after the second round of voting, it became clear that László Teleki would be the sole Gypsy politician amongst those gaining seats for the Socialist party. The ensuing parliamentary term is expected to bring significant changes in policy towards the Hungary's Gypsies, as this is the first time four Roma representatives have been present simultaneously in the legislature.

Most Gypsy students in further education are trained as teachers, with teacher training colleges in first place. Humanities and nursery- and elementary-teacher training faculties at university level, are in joint second place, with almost identical numbers of students. Contrary to popular belief, a relatively high proportion of Roma students are taking technical subjects; this tends to be the choice for males, including one quarter of those in day-release schemes. Technical subjects are followed by training in the arts, which in virtually every case means music. Even in this type of training the representation of girls is very low indeed. Very few young Roma enter college tuition for the army or the police.

May

Three years ago the Soros Foundation launched a Roma health initiative. Experiences gathered under this have been assessed at several conferences and most recently gathered together in a new published volume. The health status of young Roma women is the subject of a paper by Csilla Csoboth, György Gyukits, György Purebl and Andor Ürmös. Roma women of 20-24 years are more disadvantaged in terms of educational qualifications and employment than non-Roma women of the same age group; due to widespread poverty, a substantial proportion are unable to purchase even basic consumer articles. When they investigated utilisation of health-care resources, however, the researchers found there was no major disparity between the two groups: socially disadvantaged young Roma women are not being deprived of health-care provision. It is possible, their study suggests, that this is attributable to the system of what is termed 'head-count' financing for general practitioners, which gives them an incentive to attract as many national health insurance cards as possible to their own surgery panel.

One interesting finding of this investigation is that Roma women make greater use of hospital care but less use of specialist out-patient clinics. The explanation for this may be that Roma women come to the attention of medical specialists at a more advanced stage of disease, by which time they require hospital admission. Young Roma women are much more likely to suffer from depression than their non-Roma peers; almost one in ten is severely depressed, whilst barely more than 2% of non-Roma women are similarly affected. Depression, which is related primarily to a person's social situation and his or her experience of that situation, may play a direct role in the aetiology of a great diversity of serious somatic illnesses and is also linked with the emergence of self-destructive patterns of behaviour. Around 26% of both Roma and non-Roma women alike had entertained suicidal thoughts, but in response to the question as to whether an actual suicide attempt had been made, 12% of the Gypsy, as opposed to 'just' 6% of non-Gypsy, young women answered positively. A significant difference was also revealed in the uptake of invitations to undergo various screening tests for the prevention and early detection of disease, with Roma women showing up less favourably on every single test. The biggest cause for con-

cern is the failure to attend chest X-ray screenings, as it is well known, the researchers point out, that tuberculosis represents a threat primarily for those living in socially deprived conditions.

In an open letter, Miklós Pálfi, chairman of the Szolnok district gypsy minority self-government and deputy-chairman of the National Gypsy Minority Self-Government (NGMSG), has called on all NGMSG leaders who had won parliamentary seats via party national lists to resign from the body. He has reminded them that a ruling by the NGMSG General Secretariat in the first quarter of 1998 had forbidden its members from campaigning for National Assembly seats on any party platform. He notes that changes in personnel and structure were inevitable as a result of this and also in recognition of the fact that NGMSG, being a public body, must not be subject to party-political interests. Miklós Pálfi is of the opinion that it a necessary first step that all officials who had obtained seats in the National Assembly under various party colours see it as their moral and political duty to resign their positions in NGMSG.

It is expected that László Teleki will become Under-Secretary of State for Gypsy Affairs in the new Office of the Prime Minister. Teleki, deputy chairman of the NGMSG and leader of the National Association of Gypsy Organisations, is the only Roma politician to have obtained a parliamentary seat as a Socialist candidate in the general election. The suggestion that Péter Medgyessy, the incoming prime minister, intends to head a cabinet subcommittee dealing with Roma affairs has been confirmed from several sources. Though the decision has not yet been officially taken, the indications are that Teleki would act as secretary to that subcommittee.

June

Flórián Farkas will continue as chairman of the National Gypsy Minority Self-Government (NGMSG). At Friday's meeting of the body at Nyíregyháza, a majority of NGMSG members present voted against a motion that had raised personal objections to him. Farkas' opponents considered that the chairman's resignation was necessary in the light of a ruling by the NGMSG General Secretariat four years ago under which members were not permitted to campaign for any party in parliamentary elections. That currently applies to three of NGMSG members: the chairman, Mr Farkas, and also deputy chairman Mihály Lukács, who both gained National Assembly seats as Fidesz candidates, and László Teleki, prospective under-secretary of state for Gypsy affairs, who has been elected as a Socialist. According to a press release from the Roma Press Centre, Teleki, who is currently a NGMSG vice-chairman, takes the view that the NGMSG does not split between left- and right-wing party affiliations but between a group that supports democratic processes and one that is opposed to this.

The new prime minister is counting on active participation from minority groups both in the drafting of legislation and in deliberations of the National Council that will carry out the functions of a second chamber in Parliament. Péter Medgyessy promised, amongst other things, that the country's minorities would be gaining new institutions.

“The number of local minority self-governments may be as much as doubled after the local elections this autumn,” reckons Antal Heizer, who is expected to be chairman-designate of the Office for National and Ethnic Minorities. Whilst welcoming that growth, steps must be taken to prevent abuses. In his opinion, legislation is needed to minimize the chances of candidates not belonging to a minority entering the elections for seats on minority self-governments.

László Kállai, chairman of the Jászladány Gypsy minority self-government, has turned to the Parliamentary Commissioner (Ombudsman) for Minority Rights and the Office for County Public Administration in protest at the manner in which he alleges the Jászladány self-government has unilaterally altered the syllabus at local general schools. Mr Kállai stated that through its recent decision the local authority had removed a remedial programme for Gypsy children from the curriculum and therefore would no longer receive extra state funding for Roma education. He put the resulting shortfall in income for the settlement's school at over HUF 1 million.

“Each government has brought worthwhile measures; what has been missing is a sense of method,” László Teleki, Socialist parliamentary representative and Secretary of State for Gypsy Affairs in the Office of the Prime Minister, characterised Roma policies over the past twelve years. In his view, the new government, before committing itself to any major initiatives of its own, needs to gain an accurate picture of the present situation of Hungary's Roma population. He confirmed that he was voluntarily giving up his former post as vice-chairman of the National Gypsy Minority Self-Government as being incompatible with post of under-secretary of state.

July

The Supreme Court imposed a public-interest fine of HUF 100,000 on the owner of a bar in Patvarc, just outside the N. Hungarian town of Balassagyarmat, for refusing to serve Roma inhabitants of the village. The head of the Office for the Protection of the Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities, which had initiated the legal action, said that this ruling set a ground-breaking precedent. The proprietress of the public house in Patvarc had become the first person in Hungary to be successfully prosecuted for discriminating against the local Roma community. According to Roma villagers the only result of the legal action, which has been on-going for three years, has been that they

are now able to enter the pub, but they are left feeling that they are served only grudgingly.

Péter Medgyessy, the head of government, will take the chair of a Roma Coordinatory Council that is to be formed in early September. This council will be tasked with preparing and implementing the government's strategy for Gypsy affairs, and with coordinating the activities of other ministries in this area. The government has not yet decided on the composition of the 21-person body, but it may be assumed that seats will be taken not just by Gypsy experts; the Secretary of State for Gypsy Affairs is counting on the assistance of Anna Csongor, director of the Autonomía Foundation, for instance. Aladár Horváth, head of the Roma Civil Rights Foundation and the prime minister's adviser on Gypsy affairs, would also participate in the deliberations. It is also likely that Flórián Farkas, chairman of the National Gypsy Minority Self-Government (NGMSG), leader of Lungo Drom, and a Fidesz parliamentary representative, will be amongst the Roma politicians taking a seat in the council. In a recent radio debate, Jenő Zsigó, leader of the Roma Parliament, was sharply critical, calling it a tragic mistake that the Socialist party had nominated the recently resigned vice-chairman of the NGMSG as a parliamentary representative and subsequently under-secretary of state. In Zsigó's opinion, Teleki – whom he characterised as Stone Age in his thinking and a '*kapo*' – had been a weight on the Roma population of Hungary for the past eight years. Despite those criticisms, the under-secretary of state said he would be glad to see the leader of the Roma Parliament too as a member of the new coordinatory council.

The government has boosted the funding set aside for financing the study scholarships awarded to young Roma students by the sum of HUF 400 million. That represents an increase of about 35 per cent compared with the sum that was budgeted for in 2001, and it is estimated that it will facilitate studies for approximately 17,000 young Gypsies. Over the past five years the number of such scholarships has risen fifteen-fold, and a further 50 per cent growth is expected during the coming academic year.

“During the last fifty days the Roma of Hungary have received political compensation for the past fifty years,” declared László Teleki, Secretary of State for Gypsy Affairs in the Office of the Prime Minister. It was currently planned that ministerial commissioners concerned with policy for the Gypsy community would be functioning within six ministries. Significantly more money than hitherto was being earmarked for scholarships for Roma students, and local minority self-governments could also count on greater financial support in the future.

This year, for the first time, a Roma tent would be set up for those attending the Sziget Festival at the beginning of August, with the aim being to introduce them to Gypsy

culture, announced Radio ‘C’, Hungary’s first Roma radio station and organiser of this initiative, at a press conference. Radio ‘C’ sees the Roma Tent programme as an invaluable opportunity to arouse interest in and, it is hoped, sympathy towards this culture, leading to its wider acceptance amongst the annually growing number of festival-goers. A wide spectrum of Gypsy musics will be featured in the tent’s musical offering, with audiences able to hear a range of European – French, Spanish, Italian, Austrian and Romanian – as well as Hungarian performers, with the latter including groups representing both the more traditional musics of the Hungarian and Vlach Gypsy communities as well as jazz and Roma rap. Discussions will be staged every afternoon, with panels that include political scientists, sociologists, psychologists, ethnographers and Roma politicians, to debate such issues as Roma radicalism and nationalism, the intricacies of Roma politics, the role of Roma intellectuals, and cultural conflicts between the Roma and the majority society.

August

The Ministry of Employment Policy and Labour has established a Directorate General for Equal Opportunities. At a press conference on Wednesday, the minister, Péter Kiss, introduced Katalin Lévai, who has been appointed head of the new institution. The Directorate General’s three secretariats will concern themselves with occupational rehabilitation, equal opportunities for both genders, and programmes for the Roma workforce.

“No political power can build its policy on hatred, because anyone who foments hatred is bound to fail,” proclaimed Prime Minister Péter Medgyessy yesterday evening at a ceremony in Nagykanizsa to lay a wreath in memory of the Roma Holocaust. In his address before the sole memorial to the Roma Holocaust to have been erected in Hungary, the head of government declared that Hungarian society has a historical debt to pay to its Roma populace. In Medgyessy’s view, the Roma of Hungary were not only victims of the genocide carried out under the Nazi terror of the Second World War but also suffered grave wrongs as a result of the exclusionary actions of post-1945 left-wing authoritarian régimes, which refused to recognize Gypsies officially as an ethnic minority in their own right. The prime minister stated that Gypsies had been the biggest losers in society since the change of régime in 1989-90, which was why it was the duty of his new cabinet to improve the situation of the Roma populace with the greatest possible urgency. He noted that amongst the first steps already taken towards this goal were the creation of a under-secretary of state with specific responsibility for Roma affairs, the appointment of commissioners for Roma affairs within six further ministries, and the 40 per cent additional budget funding that had been set aside for Gypsy education in the current year. The prime also announced that it was possible that the first Hungarian ambassador of Roma descent might be appointed in the near future.

Two ceremonies to mark the beginning of the new school year are due to take place the coming weekend at the Hősök tér general school in Jászladány – one on Saturday, organised by the local authority, and the other on Sunday, held by the newly established Mihály Antal Foundation school. The private school has not yet acquired the ministerial permit required to license its operation. The local Gypsy minority self-government will be mounting a silent demonstration during both opening ceremonies in protest against what it regards as the unlawfully created foundation school, which in its view will serve to segregate pupils of Gypsy background. “The private school requires the payment of tuition fees, and impoverished Roma families will be unable to afford these,” maintained László Kállai, chairman of the local Gypsy self-government. “Of the 650 pupils at the Jászladány local authority general school, a total of 205 children had been withdrawn by the end of August, so it can be anticipated that this will be the initial enrolment with which the foundation establishment starts,” commented Mrs Ferenc Vincze, director of the local authority school. She added that the new school building, which was only completed six years ago, had been divided in two, with the foundation school’s pupils due to occupy one wing and those attending the local authority school occupying the other wing.

A proposal to hold an election for a Roma minority self-government in the Twelfth District of Budapest was initiated by Dénes Kosztolányi, a Fidesz parliamentary representative and leader of the Fidesz faction in the local authority, along with several other district politicians affiliated to other parties. The application, however, was rejected by the local election committee. At a meeting on Tuesday, the committee decided unanimously that it would not schedule such an election. In giving their reasons for the decision, it had come to light that of the six proponents, Mr Kosztolányi had stated that he personally had no affiliations to the Roma minority, whilst none of the other five had declared any such affiliation. According to a press statement released by Mr Kosztolányi, the intention had been to express solidarity with the Roma community; they believed that this step would be a demonstrative way of standing up for Gypsies.

An election alliance was entered into on Thursday by the Forum of Gypsy Organisations of Hungary, the Roma Parliament, the Democratic Roma Organisation, the National Association of Gypsy Organisations, the Roma Civil Rights Foundation, the National Alliance of Roma Graduates, the Integrationist Roman Alliance, the Association of Roma Women in Public Life, and the New Roma Round-Table Alliance. According to the terms of their collaborative agreement, the primary goals of the coalition are “overthrowing the position held by Lungo Drom under the leadership of Flórián Farkas, along with reform and democratic restructuring of the National Gypsy Minority Self-Government.”

September

Referring to a failure to meet the conditions prescribed by regulations, the Ministry of Education refused to issue an identification number to the controversial Jászladány foundation school. Without an ID number the school is unable to commence operation. The Parliamentary Commissioner (Ombudsman) for Minority Rights earlier condemned the creation of the school as a discriminatory measure aimed against the local Gypsy populace.

Tempers are still running high over the Jászladány foundation school. The school board convoked an extraordinary meeting at which László Kállai, chairman of the local Gypsy minority self-government, made an appearance in addition to the parents of children who have been attending the private school. A number of those present, blaming Mr Kállai for the school's closure, demanded that he leave the building. As has become public knowledge, the foundation school had its license to operate withdrawn because the settlement's representative body did not seek agreement from the local Gypsy self-government at the time it rented out part of the premises of the local authority general school to the foundation school. Kállai reckoned that something approaching a lynch mentality had built up in the community during recent days through the closure of the private school.

Parents who had enrolled their children for the current year at the Jászladány foundation school held a demonstration in the village to protest against the suspension of the school's licence to operate. One of the organisers, local resident Zsolt Bagi, made known the contents of a letter that the affected parents had written to Prime Minister Péter Medgyessy. In the letter they had expressed their opinion that suspending the school's licence to operate represented a breakdown of legality, as the law guarantees parents the right to secure the best possible schooling for their children. The letter referred to the fact that on 22nd August, when it had 205 enrolled pupils, the school still had a licence to operate, yet – in its own words – this had been rescinded by a sudden higher-level decision based on calumnies. “No one in the village has the right to determine whether anyone is of Magyar or Roma descent, if the person in question does not wish to disclose that voluntarily,” Mr Bagi quoted from the letter. “Thus, neither school can be said to be infringing on the rights of the local minority, since no register of that sort exists in the village.” Ibolya Tóth, director of the foundation school, commented that no one had been questioned about their ethnic background during enrolment, and they had accepted everyone who was prepared to meet the conditions laid down by the institution, including the payment of a monthly tuition fee of HUF 3,000 per child. She expressed the hope that the brand of operating unlawfully would soon be ‘erased’, and school would be able to operate again, in accordance with the wishes of the great majority of the village residents.

Parents who had enrolled their children at the Mihály Antal Foundation school blockaded the right-hand lane of the main road leading from Jászladány to Jászkisér with close to eighty private cars, lorries, tractors and motorbikes. This was the second demonstration that has been mounted this week by the parents, who are protesting against the withdrawal of the school's licence to operate at the end of August – on the grounds that the circumstances in which it was set up involved infringements of the law – by Szolnok County Administrative Office. In the view of the local Gypsy minority self-government, the private school is exclusive because poor – that is to say, predominantly Roma – families are unable to afford the requisite monthly tuition fee. The responsible ministry and the Parliamentary Commissioner for Minority Rights have taken a similar standpoint.

Around fifty Roma residents of Paks have been forced to sleep in tents for the past two weeks after the town council condemned their dwellings as unfit for habitation and demolished them. The seven families that have been left homeless are trying to purchase homes in surrounding villages, but the inhabitants of all the communities are protesting against any Roma families moving in. As a result, owners of the properties that have been selected are calling off their sale one after the other. It is feared that those now encamped on the outskirts of Paks will not gain access to housing with modern conveniences before the onset of winter.

One of the homeless Roma families in Paks has managed to purchase a house in a nearby village. The inhabitants of four villages want to hold a demonstration against the Paks self-government, alleging that the town is seeking a solution to the fate of its own socially problematical citizens by forcing them to move out of Paks.

Villages in the area around Paks are continuing to protest against the attempt by the town to 'resettle' the still homeless Roma families of the Bedótanya neighbourhood into vacant properties within their areas. One of the families has already purchased a house in Németskér, but it is doubtful whether it will be able to take up residence there because, according to mayor, a 'lynch mob' atmosphere has developed in the village since hearing the news.

Despite opposition, the family of Károly Kolompár has managed to buy a two-bedroom house for HUF 2.5 million in the village of Németskér. The purchase price was paid to the seller by the Paks mayoral office, but the family's move into the house has not yet taken place. Mrs József Mihályi, the mayor of Németskér, a village of 1,800 inhabitants, spoke about the reasons for that in the following terms. "Németskér's residents became angry when they learned that Paks was seeking to purchase houses here for the Roma families from Bedótanya. I therefore went round the village and held discussions with the owners of ten properties that were for sale. I informed them about the general mood and advised them against selling their properties right now. All of them accepted that advice. There was

just one house owner whom I did not manage to meet, the reason for that being that he had just received the money for his house from Paks. On Thursday we called an extraordinary session of the representative body and decided that we should persuade the seller to withdraw from the transaction. We were prepared to offer him the HUF 2.5 million purchase price, even though we considered the building was not worth HUF 1 million, and if he were to be sued for breaking the contract of sale, we would even cover him for any costs that arose from that. By that point several Németskér residents had indicated that they were willing to help the local authority on this. For all our efforts to convince the seller, however, he refused to cancel the sale. On hearing that, a growing number of the village residents marched off to the house that had been sold and voiced their determination that they were not going to allow the family from Bedőtanya to move here. In the end, several hundred people gathered to protest against the Bedőtanya family's arrival, and they were not put off even by the fact that, by then, the police and riot squad reinforcements were standing guard around the house." It emerged from what the mayor said that the Paks town clerk, the leader of the county administrative office, and Aladár Horváth, chairman of the Roma Civil Rights Foundation, had been present at the scene in front of the sold house, and they too judged that the Bedőtanya family could not be allowed to move in as that would be placing themselves in personal danger. The family, which was already *en route* by then, were notified to turn back. This they duly did, whereupon the police judged that a threat was no longer present and so withdrew the uniformed presence from Németskér.

After eight o'clock that evening, however, several hundred local residents forced their way onto the property and set about demolishing the house. The police, having been summoned by radio, hastened back to the scene, but by then the roof was showing several gaping patches, several square metres in size, where tiles had been ripped off, and the building's doors and windows had been smashed. The assault has rendered the property temporarily uninhabitable. Yesterday the police tried to record evidence of the destruction, though it became clear that there was little chance of establishing, from footprints that were found in the dust, who had taken part in the demolition of the house and thus who had committed a criminal act. Detectives are not expecting the local residents to offer them any assistance in their inquiries.

It appears that the plight of the homeless Roma families from Bedőtanya is being settled, with the families being given emergency accommodation in Paks as a temporary solution. The Paks local authority arrived at this agreement after signs that surrounding villages were resorting to increasingly forceful methods to protest against any attempts by the families to move there.

On Saturday morning, some five hundred people from communities around Paks turned up in the Danube-bank town to stage a protest against the attempts to purchase

properties in their villages to house the Roma families from the town's Bedótanya neighbourhood who have been left homeless. Under the weight of the protests, Paks is now seeking other housing solutions for the families. After previously camping in tents, the Bedótanya residents have been allowed to move into brick buildings in Paks. The Parliamentary Commissioner for Minority Rights has opened an investigation into the case.

An extraordinary meeting convoked by parents in the Jászladány community cultural centre spilled over into furious dispute. Tempers rose after Mrs Ferenc Vincze, director of the local self-government general school, announced that there was going to be no change in the division of classrooms within the school during the current school year. Thus children who had previously been enrolled in the private foundation school would continue to be taught separately from pupils of Roma background.

The Németskér self-government will buy the house that was wrecked last Thursday by village residents in protest at the purchase of the property by the Paks mayoral office to house one of the homeless Roma families from Bedótanya. The representative body of Németskér decided to buy the property and has placed the HUF 2.5 million purchase price in escrow with a solicitor. The Németskér representatives also passed a resolution that the house would be transferred to the village's Gypsy minority self-government, which intends to convert it into a community centre.

Nine Németskér residents who have no previous criminal record face the threat of possible prison sentences over their complicity in last Thursday's house-wrecking incident, claims Miklós Freppán, leader of Tolna County Administrative Office. He takes the view that the threat of prosecution could be minimized if the village were to reconsider and allow the Bedótanya Roma family, protest against whose arrival had sparked the damage to the property, to move in after all. The village's residents have rejected the proposal.

October

The wife of Jászladány's mayor and other non-Roma community leaders intend to put themselves forward as Gypsy minority candidates in the local elections. Should candidates widely known to favour the establishment of the contentious local private school succeed in gaining places on the local Gypsy minority self-government, they would be in a position to consent to the renting-out of part of the village self-government general school's premises. Their candidature is legal under the law as it currently stands.

Those putting themselves forward as candidates for the Roma minority in the local elections at Jászladány include Mrs István Dankó (Dr Gabriella Makai), solicitor and wife of the town's mayor; Mrs Gellért Nagy, deputy chair of the contentious foundation

school's board of trustees; János Balogh, clerk of building works in the mayoral office; and Árpád Tolvaj, electrician and member of the Independent Smallholders' Party. Local Roma residents regard their participation in elections for the Roma minority self-government as unethical and shameful. The move was condemned in a statement made to the Roma Press Centre by László Teleki, Secretary of State for Gypsy Affairs in the Office of the Prime Minister, Aladár Horváth, adviser to the prime minister, and Jenő Kaltenbach, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Minority Rights. In a statement published in this newspaper on Wednesday, Flórián Farkas, the chairman of Lungo Drom, commented it was sad that the mayor's wife should wish to put herself forward as a Roma candidate in the elections for seats on the local minority self-government. Mrs István Dankó, Mrs Gellért Nagy, János Balogh and Árpád Tolvaj were legally entitled to seek election for the posts of representatives of the Gypsy minority, and all of them were officially included on the ballot alongside the other 16 Roma candidates. All of the nearly 4,000 villagers who are on the electoral roll will be able to cast their votes for the members of the local minority self-government. Under the present law, any of the thirteen national and ethnic minorities that are recognised in Hungary may establish a local minority self-government in any of the country's settlements or in any district of the capital. Candidates for seats on a local minority self-government must collect nominations from at least five registered voters, and they must undertake to represent the minority in question, but there is no requirement for them to corroborate that they actually belong to that national or ethnic minority.

The Democratic Alliance of Gypsies of Hungary has rescinded its existing agreement with Lungo Dram, led by Flórián Farkas, with immediate effect. The agreement was reached three and a half years ago and would have lasted up till this year's local elections. According to the explanation given for the break, Lungo Drom "is actively engaged to the present day in selling out the Gypsy population to the narrow interests of political parties that espouse racist principles."

"We shall defeat Lungo Drom and the personality cult on which it is built, and we are going to bring a radical change to Roma politics," promised Aladár Horváth, spokesperson for the Left-Wing Roma Solidarity at a function marking the launch of the election campaign for the recently formed grouping. The alliance would like to create an open and transparent National Gypsy Minority Self-Government.

Over the weekend, elections for 1,870 local minority self-governments were held in a total of 1,308 settlements and metropolitan districts. Under the present law, any of Hungary's thirteen recognised national and ethnic minorities may establish a local minority self-government, with more than half of these bodies being formed by Gypsies. The Roma electorate has, in addition, returned around fifty representatives to seats on the main local

self-government. According to data collected by the Ministry of the Interior, there are almost 80 settlements in which a minority-group candidate was elected as mayor, with 35 coming from the German, 20 from the Croatian, 12 from the Slovak, four each from the Roma and Slovene, and one from the Romanian community.

Under Hungarian electoral law, anyone may offer themselves as a candidate for a minority group, provided they accept the task of representing the minority in question. This is how it was possible for Mrs István Dankó (Dr Gabriella Makai), solicitor and wife of Jászladány's mayor; Mrs Gellért Nagy, deputy chair of the foundation operating a highly controversial private school in the village, János Balogh, clerk of building works in the mayor's office, and Árpád Tolvaj, a local electrician – none of whom is of Roma descent – to run as candidates and win seats as representatives of Jászladány's Gypsy minority community. The only elected representative who is genuinely of Roma descent was Mrs Rita Banyá née Suki, whom many local Gypsies now regard as a traitor.

Jenő Kaltenbach, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Minority Rights, has lodged a report of suspected abuse of authority against the former mayor of Németskér in connection with the thwarted house purchase by the Roma family from the Bedőtanya neighbourhood of Paks, disclosed Dr Pál Magyar, the Tolna County public prosecutor.

There will be no re-run of local elections in Jászladány as the Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County Court has dismissed without right of appeal an electoral complaint that was lodged by László Kállai, former chairman of the Jászladány Gypsy minority self-government. The minority leader had complained that prior to the local elections a flier entitled 'Jászladány Samizdat' that was liable to be inflammatory and excite alarm had been distributed in the community and thereby influenced the outcome of the election. Kállai submitted that it had been largely due this flier that a majority of the village's inhabitants had returned representatives of non-Roma origin to seats in the local Gypsy minority self-government. The flier, which did not display the identities of its author, publisher or printer, called on the electorate, amongst other things, not to vote for "László Kállai and his group" and to oppose in every possible forum those who were obstructing the operation of the local foundation school.

"On Wednesday this week we shall see the formation of the Roma affairs council that is to be headed by Prime Minister Péter Medgyessy," László Teleki, Under-Secretary of State for Gypsy Affairs in the Office of the Prime Minister, announced in Budapest. Pursuant to the government's decision, Elemér Kiss, the minister heading the Office of the Prime Minister, is to chair the new Interministerial Committee for Gypsy Affairs, with Teleki as vice-chairman. The under-secretary of state had earlier proposed that six ministerial commissioners with responsibility for Roma affairs be appointed. The government supported the idea in principle, but in a recent resolution had not specified the ministries

where such posts were to be created (to date this has only happened within the Ministry of Education). In response to this newspaper's question, László Teleki stated that he remained confident that at least six such Roma commissioners would eventually be assisting ministries in their work.

November

A police intervention on All-Saints' Day at the Pál Bugát Hospital, Gyöngyös, degenerated into a bloody *mélée*. An estimated 40-50 relatives had turned up to visit an elderly Roma woman, only to be informed on the spot that the patient had unexpectedly died. On hearing the tragic news, several family members fainted, others wept and began to wail. Someone had then called for the police, soon after which six uniformed officers appeared at the hospital. Accounts from family members and the police as to what happened next differ markedly. According to Captain József Fridrik of the Gyöngyös police department, the Roma group attacked the police officers, who acted in accordance with regulations by "breaking the group's resistance with rubber truncheons." Five members of the family were arrested and they are to be summoned for forcibly defying lawful authority. During the altercation one officer suffered injuries from which it took more than eight days to recover, two suffered minor injuries. Members of the Gypsy family, on the other hand, allege that the police officers intervened brutally from the very outset. Amongst the officers who intervened was József B., whom the Roma – in sharp contrast to the police captain – regard as an outright racist. According to them, the police officers lashed out wildly at the mourners with their truncheons, and were rough in pushing women and children down the stairs from the third floor. One of the dead woman's sons was beaten up whilst handcuffed to a door in the hospital. His wife, who hastened to her husband's defence, was grabbed by the hair and thrown to the floor. According to the account of the relatives, one police officer went so far as to draw his weapon and yell "I'll blow you to bits, stinking Gypsies!" One family member alleges that several of the five Roma men who were arrested had subsequently received further beatings from police officers, with two of them requiring hospital treatment.

The statutory meeting of the Jászladány Roma minority self-government yesterday, at the village's cultural centre, lasted altogether thirty minutes. The five-person body, which has four non-Roma and one Roma member, offered no debate or dissent in deciding on the choice of chairperson and representatives, and in agreeing to form two committees. Mrs Rita Banyá née Suki, the sole member of the local minority self-government who is of Gypsy descent, was elected chairperson of the body, whilst Mrs Gellért Nagy, deputy chair of the foundation that has established a private school in the village, will be her deputy. Mrs István Dankó (Dr Gabriella Makai), solicitor and wife of Jászladány's mayor, who received the most votes in the election for the minority self-government, was

unwilling to accept a leading position. Following the meeting, Mrs Banyá said that they wished to work together with the village's self-government and would be concentrating mainly on educational issues. She added that they were in agreement that the private school, formation of which had stirred up a huge storm, should be allowed to operate, but their business as a body was to urge the raising of educational standards at the local authority general school.

More Roma politicians than ever before have acquired the right to participate as electors in the voting for a new National Gypsy Minority Self-Government. The total number could be as high as five thousand. The Roma electors will have to prepare themselves for a protracted voting procedure that may stretch out until dawn.

The two previous elections for places on the National Gypsy Minority Self-Government were won by Lungo Drom, and there was a fair chance of success the third time round. In December 2001, Flórián Farkas, chairman of the NGMSG and of Lungo Drom, had concluded an electoral pact with the right-wing parties that, in the end, had lost this year's parliamentary elections; however, it is highly questionable whether the Roma opposition groups are strong enough to exploit that weakness and take over control of the NGMSG.

Aladár Horváth is to be the Left-Wing Roma Solidarity's candidate for chairmanship of the National Gypsy Minority Self-Government in the election due to be held this January, the organisation – which is seeking to replace Lungo Drom – has announced.

Left-Wing Roma Solidarity was formed a few months ago by nine Gypsy organisations. This new grouping has determined that its paramount goals are to win the elections for the National Gypsy Minority Self-Government and secure the dismissal of Lungo Drom under Flórián Farkas, its leader. In both previous elections, Lungo Drom and its coalition partners obtained all 53 seats on the NGMSG, and there is a serious chance that this will be repeated. An overwhelming majority of the delegates, or 'electors', who will be taking part in the forthcoming election in January are people who gained seats as Roma candidates in local minority self-governments or in mainstream local self-governments, and it was candidates put up by Lungo Drom who gained more seats in these bodies than any other Gypsy organisation. Left-Wing Roma Solidarity, moreover, is being weakened by internal disputes, whilst a number of leading members of the two largest organisations that make up the grouping have gone over to Lungo Drom. As a result, Left-Wing Roma Solidarity has suspended cooperation with the two organisations in question, the Forum of Gypsy Organisations of Hungary and the National Association of Gypsy Organisations. It will serve as only partial compensation for this painful loss that the Democratic Alliance of Gypsies of Hungary, which has hitherto give no clear indication of which camp it supports, has joined the left-wing Roma alliance.

A Jász Region Roma Civil Rights Organisation, founded in a tavern in Jászládány, has set itself the target of improving the situation of Gypsies living within the area. It plans to set up a Roma community centre in the village, from which it would be possible to offer legal aid and other services, one of the founders reported.

“After the Ministry of Education, it is expected that the next commissioner for Roma affairs will begin work on 1st January,” announced László Teleki, Secretary of State for Gypsy Affairs in the Office of the Prime Minister, following the first session to be held by the Interministerial Committee for Gypsy Affairs since the hand-over of government.

December

“The integration of Gypsies into Hungarian society has to get under way without delay,” László Teleki, Under-Secretary of State for Gypsy Affairs in the Office of the Prime Minister, underscored in an address at Szolnok. Speaking about the achievements of the first six months in his post, at a forum for leaders of local Roma minority self-governments organised by the Society for the Protection of Minority Rights, Teleki highlighted the establishment of the Council for Roma Affairs, the overall boost in scholarship funding that was available for Gypsy students, and the creation of posts with responsibility for Roma affairs within individual ministries. The under-secretary of state categorised the institution of a department responsible for equal opportunities within the Ministry of Employment Policy and Labour, whose main task is to work out programmes for promoting long-term employment for those in the Roma community, amongst the measures being taken to improve quality of life for Gypsies. Mr Teleki said that it was planned that ideas for programmes to assist the Roma community in catching up with the rest of society, which would be broken down by ministry, with proposals for appropriate funding and designating those who would hold specific responsibility, would be laid before the cabinet for consideration in February. He emphasized that in the coming year of 2003 the Public Foundation for the Gypsies of Hungary would be funded to the tune of HUF 1,100 million – a sum three times greater than previously – whilst the sums available for handling emergency situations and for the support of Gypsy culture would also be going up.

Both the Ministry of Education and the Parliamentary Commissioner for Minority Rights have begun investigations in the village of Pátka, just north of Székesfehérvár in Fejér County, where, almost without exception, Roma children who attend the general school have been declared mentally subnormal and streamed into separate classes, not only for teaching purposes but even during the lunch period, and indeed until the Ombudsman launched his investigation, even had a separate set of plastic tableware. Community leaders claim that the residents of Pátka hold one another in respect, and there had been no trouble until outsiders began interfering in the village’s life. Roma residents,

however, have the feeling that the only thing they can count on from the local authority is that it will cover the costs for an abortion or insertion of a coil for birth control.

To mark Minorities Day, Prime Minister Péter Medgyessy handed out Prizes for Minorities in the Parliament building. President Ferenc Mádl and Katalin Szili, Speaker of the House, also took part in the event. Prizes were awarded to Dénes Berényi, academician and first chairman of the Apáczai Public Foundation; Mrs Gábor Husznai (née Ida Hambuch), head of the German national section at the Klára Leöwy High School, Pécs; János Joka Daróczi, editor of the Roma magazine programme for Hungarian Television; István Mezei, instigator of the Hungarian Gypsy Football Team; as well as the editorial team producing the Transylvanian Hungarian Etymological Word-Stock, the Martenica Folk Dance Ensemble, and a representative for the János Selye College, Komárom. The prime minister said it was necessary to provide for parliamentary representation of minorities, and there needed to be arrangements to ensure that only those belonging to a given ethnic group were able to sit in local minority self-governments. He considered support for integration of the Roma populace to be one of most important social issues facing the country.

One of the reasons for the poor social status of Gypsies is to be sought in the disadvantages they suffer in schooling, whilst those disadvantages may be at least partially explicable by the fact that a significant proportion of Roma children receive no, or only very limited, nursery education. Delphoi Consulting, an advisory and research firm, has conducted a study of nursery education of Roma children. Their survey showed that the smaller the nursery, and the smaller the settlement in which it is situated, the greater the likelihood that there will be a high proportion of Roma children. Higher-than-average numbers of Gypsies live in settlements where there is no nursery provision at all, according to the investigation. In the event that a nursery's capacity is not fully utilised, it is able to accept Roma children at a young age; conversely, the greater the pressure on nursery places, the older the age of the Gypsy children that it is able to accept. It follows that the proportion of Roma children receiving nursery education could be raised by increasing the capacity of nurseries. Fewer than two-thirds of Roma children complete their general education by the time they reach the age when compulsory schooling ends. Those who continue their studies do so primarily in vocational training institutions that do not offer marketable skills. As compared with the average for Hungary, merely one-sixth of young Roma students enter a training scheme leading to a secondary-school diploma (*érettségi*), whilst the chances that they will enter a high school to continue their studies are one-fortieth of those for non-Roma students.

2. DATA ON ROMA ETHNICITY IN HUNGARY

Before carrying out an analysis of census data on ethnic origins supplied by Gypsies two important factors must be borne in mind. The first is that Gypsies are non-White. Researchers who concern themselves with the Roma community often lose sight of this; indeed, one might add that they prefer to lose sight of it, and often do so deliberately. The populace itself keeps track of the fact, often referring to Gypsies in terms that directly allude to colour: ‘Brazilians’, ‘Indians’, ‘Blacks’, ‘didn’t get that tan under a sun lamp’. External appearances often make a Gypsy descent undeniable.

The second factor relates to a criterion adopted in the two national surveys of Gypsies that have been performed to date: they took as a Gypsy anyone whom the surrounding society called a Gypsy. That was necessary because, since no records are kept of the places of residence and addresses of Gypsies, it was the only way of putting together any sort of sample. (It should be noted, incidentally, that a sample cannot be drawn up on the basis of taking as a Gypsy anyone who declares himself or herself to be of Gypsy ethnicity, for records of the places of residence and addresses of such individuals are no more available than they are for other Gypsies.) That raises the question, however, of which individuals does the surrounding society look on as a Gypsy. In the light of the first factor, the surrounding society holds Gypsies to be dark-skinned. Over and above that, it looks on people of Gypsy descent as Gypsies: anyone whose parents are Gypsies is also held to be a Gypsy, and even half-Gypsies are held to be Gypsies. The essential point, though, is that descent is seen to determine who is a Gypsy. In that sense, members of the intelligentsia who are known by those in their milieu to be a child of Gypsy parents remain Gypsies themselves, even if they do not avow that or, indeed, repudiate it.

There are, of course, people who are not known to be Gypsies by their milieu and so are able to conceal their Gypsy origin, though they are the exceptions. There are also fair-skinned Gypsies who, under some circumstances, are likewise able to conceal their descent. They too are exceptions. As a general rule, descent is the guiding principle.

In a 1989 book entitled *Kiválasztottak és elvegyülők* (‘The Elect and the Miscegenators’), Hungarian-born László Márton, who for much of the post-war period has lived in France, notes: “Naturally, being a Jew by descent is a *reality*... the greater that burden, the more it is a reality, and though no one has a right to judge anyone, if one wishes to be freed of that burden, it does no harm to know (and it does no harm for a Jew in particular to know) that there is no escaping reality, and should anyone try to escape it, that escape in itself becomes a part of reality – and the most destructive part at that.”

It goes without saying that the word ‘Jew’ in the above quotation could equally be substituted by the word ‘Gypsy’. In another passage in the book, Márton writes that for only a few of those concerned does their milieu not make awareness of their Jewish descent

a live issue, and in a perverse way it is made a live issue by the very fact that there are many who conceal their origin, or have had it concealed from them during childhood, and subsequently *hit upon* it, which renders the social exclusion that they had so fervently wished to avoid seem all the more irrevocable and fateful.

A person's Jewishness becomes reduced to a matter of descent, to quote Márton again, and that applies to Jews and non-Jews alike: awareness of origin in the case of Jews, and keeping a mental note of Jewish descent in the case of non-Jews. It is also true of Gypsies that they are aware of their Gypsy origin, whilst non-Gypsies keep a mental note of a person's Gypsy descent and designate a Gypsy as being a Gypsy on that basis.

In both the surveys referred to above a Gypsy was anyone whom the surrounding society said was a Gypsy and who regarded himself or herself to be a Gypsy. A total of 2,222 households were included in the sample for the 1993 survey. In 405 households the attempt to gather information was thwarted, though in 240 cases the reason for that was that the address was wrong, or the householder had moved, or those living in the household could not be contacted. In 140 households a refusal to answer questions was encountered, in 70 of those cases without any reason being offered, in 52 cases on human rights grounds or because the person questioned was not a Gypsy. Thus, a great majority of the individuals who had been sought out on the basis of the opinion of the surrounding society turned out to regard themselves as Gypsies.

To turn to the specific matter in hand: A Gypsy who regards himself or herself as a Gypsy will not necessarily declare himself or herself to be of Gypsy ethnicity when responding to a census question. Very many people regard themselves as both Gypsies and Hungarians, or Hungarians and Gypsies, yet in respect of ethnicity do not think of themselves as Gypsies but as Hungarians or Hungarian Gypsies (Romungro).

In Hungary's 1990 census, 143,000 individuals declared themselves to be of Gypsy ethnicity; however, utilising school statistics for 1990, the size of the country's Gypsy population in that year could be put at an estimated 440,000-450,000. In other words, 32% of Gypsies declared themselves to be of Gypsy ethnicity in 1990.

In the 2001 census, 190,000 individuals declared themselves to be of Gypsy ethnicity. Utilising a national survey conducted during 2003 as a basis, the size of the country's Gypsy population in that year could be put at an estimated 600,000. Taking that figure then, again 32% of Gypsies declared themselves to be of Gypsy ethnicity in 2001. Thus, although the number of those declaring themselves to be of Gypsy ethnicity had grown, their proportion in relation to the total Gypsy population was unchanged.

In the 1993 survey every individual of 14 years and older was asked what ethnicity they declare themselves to be. The data-collecting staff had to record exactly what interviewees had said, including answers that indicated a dual identity. Of the more than 5,000 individuals questioned, 56.2% professed themselves to be of Hungarian ethnicity, 22.0% of Gypsy ethnicity, 18.2% to be Hungarian Gypsies (Romungro), and 0.7% of Romanian or Beash ethnicity.

Ethnicity was also one of the aspects on which data were sought in the 2003 survey. Of those questioned, 37.8% professed themselves to be Hungarian, 29.8% Hungarian Gypsy, 26.8% Gypsy, and 4.5% Beash by ethnicity, with 1% of other ethnicity.

In the 1993 study, of those Gypsies who had Hungarian as their mother-tongue, 60.2% professed themselves to be of Hungarian ethnicity, 18.8% to be Hungarian Gypsies, and 18.5% of Gypsy ethnicity. To put it another way, 60.2% of Romungros designated a person who is of Gypsy descent and has Hungarian as their mother-tongue as being of Hungarian ethnicity. These individuals did however acknowledge themselves as being Gypsies in responding to subsequent questions on the questionnaire as the whole interview was opened by a repeated and strongly emphasized statement that the purpose of the survey was to gain an appreciation of the situation of Gypsy families. Thus, they acknowledged themselves as being Gypsies, but Gypsies of Hungarian ethnicity.

Since publication of the volume containing the 2003 nation-wide survey data on ethnicity, much has been made of the fact that *only* 190,000 of the 600,000 Gypsies in Hungary declared themselves to be of Gypsy origin or, to put in another way, declared their Gypsy identity. The 1993 survey data, however, show that although the majority of native Hungarian-speaking Gypsies profess to be Hungarian by ethnicity, they still recognize their Gypsy origin and declare a Gypsy identity. They are left with little other choice, because the surrounding society keeps close track of that origin.

At the time the current legislation on minority rights was being drafted it was proposed that Jews should figure amongst the ethnic minorities. That was rejected by a majority of Hungary's Jewish population. In 1999, the Minorities Research Institute, operating within the Institute of Sociology at the Loránd Eötvös University of Budapest, conducted a survey into the Jewish population of modern-day Hungary. One item on the questionnaire related to Jewish identity. At one pole of the five possible answers was "I am a Jew living in Hungary", which 23% gave as their first choice, 16% as their second choice. At the other pole was the response "I am Hungarian", which 13 and 10%, respectively, selected. A majority of those responding, though, opted for choices implying a dual identity, with 30 and 25% picking as their first or second choice the answer "I am a Hungarian of Jewish religion (descent)", whilst 24% each correspondingly plumped for "I am both Hungarian and Jewish".

The ancestors of the Jews who live in Hungary today entered the country in the 18th and 19th centuries. Hungarian was not their mother-tongue before they immigrated, of course; now their native language is Hungarian, and it is likely that the great majority of them gave the response that they are Hungarian to the 2001 census question on ethnicity.

The ancestors of the Romungros entered Hungary during the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. Their native tongue was Romany, and a large proportion of them – probably a majority – preserved that for a long time, even after they acquired the Hungarian language. Now Hungarian is their native language, and we know that a majority of them declared themselves to be of Hungarian ethnicity at the time the 2001 census was conducted.

For those avowing a Hungarian Gypsy ethnicity a dual identity seems obvious enough. However, we know – as has been emphasized here – that those opting for Hungarian ethnicity also maintain a dual identity. Also we do not know, but can only guess, at what the choice of a Hungarian Gypsy ethnicity denotes precisely. It might denote “I am both Hungarian and Gypsy”, but it might denote something else.

The proportion of Gypsies who on January 1st, 1893, were living within what are the current borders of Hungary and spoke Hungarian as their native language was 79.5%. That is to say, the greater part of the ancestors of the Romungros of today had already exchanged their earlier mother-tongue for Hungarian before the end of the nineteenth century. We also know that this large portion was in itself just part of a still larger number. Of the 450,000 Gypsy population estimated from the 1993 survey, 405,000 were native Hungarian speakers, amongst whom 320,000 were descendants of earlier Hungarianised ancestors, whilst the remaining 85,000 had swapped their Romany or Beash tongue for Hungarian at some point between 1971 and 1993.

Between 1893 and 1971, the size of Hungary’s Romungro population grew four-fold, that of the Beash population eight-fold, and that of the Vlach Gypsies nine-fold. The quadrupling of the number of Hungarian Gypsies reflected assimilation; the still larger growth of the Beash and Vlach Gypsies was the result of continued immigration. The language substitutions between 1971 and 1993 can be ascribed to moves out of Gypsy colonies, closer daily contacts with the Hungarian majority society, the use of Hungarian as the language of communication in the workplace and with district nurses, doctors, lawyers, officials, and, above all, in the nursery and general schools.

In 1993, 19% of Beash Gypsies professed themselves to be Hungarian by ethnicity, the rest being either Gypsy or Hungarian Gypsy or some other ethnic group. In the 2003 survey 39% professed to be Hungarian, 42% Gypsy, 3% Beash, and 17% Hungarian Gypsy by ethnicity. With them too the dual identity implied by the choice of being Hungarian Gypsy carries multiple significations. In any event, a majority of the Beash community do not declare themselves to be either Beash or Romanian but either Gypsy or Hungarian Gypsy by ethnicity.

In 1993, 22% of Vlach Gypsies professed themselves to be Hungarian, 56.3% Gypsy, and 15.3% Hungary Gypsy by ethnicity. In the 2003 survey, 29% professed to be Hungarian, 42% Gypsy, 3% Beash, and 17% Hungarian Gypsy by ethnicity.

It should not be forgotten that only a small number of Beash Gypsies entered Hungary before the end of the nineteenth century; by far the greater part arrived during the twentieth century, right up till 1945 or 1948.

Substantial numbers of Vlach Gypsies arrived in the much larger territory that then constituted Hungary during the latter half of the nineteenth century, but even more moved into what is the country’s present territory after the revision of frontiers that followed the First World War. In the process there was a continuous Hungarianisation amongst both groups.

Nor should it be forgotten that although a majority of Hungarian Gypsies Hungarianised during the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries, that process did not occur for some of their number until the twentieth century. It is possible that Gypsies who are native Hungarian speakers and declare themselves to be Gypsy by ethnicity stem from amongst these comparatively recently Hungarianised Gypsies.

That there is a strong link between schooling and a sense of Hungarian ethnicity should be no surprise. Three obvious explanations offer themselves. The first is the assimilatory influence of schools. The second is that the individuals who seek schooling are the ones who want to adapt, fit in, and assimilate, and who would like to be seen as Hungarians. The third is related to the mother-tongue: individuals who are native Hungarian speakers receive more schooling, and in any case are proportionately more likely to declare themselves to be Hungarian by ethnicity.

Mutual correlations also apply to a person's status in the job market. Amongst the employed, the fact of having a job in itself tends to act in favour of acceptance of a Hungarian identity, as do fear of losing one's job and relations with fellow workers, though it is equally true that it is the individuals who have already fitted in and assimilated who more easily find work and are better able to retain their jobs. On top of which, it is those who are both native Hungarian speakers and have school qualifications who are more likely to be employed.

There are likewise strong correlations between participation in Gypsy organisations and an individual's sense of ethnic identity. It seems self-evident that individuals who are active in such organisations are, on average, less likely to pronounce themselves to be Hungarian and more likely Gypsy by ethnicity. That association is not entirely unambiguous, however, as fully 45% of members of Gypsy organisations professed themselves to be purely Hungarian by ethnicity (with no qualification), as compared with 56% in the total sample. A greater proportion of members of organisations do indeed declare themselves to be Gypsy by ethnicity than do non-members, but not a much greater proportion. If one accepts the principle that Gypsies are those who profess to be Gypsy by ethnicity, then one ought also to accept that nearly half the members of Gypsy organisations are not actually Gypsies.

The size and character of an individual's place of residence have a fairly substantial bearing on attitudes to ethnicity and assimilation processes. Two conflicting mechanisms can be observed. One is that the preservation of traditions is easier in small settlements, where a much larger part of social interactions are with relatives and neighbours, and there is a greater chance that the traditions represented by older generations will persist. The other is that in cities there is much more opportunity for minority civil organisations to operate, for minority schools to be run, and for cultural and political functions to be put on.

Examination of the 1993 and 2003 survey data proves the reality of both these mechanisms. The proportion of responders not professing a Hungarian ethnicity was largest amongst those who lived in settlements of fewer than 1,000 inhabitants. That rate falls

steadily as the size of the settlement grows, but in cities with a population of more than 100,000 one again see a big increase in the proportion professing to be of Gypsy ethnicity. An individual's mother-tongue also had an influence on that proportion, as Beash Gypsies are, relatively speaking, more likely to be living in small settlements, whereas a higher-than-average proportion of native Romany speakers are found in the larger cities.

If the joint distribution of linguistic and ethnic identities is looked at as a function of settlement size, then one finds that the proportion of Gypsies who are both native Hungarian speakers and profess to a Hungarian identity is lower than average both in communities with populations of less than 1,000 and in cities of more than 100,000 inhabitants, whereas the proportion of those who are non-native Hungarian speakers and also do not profess to be of Hungarian ethnicity is higher than average. Budapest deserves separate consideration. There, the high proportion of those who do not see themselves as being of Hungarian ethnicity is not attributable to individuals who are Beash Gypsies, or who have preserved their sense of identity due to their mother-tongue, because the proportion of respondents who are native Hungarian speakers but profess a Gypsy ethnicity is far higher than it is outside the capital. One may infer that Gypsy political organisations have had a certain role in this.

A person's attitude towards the language that is declared as the mother-tongue can vary, and Roma who are striving to integrate may declare themselves to be native Hungarian speakers even if that was not actually the first language they acquired in infancy. It is pertinent to cite here the four of five possible definitions of mother-tongue offered by Tove Skutnabb-Kangass:²

1. Descent – the first language to be learnt;
2. Identity/identification –
 - (a) the language with which the speaker identifies;
 - (b) the language that the speaker is identified as being a native speaker of;
3. The language that is most familiar;
4. The language that is used the most.

From these definitions Skutnabb-Kangass draws the following corollaries:

1. A person may have more than one mother-tongue;
2. One and the same person may have a different mother-tongue under each of the various definitions;
3. A person's mother-tongue may change one or more times over a lifetime;
4. The definitions of mother-tongue may be placed in a hierarchical order according to the degree of social awareness relating to human rights on language use.

In the national census for 2001 the Central Statistical Office chose not to make answers to Questions 23-25 compulsory. Amongst these, Question 23.3 inquired "Which language is your mother-tongue?", which was supplemented by the following notes:

² Quoted by Miklós Kontra, in: *Kritika*, no.1 (2003)

“One should designate as mother-tongue – free of any prompting – the language that the person in question learned (generally first of all) in his/her childhood and in which he/she generally speaks with other family members and acknowledges as the mother-tongue. The mother-tongue of mutes and infants who do not yet speak is the language in which the closest relatives speak. Given that the ethnic minority population learns and speaks more than one language at a mother-tongue level during childhood, space is allowed for three languages to be designated.”

The compilers of the census questionnaire did not notice that they had supplied three divergent definitions of mother-tongue, and accordingly failed to alert the census-takers to that fact.

In carrying out the census and the national Gypsy surveys, what was written down as the mother-tongue was the language that the individual questioned declared to be his or her mother-tongue. In the great majority of cases this may well have been, but was not necessarily, the language that was learned first. All that is known for certain is the declaration. In the great majority of cases the declared language would have been the same as the language that was learned first, but in an unknown number of cases it was not the same.

“A person’s mother-tongue may change one or more times over a lifetime,” Skutnabb-Kangass writes, to which one may add that the mother-tongue is sometimes a matter of definition and choice.

Of Hungary’s 320,000 Gypsies in 1971, according to the findings of the national survey carried out in that year, 61,000 (21.2%) had Romany and 25,000 (7.6%) Romanian a mother-tongue. In the 1990 national census a total of 48,072 persons were recorded as having Romany as their mother-tongue, but individuals speaking Beash as their mother-tongue were taken to be Romany speakers. Putting the country’s total Gypsy population in that year at 445,000, based on the school statistics, those 48,072 persons amounted to 10.8% of the total. In other words, the combined total of Gypsies with Romany or Beash as their mother-tongue declined from 86,000 (28.8%) in 1971 to 48,000 (10.8%) by 1990.

In the 1993 national survey, 5.5% of those questioned said their mother-tongue was Beash and 4.4% said it was Romany – or a combined total of 9.9%, which is close to the 10.8% recorded in the 1990 census. During the 2001 census a total of 48,685 individuals declaring Beash or Romany as their mother-tongue were recorded. As was noted above, the total Gypsy population then could be put at around 600,000, which means that by 2001 the combined total of Gypsies acknowledging Romany or Beash as their mother-tongue had declined to about 8.1%.

Against that, we also know that the 1993 survey revealed there were many more speakers of Beash or Romany than declared these as their mother-tongue: 11.3% spoke Beash and 11.1% Romany.

It would have been useful if the CSO’s volume on *Nemzetiségi Kötődés* (‘Ethnic Affiliations’, 2002), which publishes the 2001 census data, had set out separately the numbers of those who have Romany or Beash as their mother-tongue and those who speak

those languages within the family. However, for some inexplicable reason, the bulky volume has chosen to present these as combined Romany-Beash figures. All the same, the combined figure of 8.1% of all Gypsies declaring Romany or Beash as their mother-tongue indicates that the factors inducing a change of mother-tongue continued to operate between 1993 and 2001. There can be no doubt that these factors are still operating today, and will continue to operate for the foreseeable future.

Amongst those factors, the strongest direct influence is that exerted by school. Counteracting that are movements to promote Romany and Beash ethnicity, language and culture. These movements offer those who join them opportunities for political advancement that provide an income or livelihood and, these days, even certain material advantages.

Even those Beash and Vlach Gypsies who choose to change their language still regard links to the family and wider kinship as important. Those links are their assurance of a livelihood and help with raising children, as well as representing a shared social background that gives their lives a greater or lesser degree of emotional security. They are part of the reason why they still retain their Beash and Vlach identity.

Many people have laid down the view, many times over, that the only individuals who can be regarded as Gypsies are those who declare themselves to be such. It is nevertheless rather hard to determine who declare themselves to be a Gypsy. It has been evident for quite some time, but most especially in the recent past, that the matter of Gypsy identity has been and is gauged by the measure of declared ethnic affiliation; in other words, people commonly regard as Gypsies those individuals who declare themselves to be of Gypsy ethnicity. The basic assumption is made, then, that a person can only be a Gypsy in an ethnic sense. That, in turn, is linked to the assumption that all Gypsies see themselves as an ethnic group, and anyone who does not feel that he or she is a Gypsy in respect of ethnicity is *incapable of feeling* himself or herself to be a Gypsy at all. Those assumptions, needless to say, are absurd. The time has surely come when people should finally take notice of the fact that the majority of Hungary's Gypsies declare themselves to be Hungarian or Hungarian Gypsy by ethnicity and, at one and the same time, also Gypsies.

3. CHANGES IN THE JOB MARKET AND INCOMES

There is a fairly widespread view that the rate of unemployment in Hungary is 5-6%, and that this is distinctly more favourable than the average rate of 7-8% within the European Union. The true rate of unemployment, however, is much higher than 5-6%.

In the mid-1980s, there were close to 5 million Hungarians in the working population, and a further 400,000 of pensionable age who carried on working, giving a total of 5.4 million in employment, excluding those who were on maternity leave or receiving child benefit. A fall in the size of the working population, and also in real wages after allowing for inflation, started to be seen during the latter half of that decade, but even in 1989 there were still 4.8 million people of working age in jobs, along with 400,000 employed people of pensionable age.

By 1993, there were 3,827,000 people in work, which represented an overall loss of 1.6 million jobs compared with 1985 and 1.4 million jobs compared with 1989. Anyone who was able to do so retired: between 1989 and 1993 the number of pensioners grew by 400,000. There were 700,000 people officially registered as unemployed in 1993; the remaining half a million jobless were unemployed people who did not register as actively seeking employment.

The job losses hit those with no or few school qualifications hardest. Compared with individuals who had a higher education qualification, those who had completed their secondary school education were two and a half times more likely, whilst those who had only completed the eight years of general education were five times more likely to be unemployed. There were big regional disparities as well, with the unemployment rate in Budapest being just 6.6%, but that in the north-eastern counties of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén, Szabolcs-Szatmár and Nógrád being 20.2, 20.6 and 21.3%, respectively.

Job losses among Gypsies were proportionately even higher: the number of Gypsies in employment stood at 125,000 in 1985, 109,000 in 1989, and 56,000 at the end of 1993, which thus represented a loss of 69,000 jobs since 1985 and 53,000 since 1989. Whereas 30% of jobs were lost nationally over this period, for Gypsies the loss was 55%.

The main reason for this was the Gypsies' lack of schooling. Amongst Gypsies of 20 years and older, 43% had completed only 0-7 years of general school and 41% had completed only the full 8 years of general school, as compared with figures of 19 and 25% for the non-Gypsy population. The second reason relates to where the Gypsies were located. In 1993, very few Gypsies lived in the more north-westerly counties of Fejér, Komárom-Esztergom, Vas and Veszprém, and fewest of all in Győr-Moson-Sopron County – precisely those areas where unemployment within the country was lowest. Though there were larger numbers of Gypsies in Budapest, where unemployment was likewise relatively low, the proportion of Gypsies in relation to the total population of the capital was small.

The high level of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén was followed by Szabolcs-Szatmár then Nógrád, Heves, Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok and Hajdú-Bihar counties in the north and north-east, and by Baranya and Somogy counties in the southern Transdanubian region – parts of the country which comprised two-thirds of the entire Gypsy population but only one-third of the population of the country as a whole.

The number of people in work declined further between 1993 and 1997, so unemployment almost certainly grew worse. Although there was a rise in numbers in work between 1997 and 2001, that was only minor, so even in 2001 there were no more people in work than there had been in 1993. This suggests there was no real decrease in unemployment, despite a fall in the number of people officially registered as unemployed, from 700,000 in 1993 to 364,000 – or 9.8% of the workforce – in 2001. The real numbers of unemployed were a good deal higher than that, and thus the real unemployment rate a good deal higher than 9.8%, with most of those not entitled to unemployment benefits seeing no point in registering.

Radio and television stations and the press generally do not report the unemployment data put out by the Labour Exchange but the quarterly workforce survey run by the Central Statistical Office. According to that survey, the number of unemployed in 2001 was 233,000, and the unemployment rate was 5.7%. However, for the purposes of that survey only those amongst the sample questioned who have actively been seeking work during the previous four weeks and are available to start work within two weeks are classified as unemployed. In other words, the survey does not count those who are actually jobless, only those who, in response to the relevant question, answer that they have been actively looking for a job during the past four weeks.

According to a publication entitled *Foglalkoztatási helyzetkép 2001* ('Employment Situation 2001'), going by the self-assessments of those questioned in the workforce survey, "413,000 regarded themselves as unemployed". If they are accepted as representing the real unemployed, that puts jobless rate to over 10%.

The workforce data supplied by the 2001 national census put the number of Hungarians in work in 2001 at 3,690,000, which is 170,000 fewer than is shown by the quarterly workforce survey, whilst they put the number of unemployed at 426,000, which is 183,000 more than is shown by the quarterly survey. According to this measure, then, the true national rate of unemployment in 2001 was 10.1%. That is not to say that the quarterly workforce survey has chosen a bad definition of unemployment; what it implies is that around half of Hungary's unemployed population sees actively seeking a job as a hopeless enterprise.

As long as five years ago, in 1998, István R. Gábor published a study on the jobless who are past hoping in which he provided some insight into the debates which were going on within OECD countries over the interpretation and measurement of hopelessness and over the fact that if those who had lost hope of finding work were treated together with the officially unemployed, then differences between countries were much smaller than when

only unemployment indices were considered. As Gábor pointed out, this suggested that the outstandingly good results achieved by certain countries in keeping unemployment down were, in reality, an illusion.

Gábor also made reference to the Keynesian notion of unemployment being a deterrent to seeking work. Concealed unemployment appears and grows during periods of recession and slump, with the hidden jobless giving up the search for jobs for shorter or longer periods of time. When recovery arrives, and plenty of new jobs become available, those people return to the workforce.

These are rather abstract lines of thinking, let us make no bones about it. The actual unemployed person in question is likely to be in some economically backward region of the country, living in a village or hamlet, a greater or lesser distance from the nearest job centre. He would work if he could obtain a job, but he thinks it senseless and futile to go out actively looking for work. As a result, one of the unemployed is turned into one of the hidden unemployed.

To get back to Hungarian figures. When the country's unemployment crisis began to bite, from the late 1980s onwards, the size of the workforce dropped by 1.5 million, and it has not recovered since. The number of those registered as unemployed, however, fell continuously between 1993 and 2002, and it was not uncommon to hear the claim that unemployment in Hungary was much lower than in the countries of the European Union. The only explanation for this manifest discrepancy is to be found in hidden unemployment.

It is true that unemployment is low over a large part of Hungary, as is shown to some degree by the county breakdown of the registered unemployed. In 2001, those figures were: Budapest – 2.7%, Győr-Moson-Sopron County – 4.2%, Pest County – 4.3%, Vas County – 5.1%, Fejér County – 6.4%, Zala County – 6.6%, Veszprém County – 7.0%, and Komárom-Esztergom County – 7.2%.

In these areas, then, unemployment is running at close to what economists term the natural rate of unemployment; indeed, Budapest, Pest County and the cities of Győr and Sopron are suffering from labour shortages. In contrast, unemployment rates in Baranya, Somogy, Heves, Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok and Békés are higher than average, a good deal higher in Hajdú-Bihar and Nógrád, and at catastrophic levels in Szabolcs-Szatmár (17.8%) and Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén (19.3%). Again, it needs to be underlined that the real unemployment rate in these counties is even higher than those rates indicate, because they do not include those who have not bothered to register as they are not entitled to unemployment benefits.

Even greater differences exist between smaller areas. Thus, the ratio of registered unemployed to total number of able-bodied persons of working age in Hungary ranges from 1.6% in the most favourable district of Budapest to 53.3% in the most severely affected settlement.

Though it is not directly connected with the subject under discussion, it should nevertheless be noted that mean life expectancy also shows considerable variation from coun-

ty to county. Life expectancy for males in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén is four years shorter than in Budapest or Győr-Moson-Sopron.

It is known that both registered unemployed and the unregistered unemployed who are categorised as economically inactive will work if they can get work. In construction, agriculture, and many other areas of the economy much of the work is carried out by seasonal workers, who are often not officially reported to the authorities. It is also known that a great many poorly paid Gypsy and non-Gypsy individuals who are in employment also take on seasonal or casual jobs. Whether employed or unemployed, one way or another, such people will work whenever a job is to be had, and they will do whatever work happens to turn up.

In a study entitled *A cigányok munkerő-piaci helyzete* ('The Position of Gypsies in the Job Market'), Béla Janky has noted that during the same period, in the early 1990s, when Gypsies were suffering massive job losses, the number of Gypsies being offered new jobs was simultaneously rising. People were being taken on then quickly dismissed, and those who were fired were able to find work again, usually again for only a brief period. It was hard finding a job at all, but even harder to land a stable job.

Another dimension to the same phenomenon was presented by Gábor Kertesi in the May 2000 issue of the journal *Közgazdasági Szemle* (Economics Review). Kertesi pointed out that during the mid-1980s employment was predominantly full-time and meant a job that occupied a person for 12 months of the year; by the early 1990s, however, the proportion of such full-time jobs had fallen to one-half. Many of those who were able to cling on to a position in the workforce were obliged to abandon the idea of having a full-time job. "With insecurity of employment becoming a general rule, a significant portion of those who were in work were also hit by the disintegration that was taking place in society: an absence of steady work also implies, at one and the same time, the absence of a steady lifestyle, penny-pinching concerns about one's livelihood, and lower levels of state social benefits and employers' social provisions."

Both Janky and Kertesi's studies make use of the data from the 1993 survey of Hungary's Gypsy populace and discuss the employment position of Gypsies in the early 1990s. Temporary and casual work conditions came to the fore for the non-Gypsy poor as well, and have remained so right up to the present day in agriculture, construction, and many other areas, particularly those where work is more or less completely suspended during the winter months.

It might be said that this represents a return to the natural scheme of things in the world – the world of the past, of course. A century ago, the ancestors of the Gypsies of today would have earned their bread with day labour or other seasonal and casual work. At the time of the Gypsy census that was carried out in 1893, the top of the list of economic activities was occupied by seasonal agricultural work, but the activities of artisans were seasonal as well: the work of blacksmiths, tinkers, knife-grinders, coppersmiths, the makers of wooden troughs and tableware, basket weavers, and mud-brick makers. Those

were also the types of work from which Gypsies earned a living during the inter-war years.

Closely related to the problem of unemployment is the current crisis in provisions for the unemployed – a crisis that was precipitated by the previous government, under Viktor Orbán, from 2000. The upper limit of the period for which an individual's unemployment allowance was paid out was reduced from 360 to 270 days; the period for which an individual had to be employed and paying social security to qualify for such payments was raised, so that five days had to be worked for each day of entitlement to unemployment allowance; and an individual receiving that allowance was no longer permitted to engage in any economic activity. On top of that, payment of supplementary benefits was also ended and in its place a system of what were called 'regular welfare payments' was introduced. In order to qualify for these payments, an individual was required to undertake at least 30 days of community work, only during its remaining time in office the government was unable to provide as much community work as was needed.

The poor, children and poor children

A huge diversity of concepts have been thrown up in the literature dealing with poverty over the past 12 years. If one were to take only the last few years into consideration, one is forced to conclude that the dominant notions are those that would draw the line marking the poverty level at half the national median or half the national average income. A recently published study by András Gábor and Péter Szívós, however, shows that if half the median income is taken as the measure, then 10.3% of Hungary's population should be regarded as poor, but if the half the average income is used, then that covers 14.4% of its inhabitants.³

A fairer approach, though, is to designate the minimum subsistence level as the boundary, in which case 25-30% of the population is poor, or to put it another way, 25-30% of the inhabitants of Hungary live at below a minimum subsistence level. There is no doubt that many more are living below this level than did so before the 1989-90 change in régime.

The proportion of those falling into the poverty trap grew continuously up till 1995 or 1996, after which a slight improvement was seen up till 1999, and then a further dip between 1999 and 2001. One of the reasons for the deterioration is unemployment. The second reason is the drop in real wages, allowing for inflation, which declined by 26% between 1989 (=100) and 1996 (=74) and in 2001 were still 11% lower than in 1989. The third reason is that the real value of pensions has declined even more steeply than wages: by 31% between 1989 (=100) and 1996 (=69) and even in 2001 still 18% lower than it was in 1989. The fourth reason is the deterioration in social assistance and other benefits, amongst which one might single out the family allowance, the real value of which per family has plunged by 70% between 1989 (=100) and 2001 (=30).

³ András Gábor and Péter Szívós, in: *Társadalmi riport 2002* [Social report 2002].

Whichever poverty line is drawn, a far higher proportion of children than of adults fall into category of the poor.

A significant proportion of families who are living below the minimum subsistence level – several tens of thousands of families in Budapest alone, several hundred thousand in Hungary as a whole – are unable to afford the maintenance costs for a dwelling, which include rent, communal charges, water rates, sewerage charges, and electricity, gas and distance-heating bills. Grants towards these costs can be obtained in Hungary, but these are far from being sufficient to cover the sums of money actually required. The Social Welfare Law itself states that the amount of assistance is to contribute to preserving the standard of living conditions; in practice, though, the amount is much too low.

What is required is to introduce a national, guaranteed and uniform system of support for the costs of living accommodation within the scope of the Social Welfare Law.

There are some wealthy Gypsies in Hungary, and also Gypsies who, whilst not wealthy, are not poor either. The proportion of Gypsies who enjoy a middle-class standard of living and lifestyle may be put at 20% at best, though it is more likely to be 10-15%, whilst a further 10-15% live on the poverty borderline. The rest – 70-80% of all Hungarian Gypsies – are poor, with 20-30% living in desperate poverty.

In 2000/01, according to the calculations made by Gábor and Szívós, 61.5% of families of which the head of household was a Gypsy, as against 6.2% of families of which the head of household was not a Gypsy, were living on an income of less than one-half the national median income. When half the average income was used as marking the poverty line, then 68% of families with a Gypsy head of household, as compared with 9.4% of families with a non-Gypsy head of household, would be classified as poor.

4. CHANGES IN SETTLEMENT AND HOUSING CONDITIONS

The livelihood of a family is closely tied to whether it lives in a place that offers plenty of job opportunities or one where unemployment is high. There is a huge difference in this respect between Budapest and provincial towns and villages. Thirty years ago, 25,000 Gypsies lived in Budapest, less than 8% of Hungary's total Gypsy population. Between 1971 and 1993 many Gypsies moved to the capital, where the community almost doubled in size, to 44,000 or 9% of the total Gypsy population, by 1993. That migration to Budapest continued over the ensuing decade, so that the number now living in the capital can be put at 50,000-60,000, which probably reaches 10% of the total. In 1971, 45,000 Gypsies lived in provincial towns, or 14% of the total Gypsy population, and the number of town-dwellers more than trebled to 129,000 by 1993, though it should be noted that during this period many communities were upgraded to municipal status, so a lot of Gypsies became town-dwellers without moving anywhere. In any event, by 1993 the situation was that, compared with 36% of the country's non-Gypsy inhabitants, 60% of its Gypsy inhabitants resided in villages, with 40% residing in communities of fewer than 2,000 inhabitants (as against 17% of the total Hungarian population).

The disparities in place of residence are still greater when the distributions by region and county are examined. In 1971, very few Gypsies lived in Fejér, Komárom-Esztergom, Vas and Veszprém counties, and fewest of all in Győr-Moson-Sopron, and that is still the case today. These are precisely the counties in which unemployment for a long time has been the lowest in the country, being minimal by 2002, whilst average wages and salaries are the highest.

Larger numbers of Gypsies live in Budapest, which also has very low unemployment (indeed, suffers from labour shortages), but they still make up a low proportion of the capital's total population. By contrast, the greatest number and concentration of Gypsies even 20 years ago were to be found in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County, followed by Szabolcs-Szatmár then Nógrád, Heves, Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok and Hajdú-Bihar counties in the north and north-east, and by Baranya and Somogy counties in the southern Transdanubian region. Securing a livelihood was already hard back then, but employment slumped in the early 1990s and has barely shown any improvement since.

Over and above differences between town and village, between flourishing and poverty-stricken settlement, there were always wide disparities within settlements, and those disparities have undergone enormous changes in themselves. Thus, in 1971 two-thirds of the Gypsy population lived in more or less separate Gypsy colonies, the majority of which were of the traditional type, comprising a clutch of shanties at the edge of the town or village. Such colonies lacked electricity and water supplies or outside privies. Even colonies that were brought into being by the local authorities moving Gypsy fami-

lies into former servants' quarters, dilapidated labour settlements, barrack huts, or abandoned workers' hostels were little better.

In 1965 a programme was put in hand to eliminate these colonies, the principal driver for which was the availability of low-interest loans for house-building. Using such a loan, a Gypsy family could have a so-called 'CS'-house put up, one that was smaller and of inferior quality compared with the average family house, or else buy a vacated peasant's cottage in one of the many then rapidly depopulating villages. That programme largely came to an end by 1985. Before it started, in 1964, a total of 220,000 people living in 49,000 colony dwellings were counted in the country; by 1984 that had fallen to 42,000 people in 6,277 dwellings. At the time of the 1993 survey, 13.7% of Gypsies – somewhat more than 60,000 – were still living in colonies, though few of these were of the traditional type. The majority of colonies surveyed were of relatively recent construction, principally in the northern region and in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County in particular. In 1997, the Socialist-SZDSZ coalition government of Prime Minister Gyula Horn adopted a medium-term plan to improve the situation of the Gypsy population which called for a census to be taken of their settlements, but that was only implemented after years of delay, and even then it was carried out imperfectly and inaccurately. According to the census, though, approximately 100,000 people were living in colonies.

Demolition of the majority of colonies reduced, but did not eliminate, the segregation of the Gypsy population. Four-fifths of all Gypsies moved from the outskirts of villages and towns into the centre, but once they were there new forms of segregation came into being. 'CS' houses were usually built in closely packed clusters on a pre-designated area of a housing estate, thereby reproducing the earlier separation. It was only possible to purchase old peasant cottages in communities where the means for making a livelihood were in decline, and thus the original non-Gypsy population was starting to desert the land, whilst the arrival of Gypsies, in its turn, prompted even more non-Gypsies to leave. This process was most marked in smaller communities and hamlets. As long ago as 1991, Károly Kocsis and Zoltán Kovács established that the ratio of Gypsies in the local population was over 8% in 675 such settlements, over 25% in 94 settlements, and over 50% in as many as nine settlements. Those numbers have grown substantially over the intervening period to the present.

Much the same process has been taking place in the larger villages and in towns big and small. Gypsies are allowed to move into areas from which non-Gypsies are moving away, that is to say, into the declining, slummier areas of the community. That exodus then magnifies the impact of the Gypsies' arrival, and the dereliction is magnified by the exodus.

It would be a mistake, however, to think that every last Gypsy family lives in a segregated Gypsy milieu. The 1993 survey, amongst other items, questioned respondents about the ethnic make-up of their immediate neighbourhood. It was found that 30% of the families questioned lived with only other Gypsies as their immediate neighbours, 29% with a mixture of Gypsy and non-Gypsy neighbours, 29% with mostly non-Gypsy neigh-

bours, 9% with no other Gypsy as a neighbour, and the remaining 3% undetermined. Prosperity and segregation are inversely correlated. It is the poorest Gypsies who are most likely to be living in a segregated neighbourhood, the better-off Gypsies who are least likely. The proportion of Gypsies is highest in those districts where per capita income is lowest and unemployment the highest.

When we turn to look at housing conditions, it is necessary to stress, first and foremost, a fundamental change that took place between 1971 and 1993. In 1971 over 60% of Hungary's Gypsies lived in a hovel or shanty, whereas in 1993 that was the case for only 6%. By the latter date, one-fifth of rural Gypsies lived in a 'CS' house, whilst three-quarters of them had a peasant cottage or regular family house as their dwelling. Of Budapest's Gypsies, 63% were living in pre-war tenement blocks, 14% in prefabricated tower blocks, and 6% in larger family houses. In the larger provincial towns there would be one area where conditions resembled those of rural Gypsies and another part where they resembled those of Budapest Gypsy.

Overall, one-third of Gypsy dwellings surveyed in 1993 had a single room, 43% two rooms, and 24% three or more rooms. At that time, just 15% of the total housing stock in Hungary was single-room, 43% had two rooms, and 40% had three or more rooms.

In regard to access to public utilities, again a dramatic improvement was recorded in 1993 as compared with 1971. Back then just 8% of the dwellings inhabited by Gypsies had a mains water supply and a further 16% had an outside well or water-pump on the property. In 1993 more than half of dwellings had a mains water supply and 48% a bathroom, whilst an investigation into the status of Gypsy pupils in secondary education in 2000 indicated that 65% had running water and 61% a bathroom. To quote from the book reporting on that research: "The less developed the region, the smaller the settlement, the further away from the centre of the settlement, the more segregated the neighbourhood in which a family lives, and also the lower the level of the parents' own schooling, the more likely it was that the dwelling would have neither running water nor a bathroom."

Those statements could be extended to other aspects of the living conditions as well, but housing standards are most dependent on income. Wealthy Gypsies live in large, luxurious houses with all modern conveniences; poor Gypsies live in poor housing. Gábor Fleck, János Orsós and Tünde Virág have written as follows about a street in the community of Partos: "The local council designated a plot of council-owned land for Gypsy families. Initially they put up mud-wall houses but these were later replaced by single-room brick houses with a built-in or attached kitchen. At the two ends of the 'road' – a roughly one-metre wide, poorly asphalted path – were tiny houses, many of them unstuccoed, without a mains water supply to a single house, and in most places without the least trace of boundary markers, fencing or garden. Not that there would be any sense in that, as the houses are built virtually on top of one another. Altogether just two communal water pumps have been provided for almost eighty people, and there is virtually no space even to build a WC."⁴ A very different – one might say diametrically opposite – lifestyle is

highlighted by Ernő Kállai in an account of a 65-year-old widow, “who lived with her family in a three-storey, 20-room house with a floor area of 580 square metres, the monthly maintenance cost of which was HUF 80,000 and in which they felt almost as if they were in a museum, what with all the valuable pieces of furniture and paintings that had been accumulated.”⁵

To return to the matter of poverty, and not just poor Gypsies but the poor in general. There are tens of thousands of families in Budapest and several hundred thousand in Hungary as a whole, for whom the maintenance costs of a dwelling – the rent, water, sewerage and rubbish-disposal charges, electricity and gas bills, communal charges, costs of heating, having the chimney swept, and so on – represent an unaffordable burden. Although Hungary’s Social Welfare Law makes provision for assistance in paying these in order to preserve the standard of the family’s living conditions, in practice the amounts are so low as to be hardly any assistance at all. One of the country’s most pressing priorities should be an increase in the amount of these housing-maintenance grants for families in the lowest income bands or for the very poorest families – those whose outgoings to maintain their dwelling exceed one-fifth of the family income.

Some statutory amendments that came into effect in 2000 should also be mentioned. Since March 2000 occupation of a dwelling by squatting is classed as a summary offence. As squatter families are unable to pay court fines, they are punished by imprisonment. A subsequent amendment that came into effect in June 2000 permitted eviction and repossession of squatted dwellings without court review. Under the Child Protection Act, however, local councils are obliged to make alternative provisions for an evicted family. In the case of a family of four, however, that costs HUF 1.5 million. If no places are available in temporary accommodation, the cost of taking a child into state care is HUF 0.5 million per year. Apart from anything else, these statutory amendments infringe on basic human rights.

Squatting cannot, of course, be condoned as a basis for acquiring a dwelling: security of property rights requires that those who occupy a building without legal title be evicted. Eviction, however, should be subject to judicial review before it is carried out. For an eviction to be lawful, then, it should only go ahead if the local council, or the state in a wider sense, is able to meet its duty to make housing provision for an evicted family. In practice, however, it is not unheard of for the law to be infringed and families to be evicted without having been provided with alternative accommodation.

4 Gábor Fleck, János Orsós and Tünde Virág, “Élet a Bodza utcában [Life in Bodza Road],” in: *A romák/cigányok és a láthatatlan gazdaság* [Roma/Gypsies and the Invisible Economy], ed. István Kemény. Budapest: Osiris Kiadó, 2000, pp. 86–87.

5 Ernő Kállai, “Roma vállalkozók 1998-ban [Roma entrepreneurs in 1998],” *idem*, p. 45.

5. 'ROMA AFFAIRS' AND THEIR FINANCING

The 'budget for Roma affairs', or aggregating the public expenditure that is directly targeted at Gypsies, has for years been a stock item on Hungary's political agenda; analysts need to know, amongst other things, how much the government of the day has spent "on the Roma". It is clear that the chances that Hungary's half million Gypsy community have of obtaining welfare, jobs and schooling are affected primarily by the several hundred billions of forints that the state disburses each year on education, direct and indirect welfare, employment, social security, and health. Equally, the total of these various streams that is directly earmarked, in whole or part, for the Roma population and then aggregated by the Interministerial Committee for Gypsy Affairs (ICGA) amounts to no more than a few billion forints.

For big bureaucracies there is good reason why the Roma are 'invisible', as no one is allowed to discriminate in any way amongst the recipients of provisions and services on ethnic grounds. Thus, it is only possible to make inferences about the position of the Roma populace within the various provisions on the basis of their social status, income and educational situation. The aggregated 'Roma budget', on the other hand, contains not just items that support programmes aimed specifically at the Roma community (e.g. to assist reintegration into the job market) but also expenditures that have no specific ethnic tag (e.g. public works, community work and agrarian social programmes). In the latter cases the separate ministries estimate the proportion of Roma participants or beneficiaries and compute the projected expenditures on them as assistance aimed at the Roma community. Even more serious implications stem from the fact that the aggregate sum contains both items that assist the social integration of the Roma community (e.g. the grants given to the Gandhi High School or the student scholarship programme) and items that in practice aggravate its exclusion (the supplementary 'normative' payments that educational establishments may claim on various grounds to account for the number of Gypsy students on their roll is demonstrably one such).

Efforts aimed at positively discriminating in favour of the Roma, or even targeted programmes, may in principle carry the risk that, well-intentioned as they are, they lead to the setting up of a privileged system of provision, giving rise to the impression that the state is thereby, as it were, 'discharging' its duty of care. It goes without saying that even targeted sums may be spent prudently or injudiciously, but through the construction of a 'budget for Roma affairs' the government of the day gives the impression that it is financing the Roma community in accordance with a departmental logic. The only trouble is that the needs side of 'Roma affairs' is not computable in accordance with a departmental logic. The Roma community are the recipients of the same educational, health, welfare, and employment policy arrangements, are members of the same society, as anyone else.

Assembling any ‘thematic budget’ is, in some sense, bound to be an arbitrary exercise, for it would only be transparent if, on the lines of specific budgetary provisions, its revenue streams were earmarked, or in other words, could only be directed to a specified goal. Thus a separate, targeted ‘thematic budget’ is no more than an arbitrary grouping of budgetary expenditures (just expenditures!).

The aggregation of expenditures aimed, in whole or part, at the Roma community is misleading for another reason, however. Government press releases talk about dynamic growth of ‘expenditures targeted at the Roma community’. According to one such release by the Office of the Prime Minister, the HUF 7,200 million allocated for support of the Roma community in the year 2000 was “exactly two and a half times” what the previous Horn government had nominally allocated, whilst a government announcement in 2001 claimed that in that year “support for the Roma community has grown by 30%”, though what that meant in reality was only that the ICGA had totted up a nominal HUF 9,500 million in disbursements. By 2002 the ICGA had aggregated a planned expenditure of HUF 12,000 million. The announcement of this apparent expansion of funding leaves unspoken the fact that these are negligible amounts in the wider scheme of state expenditures. The prime function of the ‘Roma budget’ is to camouflage real trends in the redistribution of payments, the performance of the big welfare provision items, and the main trends in public education. As against the glowing picture suggested by such reports of ‘support for the Roma community’, the reality is that in recent years there has been a significant shift in the distribution of welfare disbursements in favour of the middle classes and to the detriment of the poorer strata in society; the welfare provision system has become highly segmented, with different groups being handled differently in respect of how benefits are received, depending on their income; and segregationist tendencies in the public education system have been accelerating.

The separated ‘Roma budget’ in 2002

The composition and sum of the expenditures accounted for by the ICAG are influenced by four factors: 1) completed and on-going PHARE projects and the government’s matching funding; 2) the government’s priorities; 3) the mechanism that encourages a maximisation of expenditures ascribed to Roma affairs; and 4) the ineffectiveness of any underlying principle for the resulting scales of financing.

To examine each of these in turn:

- 1) **PHARE projects.** This is not the place for a detailed analysis of all PHARE projects. The most important of these was one with the title *Support for social integration of cumulatively disadvantaged young people primarily in the Roma community*, which invited applications for what might be seen as too many purposes, given the sums involved and the explicit objectives. The two explicit objectives – reducing the student drop-out rate from general schools and boosting secondary education – were in any case two comprehensive strategic goals of public education. It is therefore near-

ly impossible to judge the effectiveness of applications that were awarded under the basic programmes in relation to the explicit objectives of those programmes; applications may be assessed, at best, in terms of how well they achieved their own stated objectives. Much the same is true of projects aimed at integrating and reintegrating job markets. A conspicuously wide variety of PHARE projects were related to other programmes, for instance, the development of teachers, alternative teachers and teacher training programmes, ‘welfare innovation’ programmes, the training of dispute mediators, and the training of experts who come into contact with the Roma community in the course of their work. Another equally definite trend for funding was the establishment and development of Roma community centres and support for their programmes. A strong lobby group within the government pushed for enhanced funding of community centres in general, and Roma centres in particular, with calls for normative funding to such centres and those running them.

Table 5.1: PHARE projects involving the Roma community 1999–2003

Responsible department	PHARE project	Basic programmes	Total expenditure (€ millions)
Ministry of Education – Ministry of Social and Family Affairs	Support for social integration of cumulatively disadvantaged young students primarily in the Roma community I. HU-99.04.01	Reduction of general school student drop-out rate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training programmes for children’s nurses • Teacher training and further training programmes • Development of teaching programmes • Improved hygiene in nursery and general schools • School bus programme 	12.5
		Secondary education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmes for remedial training and subject tutoring • Extramural programmes • Boosting further education chances for Roma students • Setting up residential schools at Szolnok and Ózd • Programmes to support gifted secondary-school students and prepare them for higher education and vocational training 	
Ministry of Education	Support for social integration of cumulatively disadvantaged young students primarily in the Roma community II.	Setting up Roma community and information centres	10.0
		Training of dispute mediators	
		Adaptation and elaboration of alternative programmes serving to help disadvantaged young and primarily Roma students catch up and develop their skills	
		Courses and training in Roma studies for higher education students and those coming into contact with the Roma community in the course of their work	
		EQUAL component: training to improve job-market skills	

Responsible department	PHARE project	Basic programmes	Total expenditure (€ millions)
	Trial project to facilitate transition from the world of training to that of employment HU- 00.08.02		5.3
Office of the Prime Minister	Programme for social integration of the Roma community HU-00.02.01	Welfare innovation projects	3.5
		Anti-discrimination programme	
		Central database within the Office for National and Ethnic Minorities	
Economics Ministry, later Ministry of Employment and Labour	Countering exclusion from the workforce HU-02.01.04	Workforce integration programme for provision of social services building on local initiatives	10.8
		Local initiatives aimed at workforce integration based on improving the living standards and social integration of cumulatively disadvantaged groups in the population, especially the Roma, particularly through environmental protection, environmental health and renewal actions, the maintenance and development of community infrastructure, the renovation or demolition of areas of colony-type housing, and the provision of social services.	
Ministry of Employment and Labour	Enhancing the employ-ability and employment of the disadvantaged HU-00.08.03	Workforce reintegration of three disadvantaged groups – the Roma, cumulatively disadvantaged young, and the mentally handicapped – in three economically backward regions	2.4

Table 5.2: Government contribution to individual PHARE projects

Responsible department	PHARE project	Expenditure (HUF 000)
Ministry of Education	Support for social integration of cumulatively disadvantaged young students primarily in the Roma community – Reduction of general school student drop-out rate	103,000
Government contribution	Roma social integration programme	178,000
Total		281,000

- 2) **Government budget.** In this context, the following points may be made: The two declared *priorities* of the Orbán government in relation to the Roma community, from 1998 onwards, were “work and learning”. In reality, though, the priorities were largely designed to justify the government’s generally divisive policies to public opinion in the majority society. The reasons for the disadvantages suffered by the Roma community in the workforce and in schools were not explored, nor were any strategies evolved to address the situation. The government’s sole visible measure was to expand the scholarship system. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development fought at length for demolition or renovation of Roma colonies to be included as one of the government’s high-priority targets, but the Office of the Prime Minister rejected the department’s proposals.
- 3) The annual exercise of assembling a ‘Roma budget’, by its very nature, gives ministries an *incentive* to allocate as much of their expenditure as possible to Roma-related outlays, inasmuch as the ICGA is one of the bodies that has to approve the departments’ annual action plans and the associated sums. Besides that, during the latter part of its term of office, there were external pressures on the Orbán government to encourage it to boost the sums of money that were accounted for as being channeled towards the Roma community. The asylum granted by France to some of the Roma families from the community of Zámoly who applied for refugee status in 2001 [???], the imposition of visa restrictions on entry of Hungarians into Canada, and condemnatory remarks regarding the plight of Hungary’s Roma population in EU assessments of the country all served as warnings to the government that the international repercussions of the domestic Roma situation were more important than had seemed to be the case earlier. That induced certain shifts of emphasis.
- 4) *Baselining* (i.e. the automatic indexing of previous expenditures) likewise plays a major part in the assembly of the ‘Roma budget’ (as indeed it does in any other budgetary planning exercise; even supposedly zero-based budgeting is generally an illusion in practice). Expenditure items that are firmly anchored in the budget include, for example, the financial support given to local minority self-governments and civic bodies, the National Gypsy Information and Cultural Centre or the Gandhi High School.

The Roma budget for 2002 totalled HUF 11,502.8 million, of which HUF 10,737.3 million has been broken out here according to departmental responsibilities. If the data provided by government bodies can be relied on, then it can be seen that 41% of expenditure was devoted to employment programmes, whilst 26% was swallowed up by supplementary normative payments intended to boost education of minority groups. The third-largest item was the system of providing student scholarships, much trumpeted by the government at the time, on which 7.4% of the budget was spent. In fourth place was the sum

disbursed on financing local minority self-governments and civic bodies, which accounted for 6.4 of the budget total, whilst the financing diverted to the development of public educational institutions remains substantial, at 5.2% of the total.

Yet there are cogent reasons for considering net additional funding only, which strips out a substantial portion of these expenditures. One item of this sort is the funding of supplementary normative payments for the public education sector (HUF 2,940 million), which can safely be omitted, partly because the local self-governments that actually run the schools use the sums for other purposes, and partly because the dysfunctional effect of sums that are used for this purpose has been demonstrated by repeated surveys. The budget portions that are projected as going to the Roma community under the programmes for public and community work and agrarian social support (a total of HUF 2,610 million) can likewise be deducted, because the amounts apportioned to Roma recipients are based on estimates, and there are plenty of indications that even the government does not seriously find them credible.

From another point of view, an uptake by the Roma (or any other ethnic) minority group can be imputed for public expenditure on any programme that has a broad, ‘non-discriminatory’ target group. Lastly, one is also entitled to ignore the HUF 691.7 million funding given to local minority self-governments and civic bodies. These items together amount to no less than 58% of the aggregate total expenditure identified here, with the remaining 42% amounting to HUF 4,495.6 million.

If one attempts to unravel the government intentions that are enshrined in these subsidies, four main lines of approach are discernible:

- Through the subsidies for public education, the educational authorities give the appearance of warring with themselves, attempting to push against the current broad trends – most notably segregation – in that sector, which are detrimental to the Roma community. The main underlying reason for worsening social and ethnic segregation in Hungary is the principle of essentially totally free parental choice of school, exceedingly liberal even by international standards, which permits middle-class families to select the schools they deem suitable for their children – an unconstrained process of segregation over which any government has little influence. A second reason is the ever-growing subsidy that is being channeled towards remedial education, which plays a large part in the fact that some 22% of the country’s Roma pupils are now attending remedial classes or schools. A third reason for the growing segregation are the norms that dictate when catch-up schooling is justified for a child, under a variety of pretexts, which again sanctions the separate streaming of Roma pupils within schools that give a standard education.
- Projects to promote employment attempt to help Roma individuals who have been excluded from the job market into work by way of income-support or special reintegration programmes. However, it is not always possible or desirable to give special treatment to Roma individuals within the general target group – the long-term

unemployed – who need to be reintegrated into the job market. One weakness of interventions against explicitly discriminative exclusion has been that the Orbán government was categorically opposed to bringing in comprehensive anti-discriminatory legislation.

- Regional development subsidies are relatively modest, largely because the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development’s plan for clearing of Roma colonies fell through in the autumn of 2001.
- Some of the legal-aid and anti-discrimination projects and legal-aid networks were initiated by the government, at least in part, to counteract activities of non-governmental legal-aid bodies that it was occasionally finding troublesome.

Table 5.3: Breakdown of the Roma budget for 2002

Purpose of subsidy	Subsidy (HUF 000)	Proportion of total funding (%)
Government contribution to PHARE-programmes	281	2.6
Study scholarships	797,849	7.4
Development of public educational institutions	567,050	5.2
Children’s camps	10,000	0.09
Development of curriculum and educational programmes, publications and research	25,000	0.2
Top-up funding for nursery, general and secondary school places that may be diverted to education of children from ethnic minorities	2,800,000	26.0
Supplementary payments for lower-grade general school pupils that may be diverted to education of children from ethnic minorities	140,000	1.3
Training for officials coming into contact with the Roma community	10,800	0.1
Development of cultural institutions	70,000	0.6
Cultural projects	21 000	0.2
Employment and income support programmes, programmes for reintegration into job market	4,468,000	41.0
Other welfare outlays	95,000	0.8
Regional development	284,100	2.6
Health protection programmes and research	234,100	2.1
Interior ministry, law-enforcement programmes	17,900	0.16
Legal aid, anti-discrimination and conflict resolution programmes	143,500	1.3
Information, communication, media	50,900	0.4
Other expenditures	29,500	0.2
Funding for the National Gypsy Minority Self-Government, local Roma minority self-governments and social organisations	691,700	6.4
Total	10,737,300	100.0

The rapidly expanding scholarship scheme is the largest item amongst the expenditures for educational purposes, and at the same time the showcase programme of the government's Roma policy. The principle of the scholarships is to award them, as far as possible, to every applicant who meets the criteria that have been laid down. The number of Roma youngsters who received a scholarship grant of some kind was 7,580 in school year 2000-01, which rose to 12,588 in school year 2001-02. In 2000 a sum of HUF 193.335 million was paid out in scholarships, and by 2002 this had reached HUF 797.849 million. Although the calculation is not entirely appropriate, given the variety of available scholarships, that amounts to an average support of HUF 68,381 per student, or HUF 6,338 per month during a ten-month school year.

The importance of that sum should not be underestimated as it can represent a substantial addition to the income for poor Roma families living in small villages, in addition to which the money is not granted to pupils as a demeaning welfare payment but as an entitlement in recognition of their hard work. Notwithstanding its necessity, however, the scholarship scheme in itself is not a sufficient condition for Roma pupils to catch up on their less disadvantaged peers.

Table 5.4: Study scholarships

Administering body	Purpose of subsidy	Target group	Expenditure (HUF 000)
Ministry of Education	Higher education or pre-entry training of young Roma students	Expenses for 328 and pre-entry training for 68 students	9,000
Ministry of Justice		12,588 students	650,000
Public Foundation for the Gypsies of Hungary			86,000
Public Foundation for the National and Ethnic Minorities of Hungary			52,000
Ministry of Interior	Study grants for Roma youngsters		849
Total			797,849

The largest single items under the heading of development of public educational institutions were the subvention given to the expansion and running costs of the Gandhi High School and for expanding the residential capacity for Roma students at secondary-school level. In 2002, money from the PHARE programme was channeled to secondary-school student hostels at Szolnok and Ózd, though the latter subsequently proved to be one of biggest fiascoes in Roma funding.

Table 5.5: Development of public educational institutions

Administering body	Purpose of subsidy	Target group	Expenditure (HUF 000)
Ministry of Education	Expansion of residential capacity at secondary schools	Places for 286 Roma students	23,000
Ministry of Education	Public institutions assuming a conspicuous role in education of the Gypsy minority	187 institutions	25,000
Ministry of Education	János Arany programme for talented youngsters within the framework of the basic residential college programme for encouraging talent	13 students at Collegium Martineum, 16 at Ádám Vay High School, 18 at Don Bosco Middle School	11,250
Ministry of Education	Funding Roma studies at institutions of higher education		4,000
Ministry of Education, Gandhi Public Foundation	Investments in and running costs of Gandhi High School	(of which operational subsidy:	403,800 88,000)
Ministry of Education, Public Foundation for the Gypsies of Hungary	Development workshop places at institutions undertaking vocational training of Roma youngsters		100,000
Total			567,050

Table 5.6: Children's camps

Administering body	Purpose of subsidy	Expenditure (HUF 000)
Ministry for the National Cultural Heritage	Funding camps to transmit Roma traditions and lifestyles to Gypsy children	10,000
Total		10,000

Table 5.7: Training for officials coming into contact with the Roma community

Administering body	Purpose of subsidy	Expenditure (HUF 000)
Ministry of Education	Accredited further training courses for teachers engaging in education of Roma pupils	8,300
Ministry for the National Cultural Heritage	Training of experts working for Gypsy communities	2,500
Total		10,800

Table 5.8: Development of curriculum and educational programmes, publications and research

Administering body	Purpose of subsidy	Expenditure (HUF 000)
Ministry of Education	Research to assist education for the Roma minority	4,000
Ministry of Education	Finalisation of requirements for Beash and Romany languages; publication of outline ethnological curriculum	1,000
Ministry of Education	Publication of proven teaching programmes for education of the Roma minority	10,000
Ministry for the National Cultural Heritage	Preparation and publication of accessible educational, cultural and methodological auxiliary materials in the Beash and Romany languages	10,000
Total		25,000

One ‘obligatory’ item that falls under the financing of cultural institutions and programmes is the running cost of the National Gypsy Information and Cultural Centre and, albeit only to a very limited extent, funding for its programmes; this is automatic in the same way as for any other in-built budgeted institution.

It is very hard to judge the extent to which funding of such public cultural institutions and non-governmental organisations can be considered as Roma-targeted expenditures. Subsidies provided under the heading of forming a realistic image of Gypsies have mostly gone towards assisting one-off programmes broadcast by Radio ‘C’ or other local media.

Table 5.9: Development of cultural institutions

Administering body	Purpose of subsidy	Expenditure (HUF 000)
Ministry for the National Cultural Heritage	Development of a network of public cultural institutions	26,000
Ministry for the National Cultural Heritage	Running costs of and programme funding for the National Gypsy Information and Cultural Centre	37,000 (of which programme subsidy: 2,000)
Ministry for the National Cultural Heritage	Running costs for associations, societies, clubs, etc. that meet nationwide cultural objectives	7,000
Total		70,000

Table 5.10: Cultural projects

Administering body	Purpose of subsidy	Expenditure (HUF 000)
Ministry for the National Cultural Heritage	Cultural programmes aimed at creating a realistic image of Gypsies	7,500
Ministry for the National Cultural Heritage	Publication of a Romany-Hungarian dictionary	4,000
Ministry for the National Cultural Heritage	One-off cultural events	8,000
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Publication of a CD-ROM on 'Contemporary Roma painters'	1,500
Total		21,000

The largest sum spent by the government on Roma affairs in 2002 went to financing employment initiatives. According to a report by the Office for National and Ethnic Minorities, around 4,700 unemployed people took part in various reintegration programmes in the country's capital and 14 counties, including the Roma 'start' programme, the reintegration programme for Roma families, the catch-up programme for youngsters embarking on careers, etc. Admittedly, not all participants were from the Roma community – not that there is anything wrong with that, of course – and these complex programmes also formed parts of programmes of public and community work, but that does indicate a degree of caution, if only in the sense of not aggregating the expenditures on them with the other items of the Roma budget. It is positively helpful from a vocational standpoint if programmes of public and community work are tied in with training that assists participants to exit them and go into the mainstream job market. The biggest problem of the employment programmes, apart from the relatively small number of participants, is that they cannot be adapted to the multi-component strategies the Roma often need to make a livelihood.

Table 5.11: Employment and income-support programmes, programmes to assist reintegration into job market

Administering body	Purpose of subsidy	Uptake by Roma target group	Expenditure (HUF 000)
Ministry of Social and Family Affairs	Public work programmes	(estimated) 46% (portion attributed to Roma target group: 1,500,000)	3,250,000
Ministry of Social and Family Affairs	Agrarian social programme	(estimated) 46% (portion attributed to Roma target group: 260,000)	570,000
Ministry of Economic Affairs	Employment and training programmes to improve the position of long-term unemployed in the job market	Mainly Roma	1,355,000

Ministry of Economic Affairs	Support for unemployed youngsters seeking to enter the job market	Mainly Roma	50,000
Ministry of Economic Affairs	Community work programmes		Portion attributed to Roma target group: 850,000
Ministry of Economic Affairs, Országos Foglalkoztatási Közalapítvány	Programmes aimed and employment of the Gypsy population and reintegration into the workforce	Roma	243,000
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complex development programmes directed at regional development • Leader program VFC [mi ez?] • Support for producers' cooperatives 	Partly Roma	210,000
Total			4,468,000

Table 5.12: Other welfare outlays

Administering body	Purpose of subsidy	Expenditure (HUF 000)
Ministry of Social and Family Affairs	Subsidies for programmes of Roma social organisations and for achieving family policy goals	95,000
Total		95,000

The expenditures on regional development subsidies bear the marks of the miscarried notion of clearing the country's Gypsy colonies, since the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development had drawn up plans for that project by the autumn of 2001, but the Interministerial Committee for Gypsy Affairs considered the necessary draft legislation inappropriate and rejected it.

In doing so, the ICGA created a precedent, in that although there had been previous instances where this committee turned down action plans by a ministry, or its proposals for implementing an action plan, it was unprecedented for it to condemn such a major piece of draft legislation as unfit for parliamentary debate. The notion was judged to be technically ill-founded, especially in relation to its huge projected funding costs. Equally, though, it needs to be borne in mind that the status of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development had eroded substantially by the autumn of 2001, and the government, through the ICGA, did not wish to commit itself to such a costly, long-term project.

The thwarted plan sought budgetary support of no less than HUF 43,000 million over five years for the renovation or clearing of Gypsy colonies, the most decisive feature of which was that local self-governments would have been entrusted with making the choice of which of the two routes – renovation or clearing – it wished to go down. The plan's crit-

ics were concerned that the billions of funding that were to be earmarked for the ambitious project would, in reality, be employed on local development plans and would serve only to exacerbate even more the existing spatial isolation of Roma communities from the majority society.

Following the change in government during 2002, the task of colony renovation/clearing has been transferred to the Office of the Prime Minister, but there is no indication as yet in its budget estimates that the new government is preparing to put any large-scale efforts into that area. The amounts set aside within the Roma budget are thus small change, which would only be of significance if they related to a genuine project.

Table 5.13: Regional development

Administering body	Purpose of subsidy	Expenditure (HUF 000)
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, National Gypsy Self-Government	Top-up of strict apportionment from central allocation for regional development	250,000
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development	Pro-rata allocation to prevent the replication of colony-type residential neighbourhoods	25,000
Ministry of Health	Remediation of the conditions of colony-type residential neighbourhoods	2,100
Ministry of Environmental Protection	Research into the health problems of Gypsy families living in colony-type residential neighbourhoods	7,000
Total		284,100

The biggest item amongst the health protection programmes is that for building a screening-treatment network. It is highly dubious whether this sum can truly be counted as support for the Roma community, just as it also stretches credibility to make a provision for support from expert organisations within the health sector.

Table 5.14: Health protection programmes and research

Administering body	Purpose of subsidy	Expenditure (HUF 000)
Ministry of Health	Research by the National Research Institute for Health Development	6,000
Ministry of Health, ÁNTSZ	Building screening-treatment network	208,057
Ministry of Health	Achieving Roma-related objectives of national health programme	18,100
Ministry of Health	Grants to health-sector expert organisations	2,000
Total		234,100

The expenditures allocated for interior ministry and law-enforcement objectives in relation to the Roma community are slight and, to put it politely, somewhat vague in content. Under the heading ‘International relations, seminars, conferences’, for example, the department has included a communications programme with the Netherlands and a communal programme to be implemented with the cooperation of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. It takes a vivid imagination to picture there being any Roma beneficiaries of this anyway insubstantial budget amount.

Table 5.16: Interior ministry, law-enforcement programmes

Administering body	Purpose of subsidy	Expenditure (HUF 000)
Ministry of Interior	Training in ethnological background of Gypsies at police vocational schools and college, acquisition of teaching materials	2,950
Ministry of Interior	Training for police commanders	1,000
Ministry of Interior	Preparatory course for Gypsy youngsters seeking to enter police force	2,500
Ministry of Interior	Research into relations between the Roma community and law enforcement agencies	2,500
Ministry of Interior	Programmes to promote cooperation between	2,056
Ministry of Interior	the police and local Gypsy minority self-governments International relations, seminars, conferences	7,000
Total		17,900

During the life of the Orbán government, the latter ministry – though opposed in principle to introducing any form of anti-discrimination legislation, despite Hungary’s international treaty obligations to do so – saw fit to set up a legal advice network.

Table 5.17: Legal aid, anti-discrimination and conflict management programmes

Administering body	Purpose of subsidy	Expenditure (HUF 000)
Ministry of Interior	Conflict-management programmes	2,000
Ministry of Interior	Drawing up an anti-discrimination roadmap	5,000
Ministry of Justice	Lawyers’ network for Roma individuals in anti-discrimination cases	20,000
Ministry of Justice	Allocation for coordination and intervention in cases involving minority community members (portion attributed to Roma target group: 96,500)	193,000
Office for National and Ethnic Minorities	Grants to legal-aid offices and conflict-management organisations for Gypsies	20,000
Total		143,500

The bulk of the not negligible portion of budget expenditures serving information purposes that was allocated to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was devoted to propaganda materials directed at public opinion outside the country. Particularly towards the end of its term in office, the Orbán government felt it was necessary to spell out for foreign public opinion the efforts that it had made on behalf of the interests of the Roma community.

Table 5.17: Information, communication, media

Administering body	Purpose of subsidy	Expenditure (HUF 000)
Ministry of Economic Affairs	Information brochures, leaflets	2,000
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development	Publication of methodological information brochures	800
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development	Organising information forums	20,000
Ministry of Interior	Preparation of information materials	869
Office for National and Ethnic Minorities	Conciliation talks aimed at harmonising activities of organisations supporting media that serve the Gypsy minority	500
Office for National and Ethnic Minorities	Communications programme related to implementation of medium-term package of measures	10,000
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Producing publication <i>The Gypsy Question in Hungary</i>	4,400
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Information booklet on the Roma in the 'Facts about Hungary' series	3,000
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Publishing document on long-term strategy	1,000
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Grant to programme on EU integration produced by Radio 'C'	1,200
Total		50,900

Table 5.18: Other expenditures

Administering body	Purpose of subsidy	Expenditure (HUF 000)
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development	Preparation for expert representation of Gypsies	20,000
Office for National and Ethnic Minorities	Training programmes to assist cooperation of Gypsy minority local self-governments and organisations	8,000
Office for National and Ethnic Minorities	Tasks of the Interministerial Committee for Gypsy Affairs	1,500
Total		29,500

The subvention given to local minority self-governments and civic bodies is greater than the total sum allocated to supporting public educational establishments. That in itself is not decisive in trying to judge whether the amount is large or small: the system of minority local self-government is not mistaken in principle, but the financing of their operations – and thus of local Roma self-governments – remains an unresolved issue. Self-governments at the national level receive subventions directly from the budget, whereas local minority self-governments are funded both by central government and by the wider local community’s self-government, which tends to undermine their decision-making autonomy and makes it questionable whether they can avail themselves of their tightly circumscribed right of approval.

Table 5.19: Funding for the National Gypsy Minority Self-Government, local Roma minority self-governments and social organisations

Subsidised body	Subsidy (HUF 000)
National Gypsy Minority Self-Government	188,300
Local Gypsy minority self-governments	469,600
Gypsy social organisations	33,700
Total	691,700

6. EDUCATION

1) SCHOOL SEGREGATION IN THE ENCS DISTRICT

In this section, through the example of a comprehensive survey of the administrative district of Encs – situated in Zemplén County, in the north-eastern corner of Hungary, roughly midway between Miskolc and Sárospatak – we would like to demonstrate how the socio-economic changes of the past decade and free choice of school have transformed the structure of schooling in an area that is in the process of homogenising, or ghettoising, in ethnic terms, and specifically how segregation within and between schools has arisen.⁶

Annual school statistics are available to track the demographic and ethnic changes in the area under study.⁷ The proportion of Gypsy children in the schools of the Encs district (then designated as a *járás*) was 21.9% in 1989 – 2.7% higher than that in 1980. Although that ratio had risen over the intervening decade, the absolute number of Gypsy children had fallen, as had the number and ratio of non-Gypsy children, from which it may be inferred that non-Gypsy families were able to move away from the district more easily than Gypsy families.

Between 1989 and 1992 the proportion of Gypsy children rose by a further 3.2%, but by now their number was also growing, along with population of the district, whilst the number of non-Gypsy children continued to decline. One may conjecture that the lower-status Gypsy families who were increasingly left in the area were no longer able to move away, whilst those who had lost jobs as factories in the region closed down, most notably in Miskolc, were moving back to the area.

The school statistics for 1992 and the survey of schools in the district (since redesignated as a *kistérség*) that we undertook in 2002 do not relate to precisely the same administrative unit, though the earlier *járás* covered a larger area than the present *kistérség*, so the data for 1992 and 2002 are not directly comparable. There is no doubt, however, that there was a significant increase – by 15.8% – in the proportion of Gypsy children of school age, and in 2002 their ratio on the rolls of the district's general schools was 43.6%.

In regard to the broader demographics of the district, the several decades-long decline in the population of Encs came to a halt, and indeed has even begun to increase again. This reversal of a long-standing demographic trend has gone hand in hand with a more far-reaching switch of population, and more particularly in the ethnic composition of the population. The total number of school-age children has been in continuous decline, down to the present day, but that decline is restricted to non-Gypsy children: since 1989 the number (and thus ratio) of Gypsy children, in the district's schools has grown markedly.

⁶ This survey was carried out under the direction of István Kemény within the framework of one of the independent sub-programmes of research being conducted at the Institute for Minorities Research of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. For an analysis of residential segregation, see: Tünde Virág, "Gettósodó térség (A ghettoising area)," *Kritika*, (2003, April):

⁷ Gábor Kertesi and Gábor Kézdi, *A cigány népesség Magyarországon* [The Gypsy population in Hungary]. Budapest: Kiadó??, 1998.

These social processes have also had a substantial impact on the spatial location of the various ethnic groups within the population. Currently, there are 17 settlements within the district where the Gypsy families live in ghettoised circumstances, totally segregated from the majority population, and a further 16 settlements where a process of conspicuous ethnic homogenisation is under way. The inhabitants of these villages have become both spatially and socially separated from other social strata, their contacts with those belonging to outside groups minimal and strongly hierarchised, with no other groups to act as models or points of reference. This phenomenon is completely new in respect of both its magnitude and its form, going beyond what could be interpreted as the rural Gypsy colony or ghettoised hamlet categories of previous eras.

In parallel with the growing inequalities in society and between regions that have been occurring in Hungary since the 1989-90 change in régime, a growing selectivity has been taking place within schools, grounded on various sources of financing and ideological rationales. Alongside the sharp rise in residential segregation or ghettoisation of the Gypsy populace within certain villages and urban neighbourhoods, similar efforts on the part of the majority society have played a key role in the rise of school segregation. A school system always has to operate within the prevailing socio-economic state of affairs, and it may serve either to reduce or to exacerbate existing inequalities. In the present case, the educational system and schools are not diminishing but very considerably magnifying residential inequalities, the segregation and ghettoisation of settlements.

Inter-school segregation

In the course of implementing the 1971 regional development plan innumerable hamlet schools were closed and the pupils moved to the district centre. School closures accelerated village depopulation even further, with what were in any case only a sprinkling of better-educated residents in particular more or less completely abandoning the smaller settlements.

After 1990, local self-governments, within the limited possibilities open to them, were able to decide where and under what conditions the school-age children within their area were going to be taught. The range of those possibilities essentially coincided with the differences between settlements within the area. Thus, the inhabitants of higher social status in the more prosperous villages were able to take their pick amongst schools, all of which were eager to fill their enrolment targets, and so either keep existing schools going or even have new schools opened. The local self-governments of settlements with predominantly low-status residents – often a majority of them Gypsies – had to consider themselves lucky if the children from those families were tolerated within the school district. On top of that, parents were free to opt whether to place their children within a school offered by the local self-government or to enroll them in another school of their own choosing.

On the basis of the experiences gathered in the field and interviews conducted with teachers and parents in the course of the survey, it became abundantly clear that the ratio of Gypsies within the school-age population was significantly higher than the national mean, and that it was this ratio within the schools that was the primary and most decisive factor in parents' choice of a school for their child.

The proportion of Gypsy children amongst the pupils enrolled at general schools within the district being surveyed was 43.6% in 2002. The differences between the various schools is readily apparent if they are grouped according to the ratio of Gypsy to non-Gypsy pupils on their rolls. One-quarter of all general-school age children in the district – 25.8% – were enrolled in schools in Encs itself, the only small town within the district. In these schools – with the exception of a two-class feeder school in the part of the town that is heavily populated by Gypsies – the ratio of Gypsy children is close to half (24.3%) the average for the district as a whole, which is an indication of the relatively privileged position both of the town and its schools. A further 39.3% of the children are taught in 14 schools where the ratio of Gypsy children is below 50%, whilst almost the same proportion (34.9%) are taught in 14 schools where the ratio of Gypsy children is above 50%, amongst which are five schools where that figure is higher than 80, making them, in effect, almost Gypsy-only schools.

Overall, it is clear, first of all, that there is a strong concentration of schools in the district centre and, second, that a process of segregation has been occurring amongst the schools of the smaller settlements, in parallel with the ethnic homogenisation and ghettoisation of those settlements: residential segregation has led to a polarisation of the schools. To put it another way, within the education supplied by general schools run by one and the same local authority there have been established 'central' schools, where the ratio of Gypsy pupils is relatively low, and other schools, where the ratio of Gypsy pupils is a conspicuously high, and not uncommonly close to all-Gypsy enrollment.

In order to account in some way for that situation, it is necessary to trace the changes that have taken place within the district's school structure over the past decade or so. Attention will be focused in what follows on outlining those processes and phenomena which, in altering that structure, have exacerbated the inequalities that arise from the spatial distribution of the schools.

(a) Establishment of new schools

Since 1990 four schools where teaching had been phased out years before, on account of boundary revisions or falling pupil rolls, have been restarted.

Two of the schools were reopened in 1991. These were similar inasmuch as although both reopened with very small intakes – 31 and 26 children – they operate as independent schools, with teaching to mixed-age combined classes and covering the whole eight years of the general-school curriculum. They are both located in more prosperous villages which have virtually no Gypsy residents.

By founding these schools, the families of the village were seeking to separate their children from the not negligible numbers of Gypsy pupils at the district school they had been attending up to that point, even if that was at the cost of teaching in mixed-age classes.

The other two schools were reopened as feeder schools, one in 1990, the other in 1996. Both operate in ethnically homogeneous areas with only Gypsy pupils. Although the communities thereby regained schools that had been lost due to earlier boundary changes, these have only been able to operate as 'Gypsy schools' on account of the residential segregation. It is virtually impossible for the local self-governments of such ghettoised communities to provide the material and teaching resources that are required to provide an adequate standard of education, so that – without any special external intervention – the handicaps already placed on the children are reinforced: the schools are unable to offer any opportunity for mobility.

(b) The emergence of a strong concentration of schools within Encs

With the population of the district centre undergoing significant growth up until the 1990s, its schools infrastructure was built up accordingly. In 1987, when enrollment at the one general school hit one thousand pupils, a new school was opened. Currently, all the children from families of higher social status attend the school. Both schools worked for a time with a feeder school for the lower age-groups. One that used to be attended by children from better-off families was closed because of falling rolls, and those children were switched to the main general school, whereas teaching in the other feeder school, which is attended only by Gypsy children, is at present conducted in one or two classes, though it has been proposed to expand this to four classes.

In 1995-96, schools in two other settlements signalled a wish to link formally with the higher-status general school in Encs. In both settlements the schools had only taught the junior-level classes, with pupils going on from there to attend senior-level classes at schools in other settlements.

It was obviously seen as advantageous for parents residing in these two settlements to send their children on to the more prestigious district school. The school in Encs had its own incentive for such a link, in that the bigger rolls would bring in a bigger capitation grant than it had received previously. It therefore uses that additional capitation, along with other grants, to fund a school bus to ferry children to and from the partner schools and the more outlying areas of the town. Besides the prestige from their undoubted teaching expertise, by keeping the ratio of Gypsy children relatively low, as compared with other schools in the district, the two schools in the town have established a central role that makes the better-off, non-Gypsy families feel obliged to enroll their children with them, if at all possible. Thus the finance and other resources that these schools attract are improving even as the number of children residing within the town is steadily falling.

(c) Growth in the number of children being taught outside the school district

A total of 871 school-age children live in Encs and the communities that are linked to it. Our own survey revealed that 1,192 pupils were being taught in the town's schools. The difference of 321 pupils may be attributed to two factors: pupils who are being brought in from the partner schools and children from outside settlements whose parents choose to send there. Post-1989 liberalisation, through the right to choose the school for one's child, has made it possible for parents to determine where their children will receive a suitable education. It hardly needs saying that it is parents of higher social status, better placed to enforce their rights, who are able to take real advantage of this. In the case under study, parental choice has turned whole schools, indeed virtually a whole school district, into little more than 'Gypsy schools'.

Of the total general school-age population taught at schools within the Encs administrative district (*kistérség*), 323 (7%) come from outside the school district in which they reside. Of those, 61.6% are enrolled at the two general schools in Encs itself, making up 21% of the pupils at the newer school and 11% at the older school. The number of such children enrolled by parental wish into the two Encs schools is altogether 199, of whom just five were reckoned by teachers to be of Gypsy descent.

The fact that the ratio of Gypsy children within a school is what fundamentally drives parental choice is illustrated by the example of another school district. Parents in the village of Hernádvécse send as many of their children to the general school at Novajidrány, 5 km to the south-west, as are sent from Novajidrány to the two schools in Encs, a further 7.5 km to the south-west. The fact that Novajidrány's school functions both as a receiver and a feeder school is purely because the Encs schools are not readily accessible from Hernádvécse: the ratio of Gypsy children in Novajidrány's general school is half that in the school at Hernádvécse, even if that in turn is twice the ratio in the two Encs schools. This suggests that a hierarchy of schools within the Encs administrative district as a whole could readily be constructed, based on a settlement's ease of access to, or geographical distance from, the centre in Encs and the ratio of Gypsy children within a school.

Parental choice over schooling has had the curious result that in settlements belonging to four different school districts in this particular administrative area the Gypsy:non-Gypsy ratio amongst school-age children resident in the village differs significantly from that amongst the children attending the local general school, which have thereby, in effect, become 'Gypsy schools'. One of the most serious consequences of that is the strong negative selection pressure it exerts on teachers. For the most part, teachers are loath to work in either 'all-Gypsy' or strongly 'Gypsifying' schools, where they are confronted with special pedagogical problems for which they have not been equipped by their training.

(d) Redrawing school districts

An extreme example of segregation between schools has arisen in one school district where the change in ethnic balance within the settlement, with segregation and ghettoisa-

tion of the Gypsy inhabitants, and the difficulty of reaching the schools in Encs has forced the schools – presumably under pressure from more prosperous, non-Gypsy parents – to alter the boundaries of catchment areas so as to create a better learning environment for their children in which, in this instance, they are taught together with as few problematic Gypsy children as possible.

Four settlements used to fall within the catchment area of the general school in Szalaszend, 7km north of Encs, which has a lower school at Fulókércs, a further 5 km to the north. In 1996 a school was opened at Fáj, 1 km south-west of Fulókércs, where they started teaching 13 (currently 32) Gypsy children in mixed-age junior classes, thereby ‘diluting’ the numbers at Szalaszend’s school. At the same time, a school at Szemere, 3 km north of Fulókércs which had previously been independent was tacked onto the Szalaszend school district whilst continuing to run both junior and senior classes.

Currently, then, there are two junior-class and two full junior- + senior-class general schools within the one school district, which has given the opportunity to implement segregation between schools within the district. Pupils at the Fáj ‘Gypsy school’ may transfer to Szemere for their senior years, whilst the non-Gypsy children and a few Gypsy children pass from Fulókércs junior school to the senior classes at Szalaszend school, whilst the remainder – on the odd grounds of ‘a lack of places’ – go on to the school at Szemere, whilst the non-Gypsy children from Szemere are given assistance to travel to Szalaszend for their education. As a result, three completely segregated ‘Gypsy schools’ have been brought into being alongside the general school at Szalaszend.

Intra-school segregation

In the area chosen for this study it was only possible to examine the phenomenon of within-school segregation – that is to say, the extent to which the social or ethnic background of the children in parallel classes within a given year (e.g. ‘A’, ‘B’ and ‘C’ classes for Year 4 children) differ from one another – in the five schools where pupil numbers were large enough to justify forming separate classes.

In four of the five schools where such parallel classes were operating divergent ratios of Gypsy children were found. At the new school in Encs, the most prestigious in the district, the ratio of Gypsy children was, on average, 7.1% in ‘A’ classes, 17.1% in ‘B’ classes, 23.6% in ‘C’ classes, and 31.7% in ‘D’ classes. At Gönc general school, 20 km away to the north-east, the corresponding ratio was 10.5% in ‘A’ classes and 37.3% in ‘B’ classes.

At two of the five schools the proportion of Gypsy children amongst the pupils was so high anyway that one might suppose there was little scope for such differentiation. One would be mistaken, however, because it was perceptible even here. At Forró general school, where 70% of all the children are of Gypsy background, such children made up 92.6% of the ‘A’ classes but 51.5% of the ‘B’ classes. Much the same can be said of Vilmány, where the overall ratio of Gypsy children within the school is 63.5% yet this is

split between 52.7% in the 'A' classes and 90.7% in the 'B' classes. Through this streaming, the schools divide the children into the 'decent' ones they consider amenable to the school system, and thus teachable, and the 'problematical' ones, who are unteachable with the pedagogical approach that they adopt.

Essentially the same is found if the ratios are looked at from the viewpoint of the poverty rather than ethnicity of the children's families. What that means is that the schools are making a selection amongst the children in classes of the same year according to their parents' social status: children from higher status, 'non-poor' families are in one class, children from poor families in another. Due to the close link between poverty and ethnicity, of course, this selection leads to ethnic segregation.

Summary

Using the example of this single administrative district, we have sought to show how the socio-economic changes of the past decade and free choice of school have transformed the structure of schooling in an area that is in the process of homogenising, or ghettoising, in ethnic terms, and specifically how segregation within and between schools has arisen. By restructuring the schools, the sole remaining institution that offers a chance of mobility, in line with their own interests, those of the district's non-Gypsy inhabitants who, due to the narrowing of opportunities and the fall in property values, are not in a position to move to settlements with better prospects are creating what they regard as the conditions necessary for mobility of their children; meanwhile this segregates the majority of Gypsy children into a group having 'no chance'.

By restructuring the school system on the basis of how Gypsy children are handled, three types of schools have emerged:

- 'Central' schools, in which the proportion of Gypsy children is lower than it is in the local catchment area. Even the better-off, non-Gypsy parents from outside the area place their children in these schools in the not unfounded belief that the school will be able to offer the children a better chance of mobility.
- 'Gypsy' schools, from which non-Gypsy parents remove their children. In these schools a majority of the pupils are multiply disadvantaged children, most of them Gypsies for whom, given teachers who are poorly equipped either pedagogically or in human qualities and in the absence of a peer group to serve as a model, any education that could create a chance of mobility is virtually unrealisable. The disadvantages that derive from residential inequalities are thus perpetuated through the school system.
- Schools in a 'delicate balance', where the settlement and the school's management attempt to fend off problematical Gypsy children and thereby retain the children of non-Gypsy parents. The techniques adopted may include establishment of separate schools, resort to the decades old and by now almost 'traditional' tactic of referring Gypsy children to so-called 'auxiliary' or remedial schools, or adopting segregated streaming within the school.

II) SCHOOL AND EMANCIPATION: THE GANDHI HIGH SCHOOL, PÉCS

The Gandhi Public Foundation High School and Student Home of Pécs is the first ethnic Roma institution in Hungary, and equally in Europe, to be licensed to award secondary school diplomas (*érettségi*). The Gandhi Foundation was legally registered in 1992, having been created by a group of thirty private individuals and organisations with the aim of setting up a diploma-awarding institution in which gifted young Roma students would be given a chance to become academically qualified. The first, and so far only, Roma high school was established at Pécs, and teaching got under way during the 1993/94 school year. Discussions as to whether the Hungarian state should be admitted to the foundation as a thirty-first founder member – in other words, whether it should be turned into a public foundation – came to a close in the autumn of 1994. The most cogent argument in favour of converting to public foundation status was that it had become clear by then that the private civil sphere in Hungary did not possess either the resources or motivation to keep the institution going as a private school. The counter-arguments had been driven mainly by a reluctance to surrender independence: “They’ve nationalised our school,” complained Béla Osztójkán, one of the original founders who opposed the decision and chairman of the Phralipe Independent Gypsy Organisation. In the end, with Resolution 1068 of 12 July 1995, the Horn government decided to establish the Gandhi Public Foundation, which today functions as a strictly non-profit foundation. In so doing, the government avowed that it was undertaking not only to operate the high school at Pécs but also to create and maintain a network of Gandhi-type ethnic high schools throughout the country. Over the ensuing eight years, however, not one of the six planned Roma secondary schools – including, first and foremost, Gandhi-type schools in the Miskolc area and in Budapest – has come to fruition.

Based on the experiences gained with investment in the Gandhi High School and Student Hostel at Pécs, it is fair to state that financing an institution of similar type and size is only possible from the national budget. In Hungary, as things now stand, private sources of funding of the magnitude needed just for set-up purposes, such as were available around or shortly after the 1989-90 change in the country’s régime, no longer exist, and that source is anyway negligible in relation to the amounts needed to provide for running costs. The fact is that a sum of over HUF 1,000 million of one-off investment is needed to set up a single residential school, and that will only be raised with assistance from the state. (The investment in the Pécs school was also supported by smaller grants from the Soros Foundation.) Thus, a visionary series of investments, on a scale commensurate with the importance of the matter, is needed in order to build a network of schools that will even up opportunities for the country’s community of several hundred thousand Roma inhabitants. It is undoubtedly just as necessary that disbursement of budget subventions on such a massive scale needs to be subject to audit, and that is why a public foundation had

to be established. That particular structure has the advantage of allowing funding sources outside the state purse to be tapped (e.g. the EU's PHARE programme, the Soros Foundation's Public Education Development Program, etc.).

The intention of the Gandhi Public Foundation's founding members,⁸ at the time it was incorporated, was therefore that one secondary school and attached student accommodation would be established in each of the regions that, in addition to supplying the curriculum and knowledge sought in Hungary's public school sector, would develop a teaching programme to equip Roma students to deal with the identity problems that are well-nigh unavoidably present in the prejudice-ridden Hungarian education system. Besides reinforcement of a sense of Roma identity and teaching in the native language (the majority of students at the Pécs school are Beash Gypsies from the surrounding region, but there are also Roma pupils who have the Lovari dialect of Romany or Hungarian as their mother-tongue, and during the six and a half years of study they are all taught both the Beash and Lovari languages), one of the prime tasks is to teach the students to take pride in having been born into the Roma community. Equally, though, the starting-point for the teaching programme is that Gypsy children typically receive a poorer quality of primary education than their non-Roma peers since even the brightest of them are often shunted in lower-stream, so-called 'C' classes or, not uncommonly, remedial schools, which offer very limited educational opportunities. The general schools in the south-western region of Hungary, with its many small villages and hamlets, are in any case disadvantaged from the outset in comparison with well-equipped urban institutions and, with the odd exception (e.g. the general school at Magyarmecsek), it is even less likely that the teaching will make allowance to develop pupils' abilities by compensating for gaps in knowledge that derive from the home environment.

Bearing all that in mind, the Gandhi School takes in bright and studious Roma children who are picked out in the second semester of Year 6 at general school by the 'school-visiting' team and then go on to pass an entrance examination. The team needs to be able to build up good relations with the parents as well as the children since, due to the customarily strong family bonds amongst the Roma, parents are generally reluctant to see their children leave for a distant boarding school, not least because the travel costs of home visits by the child, or visits to the school by themselves, often represent a heavy financial burden. For precisely that reason, it is necessary to secure funding for the children who are studying and being brought up at Gandhi High School to cover not only the items that are

⁸ The founder members of the Gandhi Public Foundation are: the Government of the Republic of Hungary, the Foundation for Tending the Memory of Count István Széchenyi, the Alba Circle, the Non-Violent Movement for Peace, the Amalipe Heritage Preservation Society for Gypsy Culture, the Organisation of Southern Somogy Gypsy Representatives, the Bioculture Society, the Gypsy Youth Alliance, the Gypsy Cultural and Educational Society, the Fii Cu Noi Beash Educational Society, the Baranya County Organisation of the Independent Gypsy Alliance, the 'For Youth' Society, the School Citizen Public Life Foundation, the Reformed Church of Hungary's Mission for Rescuing Neglected Young People, the Ormán Region Foundation, the Raoul Wallenberg Society, The Gate of the Teaching Buddhist College, the National Alliance for Safeguarding the Interests of Musician Gypsies, the Welfare Services Foundation, the Szedres Democratic Gypsies' Organisation, along with Éva Orsós, Ákos Topolánszky, Ilona Varga, Mrs. József Tóth, József Ignác, József Bokor, István Victor, János Dési, Menyhért Lakatos, Béla Osztoján and Ildikó Hegyi.

defined in the usual capitation but also special grants that allow costs of travel, possibly clothing, and numerous other needs that arise from a socially disadvantaged background to be met. A food allowance, for instance, is determined after taking into account the parents' circumstances and income, whilst the school covers the costs of three home visits per month (though it is not uncommon that children, particularly the younger ones, who live in the more distant settlements with poor transport connections are ferried by the school microbus), and there is no need to buy any of the teaching materials used in their education as these may be loaned from the school library. The school also subsidises the costs of taking part in cultural events (visits to theatre, cinema, concerts, etc.), whilst the costs of summer camps – which include special programmes like a joint language camp with Germany's Danish minority or the acting course at the Anna Sheer School for Actors in London – are borne by the school and its associated foundations or linguistic institutions. Help is also given to students from difficult social backgrounds – some 60% of those at the school – in securing study scholarships from the state.

The Pécs institution is in no way by itself in a position to fulfil the functions of a secondary-school system for the entire ethnic Roma community of Hungary. Leaving aside questions of distance and travel expenses, the distribution of the country's Roma population into Beash, Romungro and Vlach Gypsy groups alone is justification for the schools that still need to be set up to be regional, rather than national, in their intake.

Establishment of the school

The original idea for the Gandhi High School was hatched during the change in régime in the Baranya County village of Besence, some 30 km due south-west of Pécs and situated in the Ormán region at the southernmost tip of Hungary. It was the brainchild of József Ignác, a young local Roma resident and one of the school's founder members, who shared his ideas with Tibor Derdák, a French teacher and sociologist from Budapest who was then living in the district. They were joined by Péter Heindl, a jurist, and János Bogdán, a lecturer in Hungarian history and philosophy and himself of Beash Gypsy descent, in working out a teaching programme for a boarding high school that, at this early stage, was conceived as being privately run, and later in registering a foundation.

The initial plan was to set up a school in the city of Kaposvár, in neighbouring Somogy County; however, after local residents there protested against the idea of having a Gypsy school in their midst, it was eventually accepted by the self-government of Pécs, then controlled by a Fidesz-SZDSZ coalition. The Gandhi High School and Student Home was thus set up in Pécs after the foundation had purchased the former head-office premises of the Mecsek Coal Mines company. Situated in a housing estate in the Meszes district of the city, largely inhabited by ex-miners who had lost their jobs en masse since 1989, this school represented the sole major investment in the area over the best part of a decade, besides also being the most modern school facility in the entire region, especially after the

completion, in the autumn of 1999, of an indoor sports hall capable of accommodating five hundred people. From the very outset, the founders had reckoned on the new secondary school becoming a cultural centre in this area of the city, all the more as its range of activities includes the following:

- education and nurture, development of abilities, dissemination of knowledge;
- child and youth protection;
- social activities, family assistance, care for the elderly;
- safeguarding cultural heritages;
- promoting equal opportunities for socially disadvantaged groups;
- defending human and civil rights,
activities relating to Hungary's national and ethnic minorities.

The school, which offers six and a half years of secondary school training to put the students through the *érettségi* national secondary-school diploma examination, opened for teaching in 1994. Currently the Gandhi High School has 340 students, and in 2003 the fourth year to complete the course will be sitting for the school diploma. More than half of those leaving the school continue studies at higher education institutions. The level of preparedness of those sitting the diploma is generally higher than that of students turned out by most secondary schools in the country as most of the Gandhi School's students, for instance, also sit a higher-level examination in one or more of the two Gypsy and two foreign languages that they learn. Since 2000, when the first leaving class sat for it, the numbers of Roma students in the region (the intake includes children not just from Baranya, Somogy and Tolna but even from as far away as Fejér, Bács-Kiskun and Zala counties) who gain school diplomas and university degrees has been going up by leaps and bounds from year to year. These are the young people who will be in a position to achieve one of the public foundation's chief goals, that of pulling disintegrated Gypsy communities together again. The success of the high school's students goes well beyond what a school generally expects from its students, and so the demands placed on them are correspondingly greater: they are also needed to help change the prejudices that have grown up in the majority society regarding the lesser teachability and trainability of Gypsy children.

Disputed issues

Even before the school opened, the Gandhi High School and the school model that it stood for were generating hot debate amongst intellectuals, who were agreed on the fundamental issue that an equalising of opportunities for those in the Roma community could brook no more delay, and that those opportunities would have to be sought, first and foremost, via education. The novelty of the model supplied by the Gandhi High School carried particular force in two matters, one of which was the line it took in regard to the Gypsy 'problem'.

According to one group of distinguished sociologists, the Gypsy question is primarily a social question; this is the source of all the other disadvantages, including poor school-

ing, unemployment, the prejudices against them, and a whole lot more. This assertion was significantly bolstered by the fact that a substantial contingent amongst the intellectuals who spearheaded the fight for a change in Hungary's régime had close links with the sociologists who already back in the 1970s, by publicly declaring the existence of poverty in country, had confronted the Communist party and its ideologists, who were anxious to keep quiet about the existence of poverty. One of the consequences of this research into poverty by the school around István Kemény was that a wider public was made aware not only of the existence of a Roma question but also of the idea that the way towards reducing social tensions, as well as enhancing social amenities and, above all, the level of freedom in society, lay through emancipation of the country's Gypsies. The often repeated fact that Hungary's Roma citizens are to be seen as the prime victims of the change in régime further intensified the focus on social provision, whilst it was not entirely immaterial that several of the aforementioned group of intellectuals secured seats in the National Assembly as members of the SZDSZ in the 1990 general elections. In the view of the members of this group, the problems would largely be soluble by eliminating poverty, but of course one of principal ways of eliminating poverty was through good-quality education, and giving the Roma population a stake in receiving education.

The National and Ethnic Minority Rights Act that was drafted in 1992 and passed the following year (Law LXXVII/1993) refers to the Roma, the most sizeable of all Hungary's minorities, as an ethnic minority, thus distinguishing them from other minorities, which are referred to as national minorities. One consequence of this is that the Roma community is not entitled, as a civil and natural right, to education in the national language. The teaching employed at Gandhi High School, however, is based on precisely that principle: the school's pedagogical programme sets itself the aim of educating talented youngsters of the Roma nation, who in many instances are also poor, not in terms of their identity, but on account of other failures in society, historical circumstances and standpoints.

One of the most cogent arguments for establishing a national school was that for a Roma people which was often unacquainted with a sense of national pride and even having to contend with self-loathing and minority complexes it might, in itself, act as a liberating factor if they were to realise that it was not a matter of alterity but of alternate nationality; that what differentiated them from the majority society was a culture that was based on their own values. The validity of the notion has been strengthened by the fact that Roma parents, who are often accused of not giving sufficient encouragement for their children to learn, have shown incomparably greater confidence in the Gandhi High School simply for what it is, in part because they could be certain that no one would be looking down on their children there. Contributory to this are the experiences of being scholastically disadvantaged that all Gypsy children have had since they first went to nursery or general school, even when those were not the result of explicitly discriminative measures. Last, but not least, those who argue for promoting a sense of national identity also main-

tain that an educated Roma class who possess a sense of their identity are going to be much more likely to turn their energies to helping their own people than youngsters who set their sights on assimilation as the goal to be attained.

Critics of the Gandhi model, on the other hand, claim that separate schooling of Roma children, for one thing, creates a model for segregation; having been raised under a bell-jar, students will be poorly armed to go out into a prejudiced majority society, where they are likely to encounter continual insults. In their view, the education of Roma children would be best helped by providing special assistance to allow them to be successful within the school establishments of majority society, and where possible the most prestigious ones at that, supplementing that assistance with optional opportunities for preserving and nurturing the values and traditions of their own minority. Supporters of this model think in terms of creating Roma student hostels in which the nurturing of talents and extra tutoring to fill in gaps in knowledge take place outside, rather than within, the everyday school framework. Amongst the arguments advanced in favour of this approach is the undoubted fact that running a hostel system along these lines would be a far cheaper and more flexible option, which could be put in place even were it not to secure the sort of explicit and consistent government backing that is indispensable to operate a large nationality-based educational establishment.

The Collegium Martineum at Mánfa, on the northern outskirts of Pécs – in setting up which both Tibor Derdák and Péter Heindl, who had also been amongst the founding spirits behind the Gandhi High School, had a hand – has served as a model for organising such an intermittent hostel network.

The Gandhi High School as model

The professional experiences that have been accumulated in setting up and running the Gandhi High School and Student Home cannot now be ignored in working out any concepts of Roma education, given that its founders have invested more money and energy in it, over a longer period, than can be said for any other institution. The ten years since its foundation have seen the construction, alongside the student home (where teaching also took place in the early days), of a new school building and sports hall. Uniquely in the world, then, a Roma national education, supplied in a modern facility, has been established at Pécs.

The school's teaching programme is based on a six-year model specifically because the entrance age – 12-13 years – seems to be the best suited for coping with the strains of separation from the family and entering a boarding-school environment, whilst at the same time, in the more fortunate cases, the children have not yet been so scarred by their experiences in general school as to have lost all appetite for learning. The teaching staff are also enthusiastic about the six-year programme from a purely pedagogical point of view, as it allows them to cut down on the repetitiousness that conventional four-year high schools

find unavoidable (in many respects the four years of the high-school curriculum could be said to do little more than teach the material already acquired during the eight years of general schooling to a higher standard).

The international prestige and fame that the school has won are undeniable, and these are important not solely for PR reasons. The Gandhi School concept supplies, and can go on supplying, a foundation for educating Roma children in other successor states of the Central and Eastern European bloc. The school has built up significant professional contacts with a range of pedagogical workshops, especially in Croatia, Slovakia and Romania. The city of Pécs has the school to thank for being constantly mentioned in the international press, and the fact that it was prepared to extend a welcome to the school (the city has not made any substantial financial contribution to either its building or running costs) was part of the reason why Pécs was awarded a UNESCO prize in 1998. The most recent development in this respect was the offer made to Pécs by the city of Tucson, Arizona, in March 2003 to organize exchange exhibitions of Native American and Roma art and to provide scholarships for Gandhi High School students to study in America.

To date, no steps have been taken towards setting up further Gandhi-type schools. Besides the establishment in Pécs, the only other facility that the public foundation has so far managed to set up is a Roma Pedagogical Service Office in Budapest, which has the task of giving indirect assistance to the scholastic success of Roma children through the provision of services at school level and running further training courses for teachers. The establishment of at least five more boarding high schools is not the only original objective that has still to be accomplished, for so too is one that the late János Bogdán, the school's first director as well as main developer and driving force, held to be indispensable, which is the creation of a network of Roma nursery schools that would serve to overcome the disadvantages of underprivileged family backgrounds. The purpose would be to give Roma children a chance to compete on equal terms with non-Roma children at general school and then have a choice of whether they wished to carry on studies at a Roma or an integrated secondary school. Under this approach a nationality-focused education ought to be an option for Roma children in the same way as it has been, or could be, for children of other national minorities. Amongst the priorities for the present Hungarian government's educational authority is a model for a fully integrated educational system, to be achieved by working out special programmes for widespread, state-sponsored and -qualified integration of Roma students; the establishment of a network of Roma nursery schools and boarding schools, however, does not feature at all as a priority. It can only be hoped that the upshot of the government's concept will be that Roma children in their tens of thousands will gain the opportunity they need to set them on the path to emancipation. The abandonment of an expansion of national institutions may, on the other hand, mean that many in the Roma community find that, for the sake of assimilation, they are obliged to surrender the surplus value that accrues from a free choice of identity and the dignity that bestows.

III) THE FURORE OVER JÁSZLADÁNY SCHOOL

The Gypsies of Jászladány belong to the largest of Hungary's three Roma groups, the Romungros, or Hungarian Gypsies, who have been living in the country for centuries, having entered it in the fifteenth century at the latest, and are essentially fully assimilated linguistically. The Gypsy inhabitants of the large village were assimilated to the majority ethnic Hungarian community during the twentieth century, particularly during the forty years of Communist party control under the Rákosi and Kádár régimes. Aside from slight genetic differences in appearance – and possibly also the music-making of a few families who maintained the traditions of the Musician Gypsies – it was impossible to differentiate them linguistically or culturally from other Hungarian families. Since the Second World War the Roma menfolk of Jászladány had mostly been employed in the construction and heavy industry of the party state, with the bulk of them commuting regularly between their native village and other settlements, Budapest above all. During the 1970s, a Gypsy colony known locally as Purgély – or 'Purgatory' – that had been situated near a refuse tip, now closed but still not cleared, on the outskirts of the village, was demolished, since when the Roma inhabitants have sought to build their own dwellings within the village.

If there is still any demonstrable difference in lifestyle between the non-Gypsy and Gypsy populations of Jászladány, it is not one of Roma cultural identity but the enforced 'culture' of poverty and exclusion. Having lost their former places in the lower-middle classes, yet seen by other Roma groups as 'gad?os' – non-Roma – as far as their ancestry goes, these new poor now not only have a 'lifestyle' that is identical with that of other Roma groups on every sociological index but, what is more, identify with them emotionally and in their family contacts. To quote from an article that the village's mayor wrote in his university student days: "those who were Hungarian by blood became Gypsified in their behaviour." Instead of seeking to eliminate the poverty and exclusion, local authorities, representing the rural (economic) élite and a middle class that has come to nurture anti-Gypsy sentiments, have in recent years embarked on a deliberate course of attempting to sharpen that discrimination even further.

From a university student's 1996 article

The contents of the December 1996 issue of Jászladányi Hírek, the village self-government's newssheet, included an article with the title "Analysis of Gypsy-Hungarian Relations in Jászladány" under the by-line "István Dankó, university student". In the author's own words: "A most important, if not paramount, vulnerable point for Jászladány's chances of advancement is the right handling of Gypsy-Hungarian relations." He was also convinced, so he declared, that "the national authorities are unable to provide a solution to the problems of Gypsy-Hungarian co-existence that are becoming apparent. The legisla-

ture may designate the legal framework for relations between majority and minority groups, but at the local level it is we who are able to charge the dry paragraphs through our recognition or rejection, acceptance or exclusion, tolerance or prejudice... We need to be clear that the problem – I would wish to emphasize this most particularly to those who hold positions as teachers or leaders of opinion within the village – will not be solved by enlightenment.”

The young man, who even back then was manifestly preparing for a role in public life, continues:

“Because deeply conditioned, boundary-marking behaviours often erupt sooner from an individual in an unexpectedly arising critical situation than carefully considered, tolerant attitudes towards fellow humans of different colour, culture and norms. For all those reasons, this series of articles is not going to re-cast Gypsy-Hungarian relations in a positive direction, but the way our institutions function ought to be reformed in the light of the writings, hopefully in a radiant spirit, and operated accordingly, and when all that has been done, persistent attention over long years may make for closer co-existence between the Gypsies and the Hungarians of Ladány.”

Lacking any particular knowledge of, or grounding in, its subject, this article in the *Jászládányi Hírek* nevertheless self-confidently trots out the usual anti-Roma prejudices:

“We differentiate, then, between Gypsies and Hungarians by descent, which means making a distinction by blood. But I would swiftly add that we shall not go very far by doing so in a local society where we are striving to bridge over conflicts in the interests of channeling our energies in the direction of dynamic economic and intellectual growth. Such collocations as ‘Gypsy work’, ‘acting like a Gypsy’, or ‘blarneying like a Gypsy’ have become established, not just in Jászládány but, to my certain knowledge, in Hungarian society more widely. These have lodged in the general consciousness as expressions with an unambiguously negative colouring. I personally have even heard individuals of Gypsy origin using these expressions for some shoddy job or behaviour that they had nothing to do with... It is my experience and conviction, then, and I believe a growing number of Ladány’s citizens are able to confirm this, that the group of individuals who are Gypsies by blood does not embrace solely the lower realms of the social, intellectual and economic pyramid, nor is it possible to identify the Gypsies with these strata... It is only too evident that many people of Hungarian origin have slipped down into the lower depths of society, or one might say their Hungarian behaviour has become Gypsified. By way of contrast, there are some people of Gypsy origin who have accommodated well into the Hungarian social domain.”

This future mayor’s attitudes whilst still a student at the Agricultural University of Gödöllő were preoccupied with social aspects – to wit, a contempt for the “lower strata of the population” and their culture. One might say that his tastes are class-based rather than ethnic, for his distastes apply not just to the Roma alone but to the poor in general.

The private school – the most important sign of the de-integration crisis

The de-integration of the Roma of Jászladány could be illustrated by more than a few deeply shocking stories. The most important, however, is the story of the ‘private school’, which seeks to separate the village’s Gypsy children – making up 51% of the total general-school roll in school year 2000/01 – who attend the local self-government-run school from other pupils. It should be noted, however, that other matters, such as a continuing row over the rubbish tip and a ban on construction which deprived the local Roma population of subsidies to the tune of several tens of millions of forints, are of similar gravity.

In official documents and at press conferences, naturally, community leaders have denied all along, and continue to deny to this day, that their aim is an ethnically and socially based segregation. The commonest explanation offered is that they wished, and still wish, merely to help along pupils who have already shown their aptitude for studies by not admitting badly behaved children who have ‘no wish to learn’ into a (private) foundation school that was to be set up on the initiative of the local self-government and with the assistance of the local self-government (e.g. by letting for its use one of the more modern buildings of the existing local authority school). Without exception, the inhabitants of the community, Gypsies and non-Gypsies alike, understand this to mean that the mayor and his ‘associates’ are seeking to separate Roma from *gad?o*, or non-Roma, children. Although it is true that the quota of (scholarship-aided) Gypsy children that can be admitted into the new foundation school has been raised from the very outset of the initiative – in September 2002 it stood at 30 pupils – everyone in Jászladány is well aware that the new school will ultimately result in separating the Roma children, and that precisely through this segregation it is anticipated that children who in recent years have been enrolled at schools in other settlements will return to Jászladány.

In one of the 2001 issues of the National Gypsy Minority Self-Government’s periodical, *Világunk* (‘Our World’), which is edited by Béla Osztójkán, journalist Márta Blaha asked the mayor for his views on ‘improving education’: “We see no other solution than having a private school in which the pupils who study there, and the parents, accept a Prussian teaching régime,” István Dankó is quoted as saying:

“A person who grows up and studies in this spirit will go on to enter university or college or a strong secondary school. For those pupils and the children of those strata of the population who are passive in a Prussian teaching régime, the opportunity is opened for lifting their passivity in the local authority school through other teaching methods... When the representative body passed the aforementioned resolution, the local minority self-government almost immediately slapped the label of Gypsy-Hungarian discord on it, and in so doing it sought to turn the whole question of private schooling into a taboo subject. A taboo subject so there would be no need to think through the problem we are facing but it would be sufficient to engage in the sort of instinctual politicking which is supremely suit-

ed to rousing masses and resurrecting stereotypes... So, the way we see it, there is no road back from differentiated education to integrated education in Jászladány. Differentiated education can be perfected and made better if we make it organisationally separate from the local authority school in the private school.”

One distinguishing feature of the situation is that the prime mover and main source of funding for the initiative to set up the private school is not private individuals or enterprises (against whom a self-government with any respect for the country’s constitution should feel almost obliged to intervene on the grounds of failure to comply with equal rights legislation and the need to integrate the Roma community) but the local authority itself, led by the mayor himself.

The Jászladány Gypsy self-government’s fight with the local authorities

In Jászladány a Gypsy Minority Self-Government (GMS) was formed in 1998, in accordance with existing law, under the chairmanship of László Kállai, an ambitious, young, local Roma politician. Mr Kállai had already sat as a member of the GMS in the previous electoral term; on his own admission, prior to that he had little awareness of what minority self-government was about and had only entered politics by chance, but he had quickly woken to the fact that he would be able to help the Roma community of Jászladány within the organisational framework of the GMS. So, notwithstanding the fact that up until 1998 the Jászladány GMS had only operated in a nominal sense, he planned to make big changes in the way defence of local minority interests was implemented and thus offered himself as a candidate for the chairmanship in the 1998 elections. Mr Kállai, who had completed the 8 years of general schooling and was part way towards obtaining a qualification as a plumber, had been in the same class at school as the mayor, István Dankó, which all along had the potential to place relations on the highly personal basis of two competing and clashing former schoolmates. Despite that, the activities of the local GMS began on a non-confrontational note.

On 9 June 1999, Jászladány GMS signed a collaborative agreement with the settlement’s general school. At that point, according to the written agreement, there was a total of 647 pupils at the school, 49% of whom were Gypsies. The distribution of Gypsy pupils across the various sections of the school, however, gives pause for thought:

Regular curriculum: Upper school	Subtotal 271 pupils Gypsies 117 pupils (43.2%)
Regular curriculum: Lower school	Subtotal 333 pupils Gypsies 157 pupils (47.1%)
Total in Regular curriculum sections	604 pupils
non-Gypsies	330 pupils (54.6%)
Gypsies	274 pupils (45.4%)

Non-standard curriculum for the mildly mentally deficient:	43 pupils
Gypsies	43 pupils (100%)
Combined pupil roll	647 pupils
Gypsies	317 pupils (49.0%)
Mildly mentally deficient	43 pupils (6.6%; 13.6% of Gypsies)

Bearing in mind that the childbearing proclivity of Gypsy families (and the poor in general) in Jászladány is considerably higher than that of non-Gypsy and middle-class families, it is readily apparent from the above figures that a substantial portion of Gypsy children in the lower age-groups are being started on their school career in what is labelled as the section with “Non-standard curriculum for the mildly mentally deficient”. Altogether 13.6% of the Gypsy children at Jászladány general school are classed as having learning difficulties, whereas not one such child is to be found amongst the non-Gypsy children (or if there are any, then they are receiving the same integrated teaching as children being taught the regular curriculum). Although no details are available on how the classification of “mental deficiency” was reached, the high incidence and disparity in its application point to serious discrimination being at work. Yet the collaborative agreement states:

“The statistics show and support the fact that education of the ethnic minority forms an important element in our school’s teaching and instructional work. The various aspects of assisting social integration, reducing handicaps, creativity, nurturing talent, and practically oriented teaching have all found expression in the school’s catch-up programme for Gypsies, which has Ministry of Education approval. This programme forms the backbone of the teaching and instructional work towards the implementation of which we enter into this agreement with the Minority Self-Government.”

In its written agreement with the school, the GMS – though there is no legal authority for such agreements, it is in line with what has become accepted practice – undertook to provide financial support to Gypsy pupils to purchase textbooks. (The task of a minority self-government under the Minorities Act, beyond that of safeguarding the interests of the minority in question, is to ensure its *cultural autonomy*, but then no Romany language textbooks were being used in Jászladány; the duty to make provision for social hardship is universally placed on the local self-government.) Overall, it seems fair to conclude that the Gypsy Minority Self-Government elected in Jászladány in late 1998 did not come into conflict with the village’s self-government or its institutions for a substantial period of time.

Attempt to separate Roma pupils institutionally

In the earlier educational set-up, ‘auxiliary’ (i.e. remedial) schools alone had the function of separating Roma pupils who were experiencing learning difficulties from other children. That would not necessarily have to be regarded as a serious anti-minority action since it had to be backed by a recommendation from a ‘county expert panel’.

The Jászladány school affair, strictly speaking, did not flare up officially until 21 November 2000, after ‘smouldering’ for several years. That was the date on which the mayor, Mr István Dankó, submitted to a meeting of the village self-government’s steering body a proposal to operate a foundation-supported private school. “Something must be done in order that the local school system, as a service, meets with the emergent needs of parents in the community,” is how the motion puts it:

“Following the change in régime, material and intellectual differentiation in Hungarian society has been accelerating. As a consequence, the differing needs of various strata for services have come to the fore in education. In towns these various needs are met at the given level of schooling; in other words, élite schools and institutions providing instruction and teaching adapted to the needs of the lower strata of the population emerge within one and the same settlement. In the village of Jászladány there are currently approximately 720 children of general-school age, of whom only 648 attend the local school. The reason for the daily travel incurred by the approx. 70 children attending school elsewhere can unambiguously be attributed to the fact that our institutionally monolithic education system is unable to serve them satisfactorily. In Jászladány we are seeking to make provision within a single school for the needs of potentially emergent local strata of the population that are the source of a great many problems.”

The mayor makes reference in his motion to Samuel P. Huntington’s book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Changing World Order* and its claim that cultures are impenetrable:

“In the political events of the day we observe the escalation of the Arab-Jewish conflict and the futility of so many peace processes in the region... For the avoidance of all these conflicts, tolerance for one another has been evolved by life itself; in the cities of the USA, for example, as a form of maintaining the highest respect, with the separate schools, nurseries, libraries, prayer-houses, restaurants, etc. of different nations or religious denominations, which ultimately manifest in separate residential districts. A country can be said to be a free country when each ethnic group is granted the opportunity to practice its own customs in such a way as not to disturb one another in such activities. Those peoples which are carriers of a culture cannot be forcibly locked up together and integrated with one another,” the proponent concludes. Furthermore:

“In Jászladány’s society the Gypsy/Hungarian line of fracture is intensifying when it coincides with the rich/poor line of fracture. That social confrontation has to be avoided at all costs.”

The document stated that the two separate school complexes in Baross Square (the older building) and in Hősök Square were suitable for separating the pupils. Finally, it made a proposal for separated schooling:

“As I see it at present, setting up and running a foundation-based form of private school is the way that could offer a solution to remedy the above-analysed problems... My specific proposal is that a declaration of intent be made in which the Self-Government of Jászladány Community expresses its aspiration that the settlement’s Hősök Square school

complex and its equipment be made available to a group of teachers, organised around a leader, to be operated as the private school of a foundation or non-profit company.”

A week later, on 28 November 2000, the village self-government’s representative body convoked again, with László Kállai, chairman of the GMS also present. According to the resolution passed by the meeting, in its declaration of intent the self-government warranted that it would make the school building in Hősök Square available to the nascent private school. Mr Kállai objected to the private school during discussion at the meeting and subsequently put his objections in writing. In letters dated 11 and 12 January 2001, the GMS chairman and the GMS representative body rejected a statement by the mayor that had appeared in the January issue of the self government’s newsheet, *Ladányi Hírek*: “part of the minority self-government body would see the development potential sensibly, but the chairman is leading the minority self-government body radically away from that in a direction that plays up the disagreements.” Under pressure from the mayor and the self-government’s representative body, two members of the GMS then resigned from their posts as minority self-government representatives, and their places were taken by the candidates who had received the next-highest votes at the last election.

The official log of Jászberény police station for 23 February 2001 makes note of preparations being made for a planned 18-hour demonstration and hunger strike that was to be held from 7.00 a.m. on 27 February. According to this, the aim of the demonstration, organised by the GMS, was to mend the strained relations with the village’s self-government and improve the social situation of the Roma population.

“Members of the Jászladány Roma minority self-government who have been on hunger strike since Tuesday held out into the early hours of Wednesday despite the freezing cold. The five representatives, who are protesting against adverse discrimination affecting the Roma inhabitants of the village, drank warm cups of tea or coffee after midnight,” reported the Thursday, 1 March edition of *Népszabadság*, a national daily newspaper. That same day, Aladár Horváth, chairman of the board of trustees of the Roma Civil Rights Foundation, held discussion with Mayor István Dankó, but to no effect. At the meeting of the village self-government’s representative body on 28 February, the second day of the hunger strike, a petition was handed over to the local representatives: “We, the undersigned, the Representative Body of the Jászladány Gypsy Minority Self-Government, PROTEST that irresponsible political circles of an extremist tendency are splitting our village community into Gypsies and Hungarians, rich and poor,” the petition opens:

“WE PROTEST that Gypsies and the poor are being adversely discriminated against and forced into a lower-standard and segregationist education and social existence. Jászladány Community has no need of a private school since the new school, built at a cost of many millions of forints, belongs to everyone.”

A written response to the petition came one month later, dated 26 March 2001. “In none of its resolutions has the Representative Body for Jászladány Community had it in

mind to place its citizens of Gypsy origin in the shade as compared with those of its citizens who are held to be of Hungarian origin,” runs the letter from the mayor:

“By the notion of bringing a private school into being, we would like, through differences in the pedagogical methods that are applied and the amount of instructional material that is to be acquired, to attend to the differing needs of those children who wish to learn and those who reject the very principle of learning, or those groups of our children which are present in society who keep to house rules and those who regularly disregard the rules. That division is not identical with the groups of our Gypsy and Hungarian children.”

In a letter of 26 March, Aladár Horváth, chairman of the Roma Civil Rights Foundation, appealed to Lajos Aáry-Tamás, the Ministerial Commissioner for Educational Rights, over the infringements of the educational rights of the Jászladány GMS:

“The settlement’s self-government is failing to comply with, and is ignoring, the minority self-government’s entitlement to agreement under §29, paragraph (2) of the NEMR (Minority Rights) Act and is equally failing to comply with the prescriptions of Articles 1 and 2 of the agreement on combating discrimination in education (Law Decree 11/1964) as well as the New York Convention on eliminating all forms of racial discrimination (Law Decree 8/1969) and the prohibitions on discrimination enshrined in Article 70 (a) of the Constitution and in the Education Act.”

The Foundation sent a similar letter to the Parliamentary Commissioner for National and Ethnic Minority Rights.

In the spring of 2001, the Roma Civil Rights Foundation made a proposal to Mayor Dankó that an independent expert on Roma affairs be requested to review the differences that had arisen in Jászladány and make a recommendation as to how they might be resolved. The essence of the proposal was that the Foundation would provide a grant to cover the costs of preparing the study, whilst the local authority would look after accommodation and facilities to carry out the work for a period of one month. On account of other conditions that were raised subsequently, however, the Foundation waived any support from the mayor’s office in Jászladány. On the basis of the recommendations made by the completed study, the Roma Civil Rights Foundation worked out a programme to be submitted to Jászladány’s self-government for integrating the Roma community. The local leaders, however, rejected one of the programme’s recommendations, which read:

“In the interests of integration of the Roma community, the settlement’s self-government must desist from the notions it has been holding to date and, making a U-turn, handle the matter of Jászladány’s disintegrated Roma community in a new light. Under existing... regulations, anyone with appropriate capital and professional expertise may set up a private school. The settlement’s self-government, however, must take into account that this private-school initiative in Jászladány can be expected to result in a further segregation of Roma children, which is rejected by the Gypsy com-

munity concerned, and for that reason it is not free to lend its support by any means, whether of a material or a moral-political nature. It is not permissible that the Jászladány Community Self-Government provide a publicly owned building or... financial assistance to a project that... will result in separation and segregation of pupils belonging to a minority group.”

In a letter dated 7 May 2001, Mrs Áron Tóta, deputy head of the Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County Administrative Office, informed László Kállai, chairman of the Jászladány GMS that, under the Public Education Act (Law LXXIX/1993), investigation of the claims of “differentiated” or “segregationist” education that he had notified was the responsibility of Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County Self-Government, not the Administrative Office. The letter also mentioned that the Ministry of Education had required the country’s mayors to conduct a study, one of the main goals of which had been to establish “whether or not organising catch-up classes was one of the expedients of segregation.” She suggested that the GMS request the results of that study from the mayor. The Administrative Office also drew the GMS’ attention to the fact that the institution of a Ministerial Commissioner for Educational Rights had been created in order to promote the implementation of educational rights. On the Administrative Office’s own assessment, with reference to the legal position on public education, a minority self-government *had no right of approval* over the appointment of a general-school head except in a case “where education is carried out exclusively in the minority language.” Yet statements in the very next paragraph of the letter would seem to suggest exactly the opposite:

“In relation to §29 of Law LXXVII/1993... concerning the rights of national and ethnic minorities it can be ascertained that a local minority self-government has a right of approval only in the case where the appointment of a leader of a minority institution is on the agenda or where a settlement’s self-government stands before a decision that bears on the training of individuals belonging to the minority... This is a safeguard that the wishes and intentions of the minority in question are asserted during the proposed introduction of any education for a minority, or when the organisational framework for such education is being defined.”

On the basis of the Administrative Office’s letter, László Kállai made a written application to Mayor Dankó, dated 22 May, in which he enquired after the findings of the investigation into “catch-up education for Gypsies” that had been carried out at the Ministry of Education’s behest. The mayor’s reply of 5 June contained the following statement: “Since the investigation found that Gypsy parents are not calling for minority education in the sense of MoE Decree 32/(5 Nov.) 1997, and moreover the agreement between the Gypsy Minority Self-Government and the General School was unilaterally terminated by resolution No. 5/(24 Jan.) 2001, the chairman of GMS’s request in [sic] the conduct of the inspection was not justified.”

Dr. Jenő Kaltenbach, the Parliamentary Commissioner for National and Ethnic Minority Rights, chaired a conciliation meeting in the mayor’s office on 29 May 2001. The com-

missioner set out the provisions that are contained in §29, paragraphs (7) and (12) of Law LXXVII/1993, under which the property or tenancy rights in a tuitional or educational institution in the holding of a local self-government may be transferred, in whole or part, to another tenant, provided those pupils whose parents do not wish to send their children to the transferred tuitional or educational institution continue to be provided a service of an appropriate standard in such a manner that pupils and parents shall not incur a disproportionate burden in making use of that service. In deciding that, expert opinion on the development plan must be sought from the metropolitan or county self-government, and, if schooling or education of a national or ethnic minority is being undertaken in the school, the agreement of the local minority self-government must also be obtained. The Charter of Jászládány General School stipulates catch-up tuition for those belonging to the Gypsy ethnic group. A tuitional-educational plan elaborated for Gypsy pupils features as a separate chapter in the school's pedagogical programme. Taking all these factors into account, the Ombudsman pointed out to the settlement's mayor and clerk that property or tenancy rights in all buildings of Jászládány School could only be handed over to another party, and thus to any private foundation school that might come into being at some later date, with the agreement of the minority self-government.

The Jászládány Gypsy minority self-government approached Terézia Lajkó, the community's clerk, to seek for a referendum to be held on the issue; in July, however, the Jászládány clerk refused to authenticate the form that is required in order to initiate a referendum, justifying this on the grounds that "decision on the issues that feature in the forms (for instance, measures to counter discrimination within the school) does not lie within the competence of the representative body," since it is guaranteed by the constitution.

On 29 August 2001, László Kállai also addressed a letter to Prime Minister Viktor Orbán in which he requested assistance in finding a solution to the concerns of Jászládány's Roma community, in particular over their exclusion from the school.

On 29 September, the representative body of Jászládány self-government passed the following resolution:

"Representative Body Resolution No. 149/(11 Sep.) 2001. Response resulting from the conciliation meeting towards the Representative Body on 29 May 2001, as instigated at the behest of the Parliamentary Commissioner for National and Ethnic Minority Rights. The Representative Body of Jászládány Community Self-Government accepts the answer given by Mayor István Dankó to the initiatives made by the Parliamentary Commissioner for National and Ethnic Minority Rights in the office of the Jászládány Community Self-Government, and his points of view following the 29 May meeting, and it concurs with what is formulated in that answer."

The reply took exception to fact that the Ombudsman "in what we found a surprising manner, instead of acquainting himself thoroughly with the specific and, in relation to the matter, authentic documents, instigated an investigation in Jászládány on the basis of a

newspaper article that was teeming with disinformation.” The letter also reports that in accordance with the initiative taken by the Commissioner for Minority Rights – albeit with a delay of several months – the Representative Body had sent to the local Gypsy minority self-government the material on the investigation requested by the Ministry of Education, and in so doing had met its obligation to keep them informed. “As a result of the activities invoked by our local self-government’s local and national ‘well-wishers’,” the letter goes on, “our functioning approaches total transparency. Not one of the investigations has demonstrated any unlawfulness or oversight on the part of our self-government. After the baseless denigration of a settlement and its inhabitants, and the closure of innumerable fruitless official investigations, who is going to provide recompense for the public monies that have been frittered away? Furthermore, who is going to restore the unjustly maligned credibility of Jászladány’s citizens and self-government? With respect, Mr Ombudsman, you should take the lead in this! We therefore officially call upon you to inform the press that the rights of Gypsy minority in Jászladány have not been infringed on any point at all.”

In a letter of 21 October 2001, addressed to László Kállai, Chairman of the “Jászladány Gypsy Self-Government”, Dr. József Pálincás, Education Minister of the Republic of Hungary, attested that the Ministry of Education likewise did not share the standpoint of the community self-government on the matter of whether it needed to solicit the views of the minority self-government in deciding on crucial questions of school education in Jászladány, particularly on maintenance steps that were to be taken in organisational matters:

“...the Charter of the General School operating in Jászladány contains the tuition and education of pupils belonging to the Gypsy ethnic group, a Gypsy minority educational programme has been instituted for their pupils, supplementary normative funding is requested and received from the central budget, and thus it is classed as a minority educational institution. As part of the decision process the local self-government must therefore obtain the agreement of the responsible local minority self-government, in accordance with the seat of the institution, and the opinion of the national minority self-government.”

In the spring of the following year, Jászladány Community Self-Government prepared to introduce foundation school education and to split the school building of the former self-government general school. On 12 March 2002, it passed resolutions concerning the partitioning of the school that would result in segregation by ethnic descent, ignoring the Ombudsman’s earlier initiatives and recommendations and the points that had been raised during the conciliatory talks.

The Parliamentary Commissioner for National and Ethnic Minority Rights again reviewed the situation in a letter dated 28 May 2002 to the Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County Administrative Office, in which he put forward recommendations for the Office. In this the Ombudsman cited several of the resolutions that had been passed by the Jászladány Community Self-Government, considering them to be in contravention of the law.

“Interim Final Outcome”: standpoints of the administrative office, the local self-government and the ministry, and their ensuing steps

A few days after receiving the letter from the Parliamentary Commissioner for National and Ethnic Minority Rights, Dr Zoltán Csíkos, head of the Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County Administrative Office, wrote a letter to the Jászladány Community Self-Government in which he acquainted them with some of the crucial elements of the Ombudsman’s views. He requested the self-government to satisfy their obligation to keep the local minority self-government informed and restore the Roma self-government’s right to be included in the decision-making process.

In the wake of the general elections, János Sipos, Deputy Under-Secretary of State for Public Education at the Ministry of Education, wrote to Mr Kállai, chairman of the Jászladány GMS, to acquaint him with the line that the new leadership at the Ministry was taking on the furore that arisen – and was by then featuring in newspaper headlines – over school segregation and the establishment of a private school in the village:

“Since the Charter of the General School operating in Jászladány contains the tuition and education of pupils belonging to the Gypsy ethnic group, a Gypsy minority educational programme has been instituted for their pupils, supplementary normative funding is requested and received from the central budget, the school in question is therefore classed as a minority educational institution. For that very reason, the opinion of the responsible local minority self-government, in accordance with the seat of the institution, must be sought in the decision-making process.

Under §88, paragraphs (7) and (12) of Law LXXIX/1993 concerning public education, the property or tenancy rights in a tuitional or educational institution that is in the holding of a local self-government may be transferred, in whole or part, to another tenant, provided those pupils whose parents do not wish to send their children to the transferred tuitional or educational institution continue to be provided a service of an appropriate standard in such a manner that pupils and parents shall not incur a disproportionate burden in making use of that service. In deciding that, expert opinion on the development plan must be sought from the metropolitan or county self-government.”

Within the week, on 16 June, the Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County Administrative Office, in a legal opinion, requested the Jászladány self-government: “Bearing in mind §99 paragraph (1) of the Self-Government Act, I call upon the Representative Body to restore the lawful state of affairs by requesting the agreement of the Jászladány Gypsy Self-Government by 31 August 2002, and to notify the Administrative Office of the fact by separate letter.”

On 18 July 2002, at the request of the Jászladány Sándor Imre Zana Non-Profit Educational Foundation – and disregarding the legal opinion - the Jászladány community clerk reached the decision to issue the Mihály Antal Foundation General School with a license to operate. (An additional clause of the 6 August 2002 decision notes: “No appeal against the decision having been lodged, it has legal force as of today’s date.”)

During the interval between the clerk taking the decision and its gaining legal force an expert opinion was also reached by Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County Assembly. A document dated 26 July 2002 laid down that by the handing over of part of the 1,744.13 sq. metre self-government school building, the institutional conditions of the school were being degraded in comparison with the existing conditions, but the material, professional and personnel conditions could be assured. The consignment, signed by the chairman of the county assembly, also stated that “the reorganisation does not appear in the community self-government’s medium-term plan of action nor, consequently, in Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County’s Plan for the provision of public education requirements and for the operation and development of its institutional network. As a result, it represents ‘a certain degree of disadvantage’, and consequently an extra burden, for pupils and parents.”

“It’s not me who is segregating, it is life that segregates,” Mayor István Dankó commented to a correspondent for the Roma Press Centre on 29 August, shortly before the opening ceremony at the foundation school for its first term. “By that, I am effectively saying that I am protecting the children who wish to learn, and I am creating an opportunity for them to stay here, in Jászladány.”

As the Jászladány Community Self-Government-despite the request made by the Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County Administrative Office in tendering its legal opinion and the negative expert opinion of the Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County Assembly – did not rescind its decision over the foundation school’s license to operate and the partitioning of the self-government’s general school, once that decision had attained legal force the Mihály Antal Foundation General School applied to the Ministry of Education for a MoE identification number. (The MoE identification number is a precondition for any educational establishment to receive the usual normative funding from the state.)

On 30 August 2002, the Executive Department of the Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County Administrative Office, acting in its supervisory function, determined on a legally binding annulment of the license to operate that had been issued by the Jászladány community clerk as the authority of first instance, and communicated that decision by telefax both to the Ministry of Education and to the Jászladány community clerk. (The necessity for this rapid measure, on the last working day in August, arose because regulations forbid the reorganisation of educational establishments once the school year has started.) In the justification for this supervisory measure given by the Administrative Office no mention was made of any right to agreement on the part of the Jászladány Gypsy Self-Government.

The same day, Dr Bálint Magyar, the new Education Minister, with reference to the Administrative Office decision a few hours before, rejected without leave to appeal a request from the director of the Mihály Antal Foundation General School for the MoE identification number necessary for the school’s operation to be issued. On 2 September, Dr Magyar duly communicated that decision both to Mrs Sándor Zana, chair of the board of

trustees of the foundation that was intending to run the school, and Terézia Lajkó, the community clerk. Teaching at the foundation school was thereby rendered impossible. The self-government's representative body, however, decided that as enrollment both into the self-government and the private school had been completed by this point, they would not put the separately organised groups of pupils together again. As a consequence, pupils enrolled in the foundation school and those enrolled in the self-government school (mainly Gypsies) are still being taught separately to the present day.

Viktória Mohácsi, a Ministry of Education commissioner concerned with education of Roma and disadvantaged pupils, was party to conciliation meetings in Jászladány on several occasions during September, in some cases accompanied by the minister, Dr Magyar, to recommend to the local self-government an 'integration programme' in exchange for the authority giving up the idea of segregationist education. The offer, however, was consistently rejected. To quote from the description of the programme:

"The Ministry of Education says 'Yes!' to creating education for minorities but a resounding 'No!' to discrimination: we cannot raise walls amidst our children... It is natural that [the parents of Jászladány] should all wish to send their children to a school which prepares them for subsequent studies at secondary school in a calm and friendly atmosphere. That chance, though, must be given to every child, because every child is equally important... The Ministry of Education recommends a complex package for developing quality education that will assist integration."

Winding up the Jászladány Gypsy Self-Government in the autumn of 2002

The campaigning that preceded the concurrent local elections for self-government and minority self-government representatives was notable for the appearance of a single-sheet flier bearing the title *Jászladány Samizdat* and signed by a mysterious "SZJSZ". Under the heading 'Who we should vote for on 20 October', this xeroxed sheet, large numbers of which were distributed in the village – presumably reaching every household – published the list of candidates endorsed by the sitting mayor, István Dankó, for the regular self-government places and also the candidates he backed for the Gypsy self-government, only one actually a Gypsy, amongst whom was Dr. Gabriella Makai, the mayor's lawyer wife.

On the lower half of the front sheet, the unidentified author answered the question 'Who should we not vote for?': "Let us not vote for physicians... let us not vote for teachers who work in the self-government school or their close relatives... Let us not vote for the poor of the community – for László Kállai and his crew."

The reverse side of sheet was devoted almost entirely to the trouble that the foundation school had run into, giving a list of all the people who "have damaged the good name of our community." First place was accorded to the Education Minister, Dr Bálint Magyar,

then his “contemptible adviser”, Aladár Horváth, and the ministerial commissioner Viktória Mohácsi, followed by the head of the Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County Administrative Office (“whom the MDF placed in the high post”), Mrs Ferenc Vincze, the former headmistress of the self-government school who had tried to seek a compromise with the Ministry of Education and had therefore been dismissed, and finally the “the ‘general-schooled’ present chairman of the Gypsy self-government and his associates with their criminal records.”

In advance of the elections Mayor Dankó succeeded in whipping up a hysterical anti-Gypsy climate – or, as post-modernists might put it: he thematised the electoral discourse in Jászládány. Despite the fact that Roma voters make up a quarter to a third of the electorate, he and his candidates were returned as representatives to the community’s self-government, whilst the places on the Gypsy self-government body, with the exception of the one Roma woman who was prepared to work with the mayor on the issue of school segregation, were taken by non-Gypsies.

7. MEDIA

THE HISTORY OF RADIO 'C'

Why radio in particular?

The idea that a radio station should be set up for Hungary's Roma community surfaced back in the early days of the country's change of régime. That was not just because recognition and implementation of human rights were in the air, nor just because a process of self-organisation got under way in Roma society, as in the majority society; it was also because Roma intellectuals, civil rights activists, and minority politicians found mentors, allies, and collaborators within the liberal intelligentsia that had spearheaded the change. As, on the one hand, that intelligentsia was well aware of the role and power of the press and publicity, and on the other, the press itself, both legal and (as *samizdat*) illegal, had been a driving force in the movement for a change in régime, it was only natural that the Roma community should feel a need for publicity. Although it was not yet obvious around 1989-90 that the Roma, then still clinging on to the fringes of society, would become the prime losers, on a massive scale, of that change, researchers were already sounding a warning note: the simultaneous appearance of human rights – and hence the right of free speech – and of severe economic difficulties might easily set off scapegoating mechanisms and reinforce the existing set of anti-Gypsy prejudices.

Roma politicians of that period were in any case able to count on help from Otília Solt and Gábor Iványi – working in the wings of the Kemény school of sociology that had been tolerated for a while during the Kádár era but was latterly banned, and the human rights and charity movements (e.g. the Foundation for the Poor) that sprang up under its influence – not least because the problem of exclusion of the Roma community seemed, at first, to be a purely social issue.

Beyond seeing the replacement of earlier collaborationist-minded Roma leaders, whom they held to be 'Gypsy figureheads', the young Roma intelligentsia that emerged around the time of the change in régime had ambitions to secure emancipation, which to them meant creating their own system of institutions and having that enshrined in law. Education and publicity played a key role here, too, as prior to 1990 Gypsies had next to nothing of either a school network or a press of their own. In 1990 it seemed natural to expect that media – and a radio station first and foremost - speaking to the Roma community would be established, and instantly at that, on grounds of equity. And the reason why radio was important was simply because the Roma, just as the non-Roma, community utilises electronic media to a far greater extent than they do written media – television most of all, of course, but then setting up a television service calls for far more investment, expertise, organisation, experience, and operational funding than a radio station. Sheer logic dictated that a Roma radio station be set up first, then, building on those experiences, a television station.

Not long after the new Republic of Hungary had held its first democratic elections for seats in the National Assembly, in the spring of 1990, a media war broke out, so that the prospect for legislation on the media receded ever further, and that for setting up a Roma radio station still further and even more forlornly, into the future. Yet even though the Minority Rights Act had been passed three years before the Radio and Television Broadcasting Act (Law I/1996), this was insufficient in itself to secure rights of access to the media for minority groups, whilst the weak autonomies created by the Minorities Act were unable to assert that claim. On the matter of allocating radio waveband frequencies, the absence of any pertinent legislation, coupled with fear and ingrained reflexes of distrust towards the media, impelled the decision-makers in the Antall government to rule out even entertaining the thought, amongst other things, of inviting competitive tenders to operate a frequency to be directed to the Roma community. It did not help that the leading Roma politicians, sociologists and journalists of the time (the likes of Jenő Zsigó, Aladár Horváth, Ágnes Daróczi and Margit Horváth), along with the above-mentioned Otília Solt, Gábor Iványi, Gábor Havas and others, all had links with the liberal circles around Zsolt Csalog, a sociographer, and Guy Lázár, a vocal advocate of media liberalisation.

The frequency: FM 88.8

The idea of a community radio station broadcasting to Gypsies was first raised in 1990, the brainchild of András Bíró, a civil rights activist and past recipient of an alternative Nobel Prize, who had set up the Autonomy Foundation and, as its chairman, funded a range of Roma programmes. Working together with Ágnes Daróczi, Zsuzsa Róka and Guy Lázár, he wished to set up a Roma radio station, for which the Foundation would have purchased the necessary studio equipment. Ágnes Daróczi, who was then working in the Institute of Adult Education, looked around for a group of Roma school leavers who had gained the *érettségi* qualification to begin preparing them for the purpose. The youngsters were given professional training in the editorial office of Szolnok local radio station and made a start on collecting material for the service-to-be. The instigators, however, were not unanimous over what goal they were pursuing, for whereas Daróczi favoured a more combative, activist style that would probe into issues of Gypsy existence and identity, Guy Lázár – whose notions were closer to András Bíró’s – felt that essentially the same emancipatory goals would better be achieved by going for a more entertainment-slanted content, counting on the very fact of broadcasting to the community and addressing its needs.

Unfortunately, Guy Lázár died and, with invitations to tender for frequencies in abeyance, the whole effort was still left at the preparatory stage. Ágnes Daróczi and her team rented out a local authority-owned property at No. 7 Teleki Square, right in the middle of the Roma ‘ghetto’ of Budapest’s Eighth District, but with a moratorium being announced on the award of frequencies until 1996, the idea of founding a radio station slowly ran out of steam.

When tenders for the first round of frequency allocations were finally announced in 1997, András Biró asked György Kerényi, who was then a senior contributor to the weekly current-affairs magazine *Magyar Narancs* ('Hungarian Orange') as well as editor in chief of *Amaro Drom*, a monthly magazine for the Roma community and one of the founders of the Tilos Rádió ('Forbidden Radio') station, along with Vladimir Németh, manager of an alternative entertainment place called Tilos az Á ('No Aghs Here'), to establish a station. The Autonomy Foundation, together with Németh and Kerényi, set up the Radio C Non-Profit Company, which in 1999 tendered for three radio frequencies: two commercial and one non-profit. They did not secure either of the commercial frequencies, but no decision was announced on the award of the non-profit channel. Instead, a year later invitations were put out for fresh tenders for a not-for-profit service on 88.8 MHz, for which Radio 'C' competed with three other organisations (Tilos Rádió as well as a Roman Catholic and an American ecumenical religious foundation).

When the decision was eventually announced (after several postponements), on 7 March 2000, the award went to Radio 'C'. This was no mere chance, for it was in the run-up period to EU accession, when one report after another was citing the situation of the Roma population as the most burning of all the issues that Hungary had to face up to, and right in the middle of the period when the flight of Roma families from Zámoly to Strasbourg was the subject of world press comment – in other words, not the time to announce that a Roma station had failed to gain a license for a radio frequency. Notwithstanding which, this was no easy decision as the Broadcasting Authority was forced to come down against Tilos Rádió, a popular community station that had started life as a pirate broadcaster and by then had been operating for ten years and, moreover, already included programming for the Roma population. Six of the Broadcasting Authority's seven board members took part in the voting on 7 March, with four casting their votes for Radio 'C': the two Fidesz delegates, the Authority's chair, Judit Körmendi-Ékes and Zsuzsanna Erdős, along with the SZDSZ and MSZP delegates, János Tímár and György Ladvánszky. (The absent József Bánlaki, a delegate of the extreme right-wing MIÉP, later told a reporter from the weekly magazine *Magyar Narancs* that "he was not prepared to vote under international pressure on something that has already been settled")

After a decade of trying, then, a Roma radio station became a reality, though not under the circumstances it would have wished, because the Broadcasting Authority's narrow-minded policy on allocating waveband frequencies meant that it would have to operate instead of, rather than alongside, an alternative station that shared its goals in many respects.

Who should Radio 'C' be for?

Whereas the principal target for work put out by the Roma Press Centre is the majority society, with a view to building up a true picture of Hungary's Roma and their community, in the case of Radio 'C' it is the Roma themselves, and serving their needs is seen as

its primary task. That stems from the premise that a sense of identity and self-esteem would be boosted by a radio station which, through its cohesion-generating and community-building functions, puts out material that could only be expected to come from community insiders. Radio 'C' in practice met those expectations as soon as it came on the air: as listener responses and subsequent audience research have unanimously shown, the majority of Roma households in the Budapest area (the limits of the territory reached by its transmitter) were soon tuning to FM 88.8 on the dial so routinely that it was clear that, as the station's management had claimed all along, the community did indeed feel a need for its own broadcasts, in the same way as it needed its daily bread.

The objectives of Radio 'C' thus differ significantly from those of the Roma Press Centre, based as the latter is on an ideology of multiculturalism, with constant scanning of majority society for political correctness, aimed at encouraging greater sensitivity to the need for that correctness, and an eye for the issues of civil rights activism. The radio's editorial team is almost exclusively of Roma birth and is constantly checking what its public wants. Their starting-point is that the Roma public are presumably interested in the same things as anyone else: from current issues in politics and society to entertainment, from the world of celebrities to mundane consumer concerns – the usual mix of media topics formulated in the language the Roma themselves use and with the emphasis on those aspects that affect them most directly.

Stating the objective is far easier than achieving it, since no audience research had ever been done into the listening preferences of the Roma population, nor had anyone quantified their consumer habits. Radio 'C', which, aside from the public service functions that it naturally takes on, is obliged (as a monopoly provider in its market) to meet both of the other possible broadcasting strategies – community and commercial radio – needs to break through the barrier that experience suggests is put up between high-consuming Roma individuals and advertisers. That is no simple task as, to the extent that Radio 'C' has advertisers, these tend to purchase advertising slots not for commercial but for other purposes, with big multinational firms, if they bother at all with radio, doing it much more on charitable grounds. Yet, if they were to carry out market research targeted at the Roma population, a subtler appreciation of preferences might emerge than the current one, which can only be based on conjecture. From a survey commissioned by Radio 'C' in 2002, for example, it emerges that the proportion of this population which owns a mobile telephone is even higher than that of the Hungarian population as a whole (which in itself is fairly high by European standards). That leads one to suppose that the Roma population, on average, may be readier to adopt new fashions and also prepared to spend more than their apparent purchasing power suggests; in other words, they would appear to be an easily persuadable target group for consumer articles. Quite apart from that, they anyway use the same everyday household articles, from soap powder to nappies, margarine to chocolates, etc., that are pushed on all sides with such colossal advertising budgets. For all that, potential advertisers either do not give such aspects serious consideration, or possibly they fear

that advertisements targeted at the Roma population might somehow stigmatise their products and so see them squeezed from the mainstream, non-Roma market.

Due to the resulting low advertising income, Radio 'C' is continually struggling with financial difficulties, despite the fact that its programmes have regularly won grants in straight competition with submissions from all other mass media organisations. The amounts in question only apply to single programmes, and finance for the station's entire running costs is far from adequate. To give just one illustration: there are programme strands produced with public money for the mainstream Hungarian radio stations for which the monthly budget would be sufficient to cover the entire running costs of Radio 'C' for two and a half years. The obstacle is not the money as such, then, but a failure on the government's part to realise that it could accomplish a whole series of community-building, informative, and other objectives a lot more cheaply and effectively via the Roma radio channel. That is not least because the audience research and listener responses also indicate that, beyond the Roma community, Radio 'C' also attracts a sizeable regular listenership amongst young educated non-Roma – precisely the group that any Hungarian government will need to depend on for the future, given that any satisfactory resolution of the country's Roma question, however determined and sympathetic its political actions, may be, is not going to be a simple, short-term task. A Roma radio station that nurtures and manages one or more professional, audience-pleasing stars plausibly represents a more effective means of altering the preconceptions that are prevalent in majority society than any amount of strident anti-racist sloganeering.

Over and above that, Roma radio is also an appropriate forum for discussing internal issues that affect the community, as a means of channeling existing conflicts. Those stations and TV channels under the control of the majority society which have a programming strand that deals with Roma public life have proved, one by one, unsuited to treating the problems of the Roma with the sophistication they require. These are not problems that can be remedied by a stroke of the pen or a simple vote in parliament. Far better the community itself should gain the information it needs and engage on its own debate through whatever means are at its disposal. Only one such channel exists at present, and only in Budapest at that: Radio 'C'. The Roma community's rights of autonomy in themselves make it desirable that it be allowed to conduct its own social dialogue in its own forum.

Who is Radio 'C' for?

In 2001, at the request of Radio 'C' and with funding supplied by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Szonda Ipsos, a market research company, conducted a survey of the consumer attitudes, media consumption, and living conditions of Budapest's Roma community. Based on the data gained from a sample of 500 individuals questioned, over one-third of the Roma community in Budapest – or at least 60,000 amongst an estimated Roma population of close to 200,000 - were regular listeners to the station. A more

detailed breakdown showed that this was the ‘home’ station to which they tuned every day to catch up on the news.

One of the fundamental aims of the survey was to prove that the Roma community has real potential purchasing power and thus represents a viable target audience for advertisers. The research ascertained that Radio ‘C’ was the favourite station for 54% of Budapest’s Roma population, with the 39% shown to be regular listeners, which is a fairly high proportion as compared with other radio stations. As far as purchasing power was concerned, it turned out that the Roma population were hardly more deprived than Budapest’s non-Roma population in terms of their ownership of household appliances, with only 6% fewer having a colour television and 10% fewer a videotape machine, though when it came to mobile telephones 21% more owned one than did so in the general population. The findings on purchasing preferences were similar to the averages for the non-Roma population.

A year further on from obtaining these results, Radio ‘C’ has still not succeeded in convincing advertisers that the Roma community represents a worthwhile target group of consumers.

Postscript

Since midnight on 7 April 2003, Radio ‘C’, the only non-profit radio station in the world that broadcasts 24 hours a day to the Gypsy community, has only been transmitting music programmes. After a year and a half on the air, the Roma community’s radio station no longer speaks to the Roma community. What lies behind that, however, does not belong to the present report.

8. EVENTS IN GOVERNMENT, POLITICS AND SOCIETY

1) CALVARY OF THE ROMA AT BEDŐTANYA

In the middle of September 2002, Antal Kocsner, mayor of the community of Fadd, a village 15 km south of the Danube-bank town of Paks in Tolna County, where Hungary's sole commercial nuclear power plant is located, protested that the municipal authority was planning to disperse a group of Roma families – a total of 42 people – out of an area on the outskirts of Paks, known locally as Bedőtanya ('Bedő Ranch'), into surrounding villages. At the beginning of the month, the Paks self-government had demolished the families' dwellings on the grounds that they were hazardous, forcing the families to move into emergency tents, despite the unseasonably cold weather, with outside temperatures around 5°C.

In a statement to MTI, the Hungarian News Agency, on 16 September, Mr Kocsner said that "[they] have no ethnically based objections" to the Roma families moving into Fadd, and he recognised individuals had the right to move wherever they chose, but he thought it was unacceptable that the Paks municipal self-government should shuffle off its problem families onto surrounding communities. "The Bedőtanya families have a reputation for being difficult to handle and quarrelsome," Fadd's mayor asserted. He had heard that two people from the Paks mayoral office had been going round the village looking for houses for sale.

On the same day, Balázs Blazsek, clerk of the Paks mayoral office, gave a different appraisal of the situation, denying that the self-government was seeking to force the Roma families into moving to Fadd. According to his account, the families themselves wished to make the move, though it was true that the self-government had wanted to provide them with financial assistance to do so. In the light of the protest, however, they had second thoughts and decided instead that the money due to be paid out to the families for compulsory purchase of their properties should be deposited in escrow with a lawyer, leaving it up to the families themselves to purchase dwellings however they chose.

The statement by the Paks mayoral office clerk notwithstanding, several settlements in the surrounding area – the representative bodies of Fadd, Dunaszentgyörgy, Gerjen and Pusztahencs, amongst them – raised the prospect that protests would be organised if the Bedőtanya families were to move away from Paks. In its 19 September edition, *Magyar Nemzet* ('Hungarian Nation'), a national daily newspaper, cited János Fülöp, a representative in the Fadd self-government whom the paper identified as "the main organiser of the protest", as saying: "It is two-faced and hypocritical of the town to try and rid itself of anti-social elements who live there by exporting them elsewhere." According to Fülöp, the adults in the Bedőtanya families had not worked since the 1989-90 change in régime, some of them being "no chicken thieves but hardened criminals," though he was unable to cite any evidence to back that allegation.

Up to 19 September, just one of the families had managed to find a dwelling for itself, in Németskér, 10 km to the north-west, using the money from the Paks mayoral office.

On reading the news in the papers, Aladár Horváth, chairman of the board of trustees of the Roma Civil Rights Foundation, made a visit to Paks and contacted Mayor Imre Bor, the clerk, Mr Blazsek, as well as Dr Miklós Freppán, head of the Tolna County Administrative Office, but his discussions about relocation of the Roma families came to nothing. In a statement to MTI, Mr Horváth considered that the demonstration being threatened by the nearby villages was anti-constitutional, because it would infringe on the right of free movement. Nevertheless, in view of the huge swell of local protest, he himself urged – for the safety of the Roma families concerned – that a way be found to house them within the town. Mayor Bor, for his part, felt that the families should be moved, under police protection if need be, into properties in the district that they themselves wished to purchase, whereas Dr Freppán, fearful of the lynch-mob climate that had arisen, likewise advocated that a solution be found within Paks itself.

The same day, on 19 September, Aladár Horváth travelled to Németskér in order to inspect the house that one of the Bedőtanya families had purchased from the compulsory sale of their property in Paks. What he found on arrival was that demonstrators were barricading the entrance to the house. Following his visit, a crowd of several hundred people collected around the house in question, and several of them set about demolishing it. (The police investigation, completed in 2003, put the damage at HUF 200,000 – that being a lower limit on the substantial wrecking that was done, given that defenders of Roma rights dispute the paltry value placed on it – but have still to lay charges against anyone.)

During that evening, Aladár Horváth and colleagues, together with Pál Solt, a representative on the Paks Gypsy minority self-government, reached agreement with the leaders of the Paks Self-Government on the temporary relocation of the remaining 40 in the Bedőtanya Roma group, to part of the Biritó-Halastó estate, likewise on the outskirts of the town, with the families being assisted with the move by the municipal authority and the Paks Atomic Power Station. Part of the agreement stipulated that the Roma Civil Rights Foundation and the town's self-government would make use of the state grants that are available to fund house construction by the Roma minority in order to take care of permanent housing for the Gypsy families in question. After the agreement had been signed, Mayor Imre Bor himself paid a visit on the families in Biritó-Halastó.

The next day, despite the agreement between the Roma Civil Rights Foundation and the municipal authorities, more settlements signalled that they were joining the demonstration by the villages in the Paks district. The inhabitants of Fadd, Dunaszentgyörgy, Gerjen, Pusztahencs, Németskér and Dunaföldvár were now planning to mount a two-hour protest rally in front of Paks town hall during the morning of Saturday, 21 September.

Meanwhile, Tolna County Police Headquarters began an investigation against unknown perpetrators on suspicion of vandalism in connection with the damage inflicted on the house in Németskér. Mrs József Mihályi, the mayor of Németskér, promised that the building would

be repaired at the expense of the community self-government's budget. On the same day, Dr Jenő Kaltenbach, the Parliamentary Commissioner for National and Ethnic Minority Rights, announced that he was going to open an investigation into the matter.

"The National Assembly's Commissioner for National and Ethnic Minority Rights, will shortly come to a view on the critical situation that arisen around the Roma families in Paks," ran a 25 September new bulletin from the MTI. At the committee's meeting, Dr Kaltenbach announced: "the situation that has arisen in Paks is a matter of national importance at least as great as that of accession to the EU." "According to the commissioner, who is now looking into the events in Paks and the surrounding district," the MTI report continued, "this is a complex and not run-of-the-mill matter in which unresolved concerns that threaten to spill over into conflict are presenting as a stalking horse."

To a considerable extent, the situation in which the Bedötanya Roma families found themselves was determined by unfounded reports that were spread by the press – based on statements made by local authority leaders and other inhabitants of the Paks district – that they were "murderers and cannibals," whom no one could have a neighbour. However, nothing could have been further from the truth, as the writer of the present lines can personally testify: although a few of their number had indeed been convicted in the past for rowdy behaviour or petty larceny, the great majority of them had no criminal record, and the rumours about their antisocial behaviour stemmed very largely from prejudice on the part of the non-Gypsy population.

II) MIGRATION WITHIN A RURAL GYPSY COMMUNITY

In recent years, quite a lot of research has been carried out into the emigration of Hungary's Gypsy population to foreign countries, and a vast amount has been written about it in the press, yet we still do not know much about the phenomenon. All we read in the newspapers are isolated stories, each alleged to be typical, which as a rule present the problem in a very one-sided manner, whereas most of the emigration-related studies have been overly generalised and superficial. For all that, a considerable body of general data has become available through the publications that have appeared over this period. Here an attempt will be made to approach the issue from another angle by divulging the migratory processes that are observable within the Gypsy community of a necessarily anonymous village.

The example that is used here, for illustrative purposes, is a village of 2,500 souls somewhere in the Hungarian provinces. Agriculture has long played an important role in the life of the village, providing a livelihood for the greater part of the inhabitants. Gypsies first appeared in the district towards the end of the nineteenth century, moving into the village itself some time prior to the Second World War. At that time they were still pursuing their traditional crafts for a living, supplementing that with seasonal work as day-labourers on the land farmed by local peasants. With a boom in agriculture that surplus labour was soon mopped up. Following collectivisation by the post-war Communist régime dur-

ing the 1950s and 60s, most of the villages Gypsies, like the rest of the local population, worked for the cooperative farm, though a few had jobs with other firms in the district. Gypsies and non-Gypsies were increasingly on equal terms, with the custom of acting as godparents for one another's children becoming an everyday occurrence. As a result, through the influence of Reformed Church (Calvinist) godparents, a community that had originally been predominantly Roman Catholic gradually switched over to the Reformed Church. The children of the Gypsies who worked the land tended to remain in education as long as they could, with many of the under-thirties gaining their school diploma (*érett-ségi*) and going on to learn a trade, some even attending college or university.

During the period that immediately followed the 1989-90 change in régime, however, the rapprochement that had been slowly arrived at over decades was undone with frightening rapidity. Those Gypsies who had been employed by firms in the area lost their jobs overnight, whilst the cooperative slowly broke up and the manpower demand shrank to a fraction of what it had been. Within the space of a year, the majority of the Gypsies became unemployed. It has become a truism to assert that employers sought to rid themselves, first of all, of those in the workforce who were the least qualified, but in the case of this village that was demonstrably not the case. The sackings were often not ascribable to a lack of qualifications, the choices not based on job skills: ethnic background was more important than expertise as a criterion. Former colleagues, fellow cooperative members, and godparents of the past half century again became Gypsy outcasts on the outskirts of the village.

With links to the peasants no longer of any assistance in obtaining work, despair and difficulties in making ends meet drove the Gypsy community to evolve new strategies. One of the strategies that began to emerge from the mid-1990s on was to take on work abroad. Such jobs had several important features: (a) the work was usually undertaken on a casual basis; (b) they involved long periods of separation from the family; and (c) they had a direct impact on the community. All three features had drastic consequences for the continued life of both families and community.

a) The casual nature of the jobs also applies to many of the job opportunities that Gypsies have within Hungary itself, but with jobs abroad there is a bigger risk, because the initial outlays are also bigger. It can happen that a person who has no contract and does not speak the local language finds he gets no wages after a month of backbreaking work but has no means of redress. Being left with no other choice, he somehow makes his way back home. The losses that are incurred in such an enterprise can be grave. Making the trip in itself generally involves substantial investment, not just to purchase any items needed for the journey but also to make some sort of interim provision (usually through a loan) for the family members who are left behind – to say nothing of the travel costs.

b) Prolonged absence of the head of the family takes a big toll on rural Gypsy families. This is not just a matter of losses of a financial nature, but also of serious emotional repercussions that affect the family and the community. A family cannot do without one of its key elements. The absence of the father has important effects on the way the chil-

dren behave at home and on their progress at school. Often the eldest son is obliged to take over the role of family head, since the mother cannot keep order in the family on her own.

c) In earlier eras, all families within a Gypsy community had essentially equal opportunities. During periods when money is very tight, however, not many are in a position to embark on a trip abroad. Chancy though it may be, to the extent that it does pay off, given that even a lowly paid job abroad may pay multiples of what can be earned from casual work in Hungary, this can engender major tensions in a community that had previously been grounded on equality, and relations between families may deteriorate markedly.

Those, then, are the difficulties that must be faced by anyone setting off on such a trip. The gains are uncertain, but the price that is paid is always stiff. In the community under study here the first time that the phenomenon of working abroad appeared was in the mid-1990s, when a few of the young men undertook to work in Germany. They had a contract in hand before they set off, and were going to work in a trade for which they had qualified; four of them are still working there, with a couple of them making a monthly trip home to see their families. These are the only ones in the community who have regular jobs abroad.

Following them, a group of seven women and a man likewise left for Germany to pick asparagus. They were not contracted, and the work itself only lasted for a few weeks. Though it did bring in something for the households concerned, the overall gain was not so big as to tempt them to give it another try. Since then, they too have tried to make do with the limited opportunities for casual work in the local area.

One young Hungarian man and his wife left for Canada in the late 1990s, managing to pass themselves off as Gypsy refugees; they are still there. With news of that spreading to the Gypsy colony, a total of around 15 people from seven families there have attempted to emulate their luck. In most cases a group of several people set off, though in no case were these married couples, siblings, children under school age, or entire families. Two of the groups are still there, but the rest have all returned home. The primary goal was to find work and attempt to relieve the plight of the family; not one planned to stay abroad and start a new life there. Being abroad, though, had a major disruptive effect on earlier familial and communal ties. Many of them fell out whilst they were in Canada and have not patched over their differences since. Several mortgaged their houses or took out loans in order to pay for the trip, so that in many cases the venture put them into serious financial difficulties.

A number of the community have also travelled to the USA. A man of around forty hit on a way of doing this through a newspaper advertisement, likewise in the late 1990s. He too took out loans, the rest of the family pitched in, and the man and his wife entered the USA on tourist visas, where a Hungarian-born woman arranged work for them as illegal immigrants. The pay was not high by American standards but still far better than anything they could hope for in Hungary. Due to injury in an accident, the couple returned home sooner than they had planned, but they went back six months later. They had hoped that the rest of their family could go with them, but the latter were not granted visas; how-

ever, they did assist another two young men from the community to make the journey, and the four of them are still in America to this day.

Of the three strategies presented here, then, two – the German and the American ones – have proved durable and profitable. For those who went to Canada, with one exception, the costs outweighed the gains. The chance of steady employment in Germany was due entirely to skills qualifications, with none of the risks of casual jobs and, given the much smaller distance involved, even making it possible to maintain regular contacts with the family. Though the families found it hard to be parted from their loved ones, and roles within the family have been upset, this particular strategy has so far paid off handsomely. The gamble on obtaining work in the USA, by contrast, called for a fairly substantial up-front investment, which drew on the couple's accumulated wealth and on the rallied support of the entire family. This strategy is also proving to be remunerative, but there is a sharp discontinuity between making the money and being able to enjoy its fruits. The money earned over there only represents a truly tidy income if it is paying for Hungarian costs of living; however, one needs to work for at least a year or two in the USA before it becomes worthwhile to return home. This strategy therefore places an even bigger burden on the family if only some members depart and the rest stay at home. Emigration to Canada did not call for quite as big an initial outlay, but the repercussions turned out to be far more serious. This was the strategy that was attempted most often by members of the community, yet it proved the least successful. It was the most divisive of all for the families and the financial gains were the smallest, indeed in several cases they proved to be net losses.

It must be underlined that the above cases cover the emigration strategies of just one community and are not claimed to be generalisable in any way. The aim is merely to illustrate some contemporary patterns of migratory movement from the viewpoint of a community that is the point of departure. Still, it seems safe to make a few assertions on the basis of what has been outlined. It certainly appears that opting to look for work abroad is something members of the community entertain only under the force of circumstances; it generally incurs considerable expense, with far from secure returns; and it places great strains on family and community. The restricted scope of the strategy, and its relatively high outlays, magnify inequalities within the community, giving rise to serious tensions between families and disrupting the previous sense of communal order.

III) GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES IN 2002: A YEAR OF ELECTIONS, CHANGES AND EXPECTATIONS

The final months of the outgoing Orbán government

The completion of construction work on the Gandhi High School complex at Pécs, the prize institution of the Roma nation in Hungary, is linked to the parliamentary term that ended in the spring of 2002. Under a framework agreement concluded with the Gandhi Public Foundation in December 2000, funding from the central budget was secured and,

with the work proceeding to plan, the buildings were ready to be handed over in April 2002. Two areas relating to the country's Roma problem on which the previous government laid particular stress were the funding of scholarships for Roma students and financial help in fighting instances of discrimination. In both cases there was much trumpeting of the substantial sums that were to be made available. A brief overview of official data supplied by NEKH [Office for Ethnic and National Minorities] reveals the following:

- In school year 2001/02 a total of 12,777 young Roma students – 7,027 in the senior years at general school, 4,505 at secondary school, 1,217 at college or university, and 28 studying abroad – received study scholarships.
- In the first half-year of school year 2002/03 a subvention of HUF 499,190,000 funded scholarships for 18,900 students – 9,996 at general school, 7,103 at secondary school, 1,748 at college or university, and 64 studying abroad.

The data supplied by the 2001 national census, however, indicate that there were then 81,099 Gypsy pupils at general school, 13,035 at secondary school, and 188 in higher education. It is estimated that approximately 0.3% of the Roma population is either currently studying at an institution of higher learning or has already gained a graduate qualification.

The evident contradictions are noteworthy, as it seems that the scholarship system is not achieving the desired effect at the higher education level. Either students of non-Roma origin are receiving grants or else continuing studies at this level is associated with a loss of professed identity, or some other explanation must be sought for the disparities.

A further development that took effect in the past year was the creation by the Ministry of Justice – with the involvement of the National Gypsy Self-Government and the Office for National and Ethnic Minorities – of an Roma Anti-discrimination Client Service Network from 15 October 2001. The Ministry of Justice guaranteed funding from its own budget allocation for the Network's operating expenses and for additional training of lawyers who will be working for it. Currently the Network is operating with 22 lawyers, working from 24 legal-aid offices. The aim is build up a legal-aid service specifically concentrating on cases where the client has suffered a wrong on account of his or her Gypsy descent. Lawyers belonging to the Network are empowered to offer legal advice, to initiate court actions in anti-discrimination cases, and represent clients in court, all at no charge to the client.

Besides its direct government role, the Office for National and Ethnic Minorities, working together with the Non-Profit Foundation for the Gypsies of Hungary, gave its support to the activities of civil legal-aid offices, as well as to bodies and institutions dealing with conflict avoidance and management. In both 2001 and 2002, it secured HUF 20 million to finance civil institutions operating in these areas. On the basis of applications that were submitted, grants were given to 21 offices in 2001 and 29 offices in 2002, including HUF 1 million to an interactive legal-aid service run by Radio 'C', which, with the assistance of the radio station's invited lawyer, dispensed advice to listeners in a weekly live programme.

In connection with tasks relating to its medium-term package of measures, the Non-Profit Foundation for the Gypsies of Hungary originally announced an annual budget frame of HUF 25 million was going to be set aside to run the Gypsy Legal-Aid Offices. In view of the large number of applications, however, this was topped up from contingency reserves in both years. In 2002, out of 74 applicants, 30 bodies received grants to the tune of HUF 37.4 million in total. Funding was increased still further by the second subproject of the PHARE Roma Integration Project, instigated by the Office for National and Ethnic Minorities, which has two main components. The aim of the first component was the development of offices involved in legal-aid work with the Roma population, whilst the second component covered funding for the planned running of anti-discrimination training courses in seven regions of the country. In July 2001, it was announced that tenders were being invited for grants to develop legal-aid offices; on the basis of the applications received, 11 already operating and four new offices would be receiving funding. The implementation of expansion plans totalling HUF 53 million has been initiated under the programme. In the course of 2002, grants for office equipment totalling HUF 3 million were awarded to existing offices and for HUF 5 million to new offices.

In advance of the 2002 National Assembly elections, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and Flórián Farkas, chairman of Lungo Drom and of the National Gypsy Self-Government, reached a collaborative agreement. Under the plan a Roma Integration Office would have been set up, the activities of which would have been reviewed by the full cabinet every six months. This did not come to fruition in view of the change in government.

Early measures by the incoming government

Significant changes occurred in Roma politics, as well as in the more elevated spheres of national politics, during 2002. Not only were policies towards the Roma population amongst the issues aired in the general election campaigning for National Assembly seats during the spring, but politicians of avowedly Roma descent were to be found as candidates for parties on both the left and the right of the political spectrum and, what is more, highly enough placed on the national lists as to more or less guarantee that four such candidates would pick up seats when voting was completed. As a result, Hungary again has parliamentary representatives of Roma origin in the colours of the major national parties. As a further sign of the ascending fortunes of Roma political life, in the local elections of autumn 2002 a total of 998 settlements elected a Gypsy minority self-government, four returned a Roma mayor, and a total of 545 Gypsies gained seats in mainstream self-government authorities. This compares with the roughly three thousand Roma representatives elected for places in 740 Gypsy minority self-governments in 1998.

Given that background, it seemed reasonable to expect that Roma policy would be reformulated at government level – all the more as the new prime minister invited an adviser of Roma origin to assist him with his work. When the new government took office

in the summer of 2002, it announced that the promotion of equal opportunities for the Roma population in Hungarian society as one of its key tasks. A separate subsection of the government programme (albeit, somewhat surprisingly, under the heading of ‘Social Policy’) is concerned, following a brief assessment of the current position of this segment of the population, with the measures that are envisaged to address its needs:⁹

**“C. Tasks relating to the social and political integration of
Hungary’s Gypsy community**

1) We consider the decline in social standing of our Roma fellow countrymen to be the consequence of a widespread, dramatic social process rather than an ethnic problem. Elevating that standing and achieving the fullest possible social integration lies in all of our interests. For that reason, we shall be instigating a broad anti-poverty programme to prevent any further slipping down the social scale and to remedy equality of opportunity.

2) The government will restore the status of Gypsy policy coordination to cabinet level. To meet the tasks of the programme that has been evolved in consultation with those concerned, it will dispose of budgetary instruments and of collaborative arrangements that offer the widest possible social solidarity.

3) We shall introduce and approve a bill for an anti-discrimination law. Discrimination that gives rise to or promotes social exclusion of Gypsies will be punishable by particular sanctions. We shall examine what effective instruments may be available with which to counter public speaking that incites to racial hatred.

4) We shall restore and in practice establish communication on an equal footing between the majority society and the Roma community. We shall place weight on training well-qualified mediators, and we shall support, through scholarships and other means, an expansion in the numbers of Roma graduates.

6) We shall draw up a long-term programme for eliminating Gypsy colonies, creating decent living conditions, and encouraging housing mobility.

7) We shall fund human rights organisations that take action against discrimination and assist the establishment and running of Roma civil legal-aid bodies. We shall seek to enhance the role of civil organisations in preventing and handling local conflicts and in setting up and implementing programmes to promote integration.

8) Preservation of the Gypsy community’s ethnic and cultural identity is to be achieved alongside the process of social integration. In the interests of preserving Gypsy language and culture, the same legal guarantees will be granted as are enjoyed by other minorities.

9) The foundation of the government’s comprehensive anti-poverty programme is the development of education and improving equality of opportunity for children. We shall seek to obtain a reduction in the handicaps of poverty as early as the stage of nursery

⁹ *Cselekedni, most és mindenkiért! A nemzeti közép, a demokratikus kormányának programja Magyarország 2002–2006* (‘Action now and for everyone! Programme of the national centre, the democratic coalition government, for Hungary 2002–2006’). Parliamentary Bill No. H19, 25 May 2002.

schooling. We shall create opportunities for the employment of nursery-school teachers and auxiliary staff of Roma origin, as well as for close relations between Roma families and nursery schools. We shall make efforts to ensure that disadvantaged children are able to gain the benefit of nursery provision in larger numbers, for longer periods of time and, where necessary, within the framework of special programmes.

10) The government will give special attention to the position and reception of Roma children in the schools, and to ending segregation. We shall review the system of referrals to remedial education and take steps to obstruct declarations of private teaching status being used as a way of excluding Gypsy children from the school system.

11) We consider the right of the Roma people to autonomous instruction that strengthens their own culture to be a constitutional right. We shall encourage and support the operation of classes and schools that are organised to place an emphasis on teaching children their own culture, though this must not become a basis for educational segregation.

12) With the collaboration of teachers and family assistance services, we shall enhance the value set on school qualifications within Gypsy families. We shall take particular pains over vocational training and improving entry into higher education for the children of poor families. Working with civil organisations and enterprises that are prepared to offer sponsorship, we shall instigate preparatory, scholarship, and probationary programmes to support talented Roma youngsters.

13) We shall also instigate differentiated Roma programmes within the domain of adult education and training. Our purpose is to improve the schooling and employment opportunities of the Gypsy population. We shall embark on an expansion that takes regional differences into account, making use, as appropriate, of the existing educational and public cultural infrastructure.

14) We shall devote particular care to steering the unemployed segments of the Gypsy population back to work. We shall lay down a requirement on job centres to employ organisers with responsibility for Roma employment.

15) Amongst the traditional Roma occupational branches, we shall support those which are also efficient from an economic and environmental-protection standpoint. We shall assist local self-government actions to stimulate and organise tenant farming and agricultural production. We shall give particular attention to offering Roma employees opportunities for work not just in low-prestige occupations but also in the service sector, in tourism, and in social services.”

It is also important to highlight as passage from the section dealing with education:

“4.8. Education is one of the keys to advancement of the Roma population and to altering prejudiced behaviour against Roma individuals. For that reason:

- we shall ensure its precondition, which is that every Roma child be able to attend nursery school;
- we wish to give earmarked subsidies and expert assistance and to pay supplements to those schools and teachers who effectively implement integrated education of

Roma pupils, and at the same time we shall also support schools that have been established through civil initiatives and which accept Roma children;

- we shall establish a scholarship fund in order that teachers' training institutions train up as many teachers as possible who will take responsibility for Roma identity and commitment and also in order that, at all levels of teacher training, people are prepared for the special tasks of educating and giving tuition to youngsters of Roma origin."

As a first step towards achieving the goals set out in the government programme, several major organisational changes were introduced. Responsibility for Roma affairs was again brought under the direct purview of the Office of the Prime Minister, with its own under-secretary of state and associated Office for Roma Affairs. For the very first time in Hungarian political life, a person of Roma origin was appointed to the post of under-secretary of state and director of a state office. He has taken over from the Office for National and Ethnic Minorities the responsibility for supervising and directing strategically important Roma policy issues. Similarly, in connection with its announced programme, individual government departments began to implement the idea of appointing officials of Roma origin to handle Roma policy issue within the department. Several such rapporteurs and ministerial commissioners are already in place, but it is expected that this initiative will continue. Amongst these new officials, particular mention should be made of impact already made, despite the short time that has intervened, by the ministerial commissioner in the Ministry of Education. Having designated the ending of school segregation as their highest priority, he and his colleagues have brought in a regulation dealing with what is referred to as the 'integration norm', the long-term goal of which is to eliminate the practice of setting up separate teaching arrangements for children of Gypsy origin.

The key issues, though, will be settled within the Office of the Prime Minister. The Under-Secretary of State for Roma Policy and the Office for Roma Affairs has set to work in the following strategic areas:

- Government resolution 1186/(5 Nov.) 2002 defined the new institutional set-up for securing social integration of the Roma population, as well as the guidelines that will be used to implement the goals laid out in the government programme.
- They played an active role in working out how the Roma were to be presented in the National Development Plan and in operative programmes that are linked to imminent accession to the European Union.
- A consultative body of respected, independent experts of Roma and non-Roma origin has been set up as the Roma Affairs Council, chaired by the prime minister himself. This body is tasked with giving opinions and formulating guidelines on strategic issues.
- The Under-Secretary of State for Roma Policy embarked on a complete revision of the approach and content of Government resolution 1047/(5 May) 1999. In the course of carrying this out, the outlines of a new government programme that may

be needed in order to implement the goals set out in the Government Programme have begun to emerge. This package of measures which are targeted at the Roma population, though without excluding others, is the first element in a government effort to create equal opportunities for all social strata that are being left behind in the economy. On the basis of the details that have become known to date, it would appear that the government programme, which includes a detailed, project-oriented action plan, will be built on the following main priorities:

Equality before the law: This area includes, amongst other things, drafting anti-discrimination legislation, revision of the National and Ethnic Minority Rights Act, overhaul of the electoral system and procedures, further training for public officials in conformity with EU regulations, and setting up a regulatory framework for more effective action in countering racially motivated criminal acts.

Improved quality of life: This area includes, amongst other things, the implementation of complex model programmes that may be aimed, for instance, at continuous reintegration of economically run-down regions by boosting and bringing in new approaches to healthcare and social provision, eliminating colony-type living conditions and assisting enterprises that secure livelihoods.

Education: This area includes, amongst other things, measures which serve to overcome the disadvantages that spring from the educational system as a whole, from nursery school to university graduation, such as wider access to nursery-school facilities, ensuring a suitable environment for learning, multicultural education, reintegration of early drop-outs from the education system, and the ending of the practice of separate remedial schooling.

Employment: This area includes, amongst other things, the creation of job opportunities based on skills that will remain marketable over the long term, and providing temporary employment that will give a livelihood to people who have dropped out of the jobs market.

Identity: This area includes, amongst other things, establishing a Roma arts foundation, funding community centres, and building up international cultural links.

Social communication: This area includes, amongst other things, efforts aimed at raising tolerance levels within the majority society, funding public-service programming on Roma-related subjects for TV and radio, and giving prominence to the importance of information technology skills.

Comprising an integral part of this government programme – according to the plans that have so far become publicly known – will be an independent, cross-sectoral monitoring system for tracking and assessing how funding is used and the technical expertise of implementation, with powers to recommend changes that may be required. Taking the same fundamental principles as their point of departure, the new Under-Secretary of State and his Office will have as part of their task and goal the elaboration of a long-term strategic programme that takes on board new approaches to promoting equality of social oppor-

tunity for the Roma population. Of course, a programme is worth only as much it actually accomplishes, but it is encouraging that – going by all the signals it has given to date – the new government is looking problem areas squarely in the face.

In accordance with the EU Commission directive of 29 June 2000 on the application of the fundamental principle of equality of treatment, regardless of racial and ethnic differences between individuals, Hungary, like the existing member-states, will by 19 July 2003 have repealed all regulations or public administrative provisions and annulled or modified all individual or collective contracts, internal company directives or organisational rules that conflict with the principle of equal treatment. As one of the designate member-states, the country had already embarked on preparations to comply with the directive. The Ministry of Justice set up an Interministerial Anti-discrimination Committee in 2001 to conduct a complete review of the Hungarian corpus of law. On entering office, the new government stepped up the legislative activities within this area, and by the end of 2002 had achieved a technical outline for a bill on equality of treatment and equality of opportunity that, once public consultations that are under way have been completed, will be forwarded to the cabinet for ratification in February 2003. If all goes according to plan, that will subsequently be tabled as bill to go before parliament by April. As plans stand, the regulation will incorporate the following conceptual elements:

- Race, colour, nationality, language, disability, religion, opinion, gender, sexual orientation, age, origin, financial situation and harassment may all be a basis for discrimination, whether direct or indirect.
- The alleged offender will have to prove that he or she acted appropriately, thereby reversing the usual burden of proof.
- The law will not cover legal relations under civil law, but it will apply not only to state and self-government bodies but also to “public domain civil law relations”, when state registration creates a legal qualification.
- Prejudicial discrimination will be penalised by appropriate awards of damages, including cases where an individual has incurred a disadvantage through seeking legal remedy.
- In order to enforce the ban, a ‘Commission for Equal Treatment’ will be established, the five members of which will be appointed by the head of state and which will have powers to initiate investigations and bring cases to court.

In summary, a review of the activities of the new government to date shows that ambitious plans are being drawn up, but we are awaiting concrete actions. It therefore seems fair to call 2002 a year of change and expectations.