



The turning points in the development of the Romany ethnic group in Slovakia in 20th century and problems of research

Anna Jurová, Institute of Social Sciences SAS Košice, jurova@saske.sk

JUROVÁ, Anna. The turning points in the development of the Romany ethnic group in Slovakia in 20th century and problems of research. *Individual and Society*, 2009, Vol. 12, No. 4.

The case study focuses on the most significant turning points in the development of the Romany ethnic group within different political and social regimes of the 20th century. Besides the persecutive nature of the regime's attitude and a unique single-sided regulation of their status within the interwar Czechoslovakia, the case study follows their possibilities of cultural and social self-realization and their involvement within the improvement of their own ethnic group standards.

Assimilation policy. Right of domicile. Gypsy ID cards. Nomade certificates. Work camps. Settlements and their replacement. Unrestrained migration. Displacement and spreading of Romanies. The Association of Gypsies - Romanies. Repeated attempts towards th

As till today the Slovak historiography has not paid sufficient attention to the research within the field of Romany development since their arrival to this territory, the features determining their status are quite unknown as well as the processes of sedentarization and economical cooperation since Middle Ages, the development of mutual relations and its determination between the majority population and this culturally foreign minority. A usefulness of their crafts` production and therefore a bigger amount of tolerance through the centuries can be only deduced as well as a permanent struggle towards their assimilation realized also through directive measures. It is necessary to fill the gaps within the scope of still unknown problems and to verify some automatically accepted statements and source references of Romistic literature which have been treated as valid through several decades.[1] However at this point it is not necessary to depict the development of Romanies in Slovakia since the most ancient ages. The turning points of 18th and 19th century (the events and acts that determined the approach of the highest political bodies towards the later assimilation policy - edicts of Maria Theresa and her son Joseph II.) appear as the very starting point. They refer to the continuity of settlements and denote the situation of Romanies in the period late feudalism and early capitalism in Hungary at the end of the 19th century that had been recorded within the Hungarian census in 1893.[2] The analysis of the primary source (having an incredible significance for the historical and ethnological research of the Romany ethnic group) which has been realized till today enabled to state hypotheses about the traditionally settled Romany population living in contemporary Slovakia. It had recorded the persistence of typical Romany original occupations (smithery and work with metals in general, carpentry, music, various supplementary works in agriculture). On the other hand this period had shown off the features and problems that determined the development of Romanies on our territory for the next century - worse social conditions, worse dwelling conditions compared to the whole-Hungarian average measure (shanties, zemlyankas and semi-zemlyankas), high occurrence of separated or segregated hamlets as a result of a more numerous population and concentration of Romanies within a territory, a stronger aversion of majority population, high amounts of over-population and burden of the soil having been treated according to the persisting feudal and semi-feudal relations in agriculture that resulted in a huge wave of emigration at the end of the century. Forth-coming circumstances of the Romany ethnic group had been significantly affected by

the distinctions between legal acts issued in both parts of the monarchy at the end of 19th century. In the Austrian part the edicts were much stronger especially those dealing with homestead and nationality. A peculiar anti-Romany edict issued in 1888 was dedicated to displace the Romany population from the territory of Austria. Later the same edict complicated the situation after the foundation of Czechoslovak republic. The discriminative nature of the edict was treated by C. Nečas within his research of Romanies' persecutions,[3] however the stated questions has not become the subject of any further research thus their impact on Romany population can be only deduced. In 1916 the Hungarian Ministry of Home Affairs had also issued a detailed act covering the definite settlement of Romanies, their evidence and emission of Romany identity cards. However its administration had been postponed to the after-war period. Sources from regional archives, although not observed sufficiently by researchers, reflect different attitudes of edict's administrators towards Romany population and towards the introduction of Romany identity cards and dactyloscopic cards in Slovakia even before the law No. 117/1927 (About strolling Gypsies) was brought to life.[4]

The mentioned acts and edicts coming from both parts of the monarchy perplexed the status of Romanies after the foundation of Czechoslovak republic in 1918, when Slovakia and Carpathian Ruthenia were introduced the acts issued outside of former Hungary. Law No. 236 about the state citizenship was issued in 1920 which enabled the state authorities to treat unwanted citizens (Romanies were also counted among them) by the ways of not granting the state citizenship although they had their permanent addresses and homeship in a concrete settlement. Neither historiography nor the history of public administration studies has paid attention to these problems with regards to the Romany minority despite their extreme relevancy and recency as for the legality of the residence of Romanies within the territory of the state and despite the possibilities of their expatriation from the given territory especially after the First Vienna Award and the annexation of the southern areas of Slovakia and after the World War 2 observing the manipulation with unwanted and „probably foreign“ citizens.[5]

The after-war economical crisis had impacted the situation in Slovakia and remarkably affected conditions in regions where Romanies lived. Therefore complaints rolled up accusing Romanies of a real and alleged strolling. Requirements concerning bans of their crafts and jobs connected with moving (trade with horses and livestock, production of unburnt bricks etc.) had increased in number and especially in Czech lands a significant pressure had grown up towards preparations of a distinguishing singular legal alternation of Romanies' status. The census realized in 20s of the 20th century confirmed the decrease of specific ways of livelihood and also a social move downwards within a caste economical system towards ancillary works. The census also showed off the increase of the number of persons without livelihood sources and their reliance on relatives, begging or thefts.[6] C. Nečas was the one who pointed to insufficient usage of these sources with their high expressive power within Slovak historiography and ethnology.

In 1927 Czechoslovak republic was one of the states which issued the law about strolling Gypsies with the forth-coming executive edict from 1928 which introduced Gypsies' identity cards, a central evidence, the identification of persons through dactyloscopy and instituted a wide range of repressive measures towards Romanies who were perceived as asocials. By the issuance of further edicts of the Ministry of Home Affairs which were pointing to the still less „favourite“ minority's everyday's segregation and isolation of Romany ethnic group gained a legal platform, although it was in contradiction with the Constitution. In a masmedial hysteria the public incited on monsterprocesses with Moldavian thieves and „cannibals“. Regionally there were several attacks on Romany settlements in Povedim and struggles to expel Romanies even to a deeper isolation from urban areas. Many ghettoized endogamous communities appeared to divaricate from civilizing influence (e.g. Letanovce).[7]

The sources reflecting census in 1921 and 1930, which gathered data concerning Gypsy nationality on a very limited sample of Romanies and caused Gypsies not to become an officially accepted minority, at the same time filed the numbers of Gypsy dwellings, huts and zemlyankas in individual urban areas. This extensive material, similar to specific police records made in 20s of the 20th century, is still waiting to be properly treated as they are significant for the demonstration of residence legality of Romanies in individual urban areas and for the comparison to the after-war development and number of Romanies in the restored republic.

A hard and deepening social-economical situation of Romany ethnic group in the region of Spis and prevailing persecutions of Romanies in Gemer are proved by a partial research made before 1989.[8] Only a recent research related to the holocaust using memoirs of Romanies can prove that within hard economical conditions in individual regions Romanies asserted themselves as workers working not only for wealthy farmers or for big land-owners but they were working also as road-builders, miners, unburnt

and burnt bricks producers, herbs collectors and they also ancillary workers in „white people`s“ households. The social-economical links between Romany and Jewish population is still unknown however they can be guessed by the evidence of family links in higher social and educated classes.[\[9\]](#)

As the interwar Czechoslovakia was based on democratic principles, the Romany community had also been impacted by differential processes. The result of the processes was a creation of a small group of socially better set businessmen, culturally more advanced musicians who struggled to integrate within the majority population. They took care of their children`s education and got involved in cultural life, participated in various associations` activities and took part at public events. Induced by local authorities a Romany school had been built in Uzhorod with an active participation of Romany parents at bricks production. The school started its activity in 1926 and became a model for the other schools which were to be built in Kosice, Giraltovce, Lubica by Kezmarok, Medzilaborce, Podskalka by Humenne etc. The acceptance of the oddness of Romany children together with the ability of teachers to communicate in Romany language and with the cultivation of musical talent led to success at educational process embodied in the graduation from secondary schools.[\[10\]](#) In the period of existence of the interwar Czechoslovak republic Romany music groups belonged to local coloring of Slovak towns, they regularly performed not only in cafés but also at events commemorating the foundation of the state, at promotions of mute films, at sport events of workers` associations etc. As soon as 1924 Romany musicians in Kosice struggled to establish their own labour union to defend themselves against accusations of the spreading of „hungarization“ through their music (The Ministry of Home Affairs rejected the struggle). In 1929 Czech doctors initiated the foundation of the League for the cultural improvement of Gypsies in Kosice which had widened its activities and in 1930 it had been renamed to the Society for the study and solution of the Gypsy question. Besides social-healthcare, cultural-promotional, researching and publishing activities also sport activities appeared manifested by the foundation of Romany football club which initiated other clubs to be established and contributed to the sporting-musical promotion in Baltic states (except for the sporting activities they successfully performed in radio). Romanies performed in theatres, they prepared dramatic cultural series and got involved in circumstances of their ethnic group. In 1936 they founded their own musical association Lavutarisz which was active all through Slovakia and by the foundation of school orchestra in Kosice it struggled to improve Romanies` level by the education of children coming from socially weaker families and materially supporting them. However after the First Vienna Award the activities of the association had been stopped and its move to Presov was according to the changed political circumstances definitely rejected.[\[11\]](#)

During the World War II Romanies became a subject of continual extensive persecutions which limited the performance of their occupation, movement and their poverty, misery and measure of isolation from the majority population had been deepened. The research of prof. Necas dealing with the holocaust of Romanies included also the realization of an edict requiring the concentration of Romanies in labour camps for asocials.[\[12\]](#) The lives of Romanies in Slovakia had been significantly impacted by an edict requiring a mass movement of Romany settlements, which were traditionally located at the edges of towns and other urban areas of majority population, to a distant locations marked by local authorities. The above mentioned results of census from 20s show that Romanies lived in 1709 towns and other urban areas throughout Slovakia. Although by annexation of southern Slovakia by Hungary many Romanies found themselves outside of the state there were still regions (especially in eastern Slovakia) with a significant share of Romany population - the Saris-Zemplin county, Spis and partially central Slovakia. On 20th April 1941 the Ministry of Home Affairs issued an edict called „On the adjustment of some conditions of Gypsies“. The edict together with a following decree strictly ordered „to remove Gypsies` dwellings from frequently used roads and to prevent Gypsies from free motion and shirking“. Subordinated authorities were asked to report the handling of the orders. The handed reports counting the realization of the order in individual counties and urban areas sound as a cruel paradox. The order had been realized brutally although the „nomad and unemployed Gypsies“ were not living within the treated area. Still in 1944 under the thread of punishment and direct force another settlements were being dissolved and Romanies expelled to forests or to insufficient lands far from urban areas. Ghettoization of Romanies in isolation had stopped all the integrative, adaptation and inner social differential processes, it had deepened the consequences of population explosion, accelerated the downfall of traditional livelihood and destroyed traditional ethic norms and regulations of the functioning of Romany society. According to a long-lasting stationary research of M. Hübschmann these drastic regulations triggered the process of deculturalization, degeneration and regress among Romanies in eastern Slovakia, which continued all through the after-war period within the policy of the former regime.[\[13\]](#)

The after-war development of Romanies in Slovakia can be observed on several stages which required the integration of Romanies within the majority population and the adaptation of its norms. Individual stages differed from each other in methods of solution of so-called Gypsy question. All the stages had however

one common sign - it was the suppression of ethnicity and the rejection of Romany society as a distinctive ethnic minority in dimensions of the political and legal status of nationality.

The previous context has shown the struggle, activity and ambitions of certain classes of Romany population to integrate to the interwar civil majority society with respect to their specifics and language and cultural oddness. These classes accepted the restoration of Czechoslovakia with big expectations. Similarly Romanies from the lowest classes identified themselves with the policy of communists which they joined during the war (it is another unknown side of Romany ethnic group in Slovakia). After the years of imprisonment in camps and isolated ghettos their unwanted „revisibility“ caused very controversial attitudes of the public administration and also individual inhabitants towards „their Gypsies“, who were to become equal citizens of the state. Although some of authorities showed off marks of helpfulness towards Romanies while solving their accumulated basic existential problems (various support, granting houses after expatriated Germans, granting food tickets and clothes tickets) the persecution and repressive approaches dominated. [\[14\]](#)

Law No. 117/1927 was a legislature frame enabling the persecution of Romanies. A wide range of anti-Romany restrictions had been brought by the order of Commission of Home Affairs „about assigning Romanies for generally useful work“, the presidential decree No. 88/1945 about the mobilization of workforce and the order of Slovak National Council No. 105/1945 about labour camps according to which Romanies were interned as asocials in camps in Mega Valley, Kralovany, Ustie nad Oravou etc. where they worked at similar building sites as during the war. There were another internal orders issued by the Commission of Home Affairs pointed against Romanies dealing with black market, vagancy and begging. Regional and local authorities approached the situation very actively and struggling to expel Romanies from their areas they issued new regulations for their persecution. The process of expulsion of Romanies had been empowered by the novelization of the edict from 20th April 1941, which ordered to dislocate Romany settlements to distant places from urban areas. Catastrophic consequences of issuance and realization of this edict right after deliberation are being showed off by contemporary segregated, isolated huge Romany concentrations in eastern Slovakia with a high amount of unemployment and poverty and a definite expulsion and total marginalization of inhabitants living there. It must be stressed that local authorities realized the edict in tens of other cases but they became obvious only at later observation of activities of national committees.[\[15\]](#) At the same time the terrain research in settlement and the research of archive documents related to the dissolution of Romany settlements definitely prove that many authorities as well as individuals prevented Romanies from building in urban areas right after the war even in cases when Romanies had the building material and instruments assured.[\[16\]](#) On the other hand positive attitudes and mutual communication as well as the acceptance of the minority had led to the integration and a normal coexistence of culturally different inhabitants.[\[17\]](#)

In the context of development before February 1948 it must be emphasized that Romanies themselves tried to solve their heavy social problem as they accumulated during the war and to integrate to the „new“ society. They were spontaneously leaving for work to Czech lands and they were also an irreplaceable element at restoration works after the war. Czech authorities were considering the possibility of introduction of three-stage work camps for Romanies where they should have been selected according to the degree of adaptability and only „strange“ and inadaptible persons should have been expelled. However such legislature proposals had been rejected as non-legal. In 1947 a census - the first anti-Romany regulation - had been realized. It proved 101,190 Gypsies-Romanies in the whole Czechoslovakia. From among them 16,000 Romanies from Slovakia were taking part at works in various industry centers and in borderland. The census erased baseless prejudices concerning asociality, criminality, idleness and vagancy of Romanies which were widely spread in the nationalistic press and it proved their active participation in the work process. High flexibility and adaptability of Romanies on the post-war circumstances was admitted not only by the contemporary press but also present several-years-long stationary researches of integration and segregation in various urban areas of Bardejov district where Romanies were delivering building material, furniture, clothes, shoes, china, glass and other goods in rented railway wagons from Czech borderland.[\[18\]](#)

Similarly during the post-war restoration of eastern and southern Slovakia their activities in trade and supplement of building and agricultural living and non-living inventory were welcomed by the inhabitants (in borderland both parts of the society participated at smuggling of various goods; for horse trade Romanies were assigned to convict labour camps according to law No. 247/1948). However observing the crimes from the period of communism the authors underestimated the topic of Romanies and their persecutions. The approach proves a one-side view of socialistic solution of Gypsy question which was perceived by the majority as a subsidizing of the ethnic group on expenses of the majority. In the post-war period a significant part of Romanies in eastern Slovak settlements did not have conditions and

abilities to overcome their catastrophic circumstances. In a pluralist society with regards to continuing processes of differentiation and social and cultural stratification within individual communities and assuming acceptance of their ethnic and cultural specifics wide classes of Romany ethnic group would have integrated to significantly structured and institutionalized majority population on particular levels. Certain mobilization tendencies were shown off by the un-official Romany representation which at various turning points introduced its demands for the benefit of the change in views of Romanies within the society and it tried to establish proper cultural organizations similar to those in the interwar period. In 1948 the new political power fastening its position rejected the proposal of foundation of „Association of Slovak Gypsies“ for its ambition to represent politically and culturally the members of Romany ethnic group in decisions concerning its future development.[\[19\]](#)

Having accomplished the repressive processes at the end of 40s and beginning of 50s by assigning Romanies to convict labour camps, auxiliary technical battalions, dissolving business licenses, by pressure towards the socialization and collectivization of agriculture (Romanies lost a chance get employed at farmers) general authorities wanted to formulate the principles of their policy towards Romany minority. At the background of general minority policy formulation there was a strong struggle to define Romany minority as a generally and legally accepted minority. The proposals of the support for ethno-cultural and ethno-emancipating process that may have contributed to a general improvement and to a less problematic integration within the society were rejected, although some newer sources prove the existence of such conditions. (in a cultural sphere, in an educational process).[\[20\]](#) The hardest assimilation policy in education caused the biggest damages in intergenerational reproduction of graduates from special schools and the growth of unqualified and illiterate workforces. These are not able to assert within the labour market in the post-November development. An ideological determination in the Marxist perception of nationalities could not have been overcome and the possibility of Romany national constitution had been precariously rejected as for the inner circumstances of Czechoslovakia. Romanies who were perceived as socially and culturally unadvanced inhabitants should have been adapted to the life of „our working class“. The assimilation of Romanies and removal of their primitive way of living had been accented as a basic principle of the solution.

It must be emphasized that at the beginning of 50s a frame model of Romany ethnic group development had been drawn for the next decades and the ruling power started a policy which is today known as a social engineering of the former regime. According to the doctrines of the former regime Romanies should have overcome their historically determined backwardness and made themselves equal to the majority population by solution of their social – economical problems. Thus the former Gypsy question became a social question. However it did not mention that the state subsidized the whole Romany community by social tributes as it usually perceived by the majority. In each accepted concept by various intensity and methods the state followed the solution of employment, dwelling, education, healthcare and social circumstances (the preference of socially weak citizens did not cover only Romanies) of Romanies within the conditions of extensively developing economy. Various institutions on various levels had been established to achieve projected aims. The institutions were obliged to deal with the actual problems, to make evidence of Romany inhabitants according to previously defined criteria (i.e. not only socially weak inadaptable persons) and to show off realized activities in practice.

Since the beginning of 50s up to 1970 various models of assimilation policy had been involved. Before 1958 it went on the concept of social assimilation as according to the order from 1952 it should have focused on a wide scale of problems in the sphere of improving the life standard and securing a social support for Romany families at the solution of employment, dwelling, hygiene and healthcare questions, education and equality in public life. As Czechoslovakia became a part of Soviet sphere of power, the focus on heavy industry and engineering had not created conditions for the employment of unqualified Romany workforces. These asserted themselves within organized promotions in building industry, but accelerated collectivization freed more and more workforces from agriculture thus they had regularly leave for work out of their regions. Conditions for the growth of individual consumption were not being created, flat building was falling short and Romanies were forced to stay in their settlements. An extensive research revealed a significantly adverse hygienic, dwelling and healthcare situation in these locations as well as neglecting of school attendance and a high amount of illiteracy. In this period the living conditions in Slovak country-side were not favorable also for the majority population therefore the state administration, cultural and medical institutions focused on a number of promotional-educational activities, course activities and medical operations to prevent serious illnesses (ten thousands of people were recorded to have tuberculosis). The Board of Commissions initiated an ambitious plan to dissolve 1,305 Romany settlements, but till the end of 50s there were not even basic conditions set for its realization. In the stage of nonviolent assimilation nomad Wallach Romanies did not respect the ban of private trade and were permanently moving all through the state. They caused a big discontent of

inhabitants by thefts and endangering general security. Therefore the definite and radical change of attitude towards Romany inhabitants was called for and weak results of the realized concept confirmed a „strong need“ for the change.

The period of years 1958 - 1968 represents a stage of struggle for violent social and ethnic assimilation. The stage is defined by the decree of the General Secretariate of Czechoslovak Communist Party issued on 8 April 1958 as law No. 74/1958 „About a permanent settlement of nomad persons with the realization of evidence of these persons“ and governmental edict No. 502/1965 „About an organized dissolution of Romanies“. The decree of the highest party authority strictly rejected the admission of the status of nationality to Romanies, which were being continually introduced in public life, together with the publishing of a school book of Romany language and with the raising of Romany traditions and folklore. The essential aim of the solution at this stage was a complete social and cultural equation of Romanies and the rest of the society towards a definite melting in a near future. It had confirmed the „accuracy“ of the up-to-date treatment of Romanies as „socially and culturally unadvanced inhabitants with typical features of their way of living“. The problems mass classification of Romanies within the work process were solved directly (several thousands people), some worst settlements were dissolved and flat-building was realized, mostly within the settlements, and Romany families were granted flats. However the forth-coming economical crisis at the beginning of 60s had complicated the realization of social-economical solutions not only for Romany citizens.

Law No. 74/1958 About permanent settlement of nomad persons had a significant impact on a still nomading group of Romany ethnic and in its consequences it impacted much bigger part of Romanies with the limited freedom of movement and residence. The census in 1959 showed off 27,933 persons including children and there appeared a controversial group of semi-nomads. According to the state administration the group of semi-nomads included persons who had permanent residence but commuted seasonally for work, often within organized promotions. Such a one-shot repressive approach had dissolved the nomadism in Czechoslovakia while other blunt regulations were involved such as horses and wagons buyouts, forced residence in places with the lack of job and dwelling opportunities. Although the pressure towards the fulfillment of voluntarily defined tasks from 1958 continued, the failure of melting Romanies with the majority became obvious and problem were cumulating on especially in eastern Slovakia.[21]

Therefore in 1965 a new concept of diffusion and replacement of Romanies from areas of their high concentration had been brought to life. The stress was put on dissolution of settlements and buyout of Romany huts, flat grants and family houses building. Twin cities and districts in Czech lands did not respect the defined requirements and similarly to their Slovak colleagues they saw a chance to get rid of „their Romanies“. In the process of directed assimilation the state administration manipulated with Romanies as much as it was possible and at the same time it wasted a huge amount of resources. The concept had to be abolished although even in next decades the exodus of Romany workforces to Czech lands continued, as the sources of investments to extensive development of economy and further flat building showed off a disparity compared to Slovakia, which had a continual growth of workforces at its disposal.

Since 1972 till the fall of the totalitarian regime the development of Romany community followed the pattern of social-cultural integration of Romanies within the majority society. It was a continuation of paternalistic policy of social charity and created a gentle alternation of assimilation. The aims heading towards the equation with the whole society were considered to be a long-term multigenerational potential plan. So-called Gypsy question institutionalized in 1958 within commissions for questions of Gypsy inhabitants annually showed off in statements of employed Romany workforces (as for the economic activity under the pressure of forced employment Romany male workforces reached in numbers the level of majority), in statements of dissolved Romany settlements bought-out huts, granted flats, improvement of education of Romany children, healthcare and social care. The report of independent experts` commission from 1990 declared a significant improvement of social-economical conditions of Romanies in Czechoslovakia since the World War 2, but that was only an imaginary success showed by outer indicators. All repeated struggles for activation of Romany inner powers and realization of requirements of changes in the attitude of the state towards the minority (activities of Associations of Gypsies - Romanies in 1969 - 1973, in 1984 and during „perestroika“) were rejected by the Party and the state authorities. Thus Romanies were manipulated into a position of a subject of the state's paternalistic care, they had been void of their responsibility for their own development and existence and the majority society had been confirmed in its aversion towards such a „preferred“ minority.

During the era of socialism the development of the solution of the Gypsy question did not require any

objective knowledge of history, status and real achieved level of the members of Romany minority. The mentioned activities of Romany representation were unwanted and they had been hidden from public. A historical research had been stopped and it was rejected, almost banned. Except for regular demographic materials in 70s a group of sociologists led by K. Sara at the Institute of Sociology CSAS (later the Institute of Ethnology and Folkloristics) prepared texts which were modified according to the state`s ideology and policy. Only in late 80s research had brought marks of new approaches and a diversion of scientific sphere from the „dictate“ of the Party`s and the state`s ruling power in the scientific research. Thus despite of various obstacles several studies were published in a separate edition of Slovensky narodopis (Slovak Ethnography), the anthology of materials from Cesky Krumlov, where not only representatives of the scientific sphere but also state officials, who had the solution of Gypsy question in their competence, called for a new approach towards the questions of Romany ethnic group (authors used the name Romanies, not Gypsies) and for the definition of a new status within the society. Similarly a research of a Gypsy family had been started at the Institute of Social Sciences CSAS in Kosice and an analysis of the state`s policy towards Romanies and both streams were reflected within a numbers of anthology and monograph outputs.[22]

The continual dissolution of the communistic regime, the activities of pro-reform forces within the whole society as well as the above mentioned call for new attitudes and approaches towards Romanies led an inevitable change of the state`s policy, towards the definition of new concepts and solutions Romanies themselves participating at the process.

In a certain look-back at the period since 1989 the development within the process of transformation of our society, related to the Romany minority, of course being aware of a certain subjectivity and with a necessity of profound research of a number of sources, can be characterized as a policy of barrierism, alibism and even extremism or a lax rejection of participation of a ruling political power at the solution of cumulated problems which were not prepared for by any part of the Romany community. After 1989 the former socialist state policy of „social engineering“ was rejected and through the acceptance of so-called „Principles of state policy“ in 1991 the ethno-cultural side of the problem became more accented and overestimated as well as the possibilities of ethno-emancipating development of the explicitly admitted Romany national minority together with the neglecting or even ignorance of the cumulating social and economical problems of unemployed members of the Romany ethnic group. At the contemporary reflection of state`s approaches in this sphere within the materials of the Institute for Public Questions [23] the regulations accepted in 90s have been evaluated as sub-legal norms as all the principles, conceptual intentions, strategies and strategies in progress, the statutes of governmental commissioners were accepted by decrees of the government and not by laws of the National Council of Slovak Republic.

It should be emphasized that the acknowledgement of Romanies as a national minority, in the sense of a valid legislature and terminology, was based on the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Basic Freedoms from 9 January 1991, which was accepted by (in that period still) the federal National Assembly and the acknowledgement itself emerged from the composition of individual paragraphs of the Charter within the Constitutions of both succession states. It means that it was based on relevant legal documents (also the census in 1991, which introduced the possibility of a free choice of nationality, was realized within the former common state as based on the Charter) and the Principles accepted in April 1991 appear to be a redundant act of a lesser legal power. [24] Coming out of the intentions of the documents the Gypsy question in Slovakia appeared to be solved - all the possibilities of the ethno-cultural development of the Romany minority (similarly supported with regards to other minorities living in Slovakia) were considered as a result of accepted governmental principles. Although neither the state ruling power nor the sphere of experts would have admitted it the inconsistency of the principles disabled a real fulfillment of national rights of Romanies in practice and the struggles for the novelization can be recorded as soon as 1993.

This year became the first crisis turning point in the development of the Romany ethnic group in Slovakia in 90s (the illegal decree in Spisske Podhradie constraining the personal freedom of Romanies living there must have been abolished after negative responses from abroad). The highest authorities of the independent state were not able to respond to the menacingly deepening social problems within the Romany ethnic group caused by a huge unemployment and a sifting through the social system in the case of whole communities [25] - Romanies got to a situation that has not been resolved till today. Mutual relations with the majority population were typical for the accelerating anti-Romany tension which led to the tragic event - the murder of M. Goral in 1995 with an evident racial background. The event can be understood as another very negative moment in the development of the Romany ethnic group in 90s. The installation of a governmental delegate for citizens, who require special help (by this step the members of Romany community were again degraded to the position of socially unadvanced and inadaptable citizens) and poor struggles towards an introduction of publicly profitable works for longtime unemployed people

appeared to be only a weak response to the given situation. The continuation of the negative tendencies in the social-economical sphere in the half of 90s led to attempts for migration of Romanies and their applications for asylum in various countries. Thus the Romany problem got international dimensions. The introduction of visa duties for Slovak citizens accelerated the anti-Romany moods within the society, triggered rude attacks from the side of nationalist politicians and a wide medialization of anti-Romany attacks. The regulations of Meciar`s government in 1996 and Conceptual intentions in 1997 defined the Romanies` problems as social matter and narrowed the space for the ethno-cultural development of minorities as such by shortening the legal subjectivity of minorities` cultural institutions (including the Romany theatre Romathan) but in practical politics it had not brought any positive change despite the pre-election vows and struggles to gain and manipulate a Gypsy voter.[26]

Year 1989 as a significant turning point in the development of Romanies in 20th century mentioned not only the acceptance of their different cultural and ethnic identity but it became also the very beginning of their controversial and immature political activities. The impossibility of political and other engagement of Romany representatives in the previous era brought an inprecedented activity of creation, abolishment, combination, fusion and division of various Romany political subjects and various cultural organizations and associations. The development of this colorful spectrum of subject is manifested by its disability to reflect professionally and to name the problems of its minority, the inexperience, immaturity and prevailing personal interests of individual leaders, who let themselves to corrupt and gain by the coalition or opposition majority parties with the imaginations of promised positions within the state administration or grants of community projects and other profitable orders. Except for the elections in 1990 (when the Romany Independent Initiative ran in coalition) the Romany parties have not succeeded in any elections despite of a number of analyses of election results or prognoses of potential possibilities and other professional knowledge mediated to them by the majority sphere. [27]The Romany representation itself has not been able to find starting points and solutions of a significantly unpleasant social-economical situation of the Romany community although they participated at the preparations of some of the regulations of the Meciar`s government.

The period after 1998 can be perceived as a new stage of possibilities of development of our second biggest minority. The widening of the number of associations and activities within the Romany nongovernmental sector continued as well as the growth of number of Romany political subjects continued at the end of the century,. The repeating of former mistakes and a continual fragmentation of the Romany political spectrum, calculations with Romany votes and ignorance of Romany political subjects as real political partners by other parties had not brought any effective solution in elections in 1998 and 2002.[28] Although a new governmental coalition declared a priority of Romany problem solution in practical life chronically lasting problems got deeper as for the unemployment, growth of the culture of poverty or a modern classification of Romany minority as underclass. Continuing strategy of migration of Romanies led to rude attacks from the highest authorities, including the vice-prime minister Csaky, to the searching for contraveners within various organized groups and moneylenders but also to the organization of indigested transports of groups of migrants. Except for accusations of ethno-tourism and ethno-business new terms appeared in a vocabulary of political parties` representatives and the state administration such as illegal settlements, illegal inhabitants etc. The topic of Romanies has become a popular matter of populistically oriented political representatives not only before elections. Based on the proposal of the vice-prime minister responsible for minorities the statute of the delegate has been changed twice and two people (Vincent Danihel and Klara Orgovanova) held the position. The government accepted the strategy for the Romany problem solution only before the summit in Helsinki in September 1999 and its elaboration in May 2000. The newly named governmental delegate for Romany communities introduced her priorities of the activities of her office, oriented towards the development of Romany settlements, solution of social problems and unemployment, education and re-codification of the Romany language. Although several evaluative reports from European community accepted positively the legislature approximation of our minority policy to European norms but they have not missed the fact that the government was satisfied with the existing status and within the practical application of the accepted norms there was no political will and compliancy to deal with the unpopular „Romany problem“. During our joining process foreign sources often critically reflected an unsatisfactory status of the Romany minority in Slovakia.

The matter can be closed with the statement that in the last century the development of Romanies in Slovakia proceeded within complicated conditions of democratic and totalitarian political-social regimes. Those were the features that determined the status of the Romany minority on individual stages and the reactions of its representatives at the turning points. Political and ideological starting points of the state ruling power in approaches towards the members of this community represented serious obstacles within the processes of overcoming the dependency on paternalistic regulations in the social-economical sphere.

A violent assimilation policy in educational, ethno-cultural and ethno-emancipating sphere disabled Romanies to become a subject of their own ethno-selfconscious development and to gain a higher grade of ethnic and political self-reflection. At the end of the 20th the consequences of former regulations and subjective reactions on post-November development led century to a remarkably negative situation within the development of Romany communities, to their downfall through the social network, to the disintegration of Romany political and social-cultural subjects. Till today the starting points have been very difficult to find.

(translated by Mgr. Dušan Labuda)

Medzníky vo vývoji rómskeho etnika na Slovensku v 20. storočí a problémy výskumu

Príspevok sa zameriava na najdôležitejšie medzníky vo vývoji rómskeho etnika v odlišných politických a spoločenských režimoch 20. storočia. Okrem perzekučných prístupov a osobitnej singularnej legislatívnej úpravy ich postavenia v 1. ČSR (zákon č.117/1927 o potulných Cigánoch a jeho vykonávacie nariadenie), sleduje aj možnosti ich kultúrno-spoločenského vyžitia sa a angažovanosti v prospech svojho etnika (hudobné a dramatické predstavenia v divadlách, nahrávanie v rozhlase, prezentácia v zahraničí, športové aktivity, samostatné cigánske triedy a školy s cieľom využiť pri výučbe znalosť rómčiny a špecifik rómskych detí). Iná situácia nastala počas druhej svetovej vojny, keď Rómovia boli pozbavení možnosti vlastných zdrojov obživy (odoberanie živností na obchodovanie), zaraďovaní do pracovných táborov, vytlačaní z pôvodných, historicky vzniknutých osád, obmedzovaní v slobodnom pohybe vydávaním zákazov cestovania. Rozporuplný vývoj po druhej svetovej vojne znamenal rôzne formy asimilačnej politiky a potláčanie všetkých náznakov o presadenie sa rómskych aktivistov na jednej strane a rôzne výsledky sociálnej politiky označovanej dnes ako sociálne inžinierstvo. Krátko pôsobiaci Zväz Cigánov - Rómov predstavoval potenciál tejto minority v seba presadzovaní sa, ale aj nezrelosť rómskych lídrov, ktorá sa prejavuje aj vo vývoji po novembri 1989. V poznaní tejto problematiky existujú veľké medzery z dôvodov nezájmu a nedostatočnej pozornosti o túto tému v historiografii i v spoločnosti vôbec, ako aj náročnosti samotného výskumu.

[1] HORVÁTHOVÁ, Emília. *Cigáni na Slovensku*. Bratislava : Vydavateľstvo SAV, 1964. Jurová, Anna. História Rómov na Slovensku stále neznáma.(Úvaha o problémoch výskumu). In: *Romano džaniben. Časopis romistických študií*, 1999, roč. 6, č. 3-4, s. 104-110.

[2] HORVÁTHOVÁ, E. *Cigáni na Slovensku...*; Tkáčová, Anna. Rómovia v období od vlády Márie Terézie po vznik 1. ČSR. In: VAŠEČKA, Michal et. al. *Čačipen pal o Roma. Súhrnná správa o Rómoch na Slovensku*. Bratislava : IVO, 2002, s. 31-42. DŽAMBAZOVIČ, Roman. Rómovia v Uhorsku koncom 19. storočia. In: *Sociológia* 5/2001, s.491-506. JUROVÁ, A. Historický vývoj rómskych osád na Slovensku a problematika vlastníckych vzťahov k pôde. („Nelegálne osady“). In: *Človek a spoločnosť*, 2002, roč. 5, č. 4. Dostupné na internete: <http://www.saske/cas/4-2002/jurova.html>. JUROVÁ, A. Rómovia na južnom Slovensku na základe celouhorskeho súpisu z roku 1893 (problémy početnosti, národnostnej príslušnosti). In: ŠUTAJOVÁ, Jana - ĎURKOVSKÁ, Mária. (Eds.). *Maďarská menšina na Slovensku v procesoch transformácie po roku 1989 (Identita a politika II)*. Prešov : Universum, 2008, s. 211-219.

[3] NEČAS, Ctibor. *Českoslovenští Romové v letech 1938 - 1945*. Brno : Masarykova univerzita, 1994.

[4] It goes on the document collections of gendarmerie departments from the period of the interwar Czechoslovakia till the end of the World War 2.

[5] JUROVÁ, A. Problémy výskumu histórie Rómov na Slovensku (v Československu) v 20. storočí. In: *Česko-slovenská historická ročenka*. Brno : Masarykova univerzita, 2007, s. 129-140. JUROVÁ, A. Rómovia na Slovensku (v Československu) v rokoch 1945 - 1947. In: *Človek a spoločnosť*, 2009, roč. 12, č. 1. Dostupné na internete: <http://www.saske/cas/1-2009/jurova/html>.

[6] NEČAS, C. Štatistické výsledky o cigánskej populácii na východnom Slovensku. In: *Historica carpatica*,

20/1989, s. 213-224. NEČAS, C. Materiál o Romech na Slovensku z roku 1924. In: *Historická demografie*, 22/1998, s. 169-199. JUROVÁ, A. Niekoľko poznámok k evidenciám Rómov v predvojnovom období. In: *Človek a spoločnosť*, 2001, roč. 4, č. 1. Dostupné na internete: <http://www.saske/cas/1-2001/jurova/html>.

[7] The events were dealt with within articles in *Romano nevo lil*, *Romano džaniben*, or within a popularizing elaboration of the topic of „Moldavian cannibals“ by the writer V. Ferko. It is unnecessary to study the sources precisely and to reflect the topic within a contemporary context. JUROVÁ, A. Niekoľko poznámok k otázkam rómskych osád. (Kauza Letanovce). In: *Človek a spoločnosť*, 2003, roč. 6, č. 1. Dostupné na internete: <http://www.saske/cas/1-2003/jurova/html>.

[8] GECELOVSKÝ, Vladimír. Perzekúcia Cigánov v období tzv. Slovenského štátu. In: *Obzor Gemera*, 1986, roč. 17, č. 3, s. 174-177. GECELOVSKÝ, V. Sociálno-politické postavenie a perzekúcia Cigánov na Gemeri v rokoch 1918-1945. In: *Historica carpatica*, 18, 1987. GECELOVSKÝ, V. *Rómovia na Gemeri do roku 1945*. Rožňava, 1990. KOLLÁROVÁ, Zuzana. K problematike cigánskej otázky na Spiši (1918 - 1945). In: *Slovenský národopis*, 1988, roč. 36, č. 1, s. 137-146. KOLLÁROVÁ, Z. K vývoju rómskej society na Spiši do roku 1945. In: MANN, Arne B. (Ed.). *Neznámi Rómovia*. Bratislava : Ister Science Press, 1992, s.61-72.

[9] HÜBSCHMANNOVÁ, Milena. *Šaj pes dovakeras - můžeme se domluvit*. Olomouc : Vydavatelství Univerzity F. Palackého, 1995. HÜBSCHMANNOVÁ, M. *Je opravdu třeba tolik utrpení? Úvahy nad vzpomínkami slovenských Romů na druhou světovou válku*. In: FRIŠTENSKÁ, Hana - LAZNIČKOVÁ, Ilona - SULITKA, Andrej (Eds.). *Neznámý holokaust*. Praha : Desetiletí výchovy k lidským právům v Praze-Muzeum romské kultury v Brně, 1995, s.71-79. FEDIČ, Vasil'. *Východoslovenskí Rómovia a druhá svetová vojna*. Humenné, 2001. LACKOVÁ, Elena. *Narodila jsem se pod šťastnou hvězdou*. Praha : Triáda, 1997.

[10] These matters were not reflected adequately within historiography. They are better known from popularizing articles or from the literature of propaganda of the socialist era, e.g. PREDMERSKÝ, Vladimír. *Rastú nám noví ľudia*. Bratislava, 1958. The magazine *Romano džaniben* dealt with the matter of education within its monothematic issue 3/1995.

[11] MANN, Arne B. Rómski mestskí hudobníci. In: *Diferenciácia mestského spoločenstva v každodennom živote*. Bratislava : Ústav etnológie SAV, 1999, s. 154-174. FILO, R. Športový klub slovenských Cigánov Roma Košice. In: *Romano džaniben*, 2002, roč. 9, č. 1-2. STUHLÍK, J. Diskusia v Slovenskej ethnografii 1957.

[12] GECELOVSKÝ, V. *Rómovia na Gemeri...*; NEČAS, C. Pracovní tábory tzv. asociálu a Cikánů na východním Slovensku v roce 1942. In: *Nové obzory*, 17/1975, s. 25-51. NEČAS, C. Diskriminace a persekuce slovenských Cikánů v letech 1939 - 1945. In: *Nové obzory*, 19/1977, s. 125-154. NEČAS, C. *Nad osudem českých a slovenských Cikánův letech 1939 - 1945*. Brno, 1981. NEČAS, C. Pronásledování Cikánů v období slovenského státu. In: *Slovenský národopis*, 1988, roč. 36, č. 1, s. 126-135. NEČAS, C. *Českoslovenští Romové...*

[13] HÜBSCHMANNOVÁ, M. *Šaj pes dovakeras...*; NEČAS, C. *Českoslovenští Romové...*; JUROVÁ, A. *Historický vývoj rómskych osád...*

[14] JUROVÁ, A. *Rómska problematika 1945 - 1967. Dokumenty*. Praha : Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR, 1996. 4 zväzky. JUROVÁ, A. *Rómovia na Slovensku (v Československu)...*

[15] JUROVÁ, A. *Rómska problematika ...*; JUROVÁ, A. *Rómovia na Slovensku (v Československu)...*; JUROVÁ, A. *Historický vývoj rómskych osád...*

[16] JUROVÁ, A. *Niekoľko poznámok k otázkam...*

- [17] KUŽEL, Stanislav (Ed.). *Terenní výzkum integrace a segregace*. Praha : Cargo Publishers, 2000.
- [18] JUROVÁ, A. *Rómovia na Slovensku (v Československu)...* ; HAIŠMAN, Tomáš. Snahy centrálních orgánů státní správy o řešení tzv. cikánské otázky v českých zemích v letech 1945 až 1947 ve světle tisku. In: *Český lid*, 1989, roč. 76, č. 1, s. 5-10. KUŽEL, S. Skrytá ekonomika segregace a kolektivní paternalismus aneb Proč je třeba porozumět situaci slovenských vesničanů - monitoring z rubové strany. In: Kužel, S. (Ed.). *Terenní výzkum integrace a segregace*. Praha : Cargo Publishers, 2000, s. 144 -164.
- [19] JUROVÁ, A. *Vývoj rómskej problematiky na Slovensku po roku 1945*. Bratislava : Goldpress Publishers, 1993. JUROVÁ, A. Vývoj postavenia Rómov na Slovensku a otázky ich „integrácie“ do spoločnosti. In: *Ethnologia Actualis Slovaca*, 1-2/2000, s. 9-29.
- [20] JUROVÁ, A. *Vývoj rómskej problematiky...*; JUROVÁ, A. *Vývoj postavenia Rómov*, s. 9-29; also JUROVÁ, A. Otázky vzdelávania Rómov v období socializmu vo vzťahu k materinskému jazyku. In: *Človek a spoločnosť*, 2000, roč. 3, č. 1. Dostupné na internete: <http://www.saske/cas/1-2000/jurova/html>.
- [21] Based on a wide historical-ethnological research in 50s more articles of E. Horvathova (The culture of the Gypsies in Rozkovany) were published at that time together with the monograph Gypsies in Slovakia (it has not been overcome as for the width of scope, but it had to be corrected as for the views` platform), the articles of the etymologist E. David, but also a propagandistic manual of SUS, Jaroslav. *Cikánská otázka v ČSSR*. (The Gypsy question in CSSR). Praha, 1961.
- [22] KÁRA, Karel et al. *Cikáni v ČSSR v procesu společenské integrace*. Praha : Ústav pro filosofii a sociologii ČSAV, 1975; *Slovenský národopis* 1/1988; *Teoreticko-metodologické východiská výskumu cigánskej rodiny*. Košice : Spoločenskovedný ústav SAV, 1988; *Etnické menšiny na Slovensku*. Košice : Spoločenskovedný ústav SAV 1991. MANN, A. *Neznámi Rómovia*. Bratislava : Ister Science Press, 1992.
- [23] Kapitoly o Rómoch v publikáciách Slovensko: *Súhrnná správa o stave spoločnosti*. Bratislava : IVO, od roku 1998; VAŠEČKA, M. et al. *Čačipen pal o Roma. Súhrnná správa o Rómoch na Slovensku*. Bratislava : IVO, 2002.
- [24] JUROVÁ, A. Pokus o pohľad na niektoré problémy vývoja Rómov na Slovensku v 90. rokoch. In: *Človek a spoločnosť*, 1999, roč. 2, č. 3. Dostupné na internete: <http://www.saske/cas/3-1999/jurova/html>.
- [25] JUROVÁ, A. Vývoj situácie rómskej menšiny na Slovensku. In: *Pravdepodobné riziká a ohrozenia v strednej Európe a tendencie ich vývoja. Riziká vplývajúce na bezpečnostnú situáciu v SR*. Bratislava : MNO, 1998, s. 24-34.
- [26] See footnote 24, also VAŠEČKA, M. et al. *Rómske hlasy. Rómovia a ich politická participácia v transformačnom období*. Bratislava : IVO, 2002.
- [27] See footnote 24 - 26. Analýzu volebných výsledkov z roku 1992 spracoval A. B. Mann v príspevku Rómovia a voľby 1992. In: *Romano džaniben*, 1-2/1994, s. 19-24.
- [28] VAŠEČKA, M. et al. *Rómske hlasy...*; VAŠEČKA, M. et al. *Čačipen pal o Roma ...*