

GARTH CARTWRIGHT

*'A little bit
special'*

CENSORSHIP AND THE GYPSY
MUSICIANS OF ROMANIA

FREEMUSE



**THE WORLD FORUM ON
MUSIC & CENSORSHIP**

“A LITTLE BIT SPECIAL”

Censorship and the gypsy musicians of Romania

by GARTH CARTWRIGHT

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Freemuse

Wilders Plads 8 H · 1403 Copenhagen K. · Denmark

tel: +45 32 69 89 20 · fax: +45 32 69 89 01

e-mail: freemuse@humanrights.dk

web: www.freemuse.org

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PREFACE

This is the second report in a series of reports on music censorship published by Freemuse.

We often tend to believe that censorship is when a government stops music from being played on radio or when musicians are put on trial, for political or religious reasons, but censorship is a much more complex issue.

In this report we turn our attention to the conditions and status of Gypsy (Roma) musicians in Romania.

In Romania there is no straightforward government ban on Gypsy music. Instead, the attitude to Gypsies and their music throughout Romanian society is more one of neglect. It is an attitude with racial undertones towards a minority, which is encouraged by government bodies with strong support from the Romanian public.

This was clearly shown during the last Presidential elections in December 2000, when the extreme nationalist leader Corneliu Vadim Tudor expressed “that Gypsies should be loaded into paper boats and sent home to India”.¹⁾

The effect of these attitudes is one of exclusion – and excluding a form of musical expression is very similar to what we find in countries where musical censorship is practised.

Exclusion is nothing new for Gypsies yet across the last millennium their music has had profound effect upon music making in Europe. Whether this is in the shaping of flamenco, the jazz of Django Reinhardt or the classical music of Béla Bartók, (who pioneered ethnomusicography with Gypsy musicians in Transylvania) the influence of Gypsy music has provided an often invisible backbone to celebrated European musics.

Even though the musics of Europe’s varied Gypsy communities attract an international audience today it remains marginalised in Eastern Europe. Fame abroad does not necessarily give status or success to the Gypsy musicians or the music

¹⁾ *Songlines*, spring/summer 2001; *Listen to the Village Band*, by Simon Broughton

itself at home. Having said this, amongst Gypsy populations around the world, musicians are amongst the most prosperous members of the community.

According to the European Roma Rights Center, Gypsies make both for Romania's largest minority and Europe's largest minority. They also possess the highest birth rate of any community in Europe. Yet the social exclusion and marginalisation they suffer in Romania is repeated throughout Eastern and Western Europe. President Vaclav Havel noted, "the treatment of our Gypsy minority is a litmus test for Czech democracy".

To paraphrase Havel, the treatment across Europe is a litmus test for all our democracies. And in Romania, on which we focus for this report, democracy is still tender, uncertain. How Romania values its Gypsy musicians in the future may well be an indicator of that nation's development in the 21st Century.

Censorship of music has existed ever since the time of ancient Greece.

Plato distinguished between "good music" and "bad music" – suggesting that "bad" music had to be controlled or banned as it had the potential to divert people away from the "good life".

And music censorship still exists: From the extreme, the killing of musicians in Algeria, the total ban on music in Afghanistan, to the apparently banal (lobbying groups in the US succeeding in keeping popular music off the concert stage, and out of the media and the shops).

When music is banned the very soul of a culture is being strangled. Ban a music culture for a decade and a whole generation grows up without an essential cultural reference. Only through the documentation of music censorship can we discuss and understand the effects of censorship. Only through documentation can we support suppressed cultural expressions.

In order to address the ever-present phenomenon of music censorship and to investigate the lack of interest in these violations of freedom of expression, the 1st World Conference on Music Censorship was organized in Copenhagen, Denmark, in November 1998. As a result of the conference Freemuse (Freedom of Musical Expression) – the World Forum on Music and Censorship, was established in 1999, and in year 2000 Freemuse received core funding from The Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

I would like to express my gratitude to musicologist Ms. Speranta Radulecsu for her help with this report and for sharing her recordings of “authentic Gypsy music” that can be heard on www.freemuse.org.

Also, a warm thank you to Crammed Discs of Belgium for donating 100 CDs of Taraf de Haidouks, “Band of Gypsies”, a CD recorded (despite many obstacles) in Bucharest in December 2000. The CD will be enclosed with the first 100 copies of the report.

Marie Korpe,
Executive director of Freemuse

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

GARTH CARTWRIGHT A New Zealander, now based in London, is the author of *The Tower Guide To World Music* (March 2000) and a freelance journalist whose work has appeared in *The Independent On Sunday*, *Guardian*, *The Times*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *BBC Radio 3*, *The Irish Times*, *The Irish Post*, *All Music Guide.com*, *amazon.com*, *Q*, *Uncut*, *Folk Roots*, *Songlines*, *Sydney Morning Herald*, *Okinawa Press*, *El Mundo*.

He was awarded the *Guardian/Stop Press Journalism Award*:

Best Music Writer 1996.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The research for this report was conducted during two fact-finding missions to Romania in Spring and Winter 2000. Expenses for both visits were covered by New Note, a London-based music distribution company who handle Gypsy recordings from several countries including Romania. New Note offered contacts in Romania and helped arrange flights and accommodation – beyond that the research and its contents and results was entirely down to my efforts and the direction offered by Freemuse.

During both visits I based myself in Bucharest and visited Gypsy communities there and in the village, fifty kilometres southwest, of Clejani. Clejani is noted as the most musically famous of all Romanian Gypsy villages – amongst its inhabitants there are up to two hundred musicians – and the popularity in Western Europe, Japan and the US of one group of Clejani Gypsy musicians, Taraf de Haidouks, has helped focus international attention on both the artistry and social deprivation of Romania's Gypsies.

While Taraf de Haidouks are currently Romania's most celebrated international musicians they remain unknown/ignored within Romania. In December 2000 they played their first ever major concerts in Bucharest and having the opportunity to witness these concerts and the organisational efforts involved demonstrated to me the difficulties Gypsy musicians face when trying to perform within the mainstream of Romanian culture. The examples I give of Taraf de Haidouks and their encounters with the Romanian authorities represents, I believe, the obstacles facing all Gypsy musicians in Romania.

While I lacked the time to visit Gypsy communities in Transylvania and Moldova in the north of Romania I endeavoured to speak to Romanian Gypsies and non-Gypsies from throughout the country – both in person and by phone and e-mail. The musical styles of Romanian Gypsy music varies due to region – in Transylvania a Hungarian influence is evident while the Turkish/Yugoslav brass band style is prominent in the region of Moldova; crossing the Carpathian Mountains

and into the flatlands of Wallachia in the south the music is largely defined by small, vigorous string orchestras – yet the problems and persecution that affects the Gypsies is much the same throughout Romania.

Thus when I write here of Romanian Gypsy musicians I hope that the experience(s) chronicled can be considered as representative of the widespread Romanian Gypsy community.

Author's Note

While the appellation “Roma” is now largely employed by academics and human rights organisations instead of “Gypsy” I have stuck with Gypsy for this report. Using The Collins English Dictionary definition of Gypsy – *“a member of a people scattered throughout Europe and North America, who maintain a nomadic way of life. They migrated from NW India from about the 9th century onwards”* – I believe it remains the title which the vast majority of people comprehend the ethnic group discussed in this report. All the music mentioned throughout this report is marketed as “Gypsy” and within Romania the musicians I spoke to (and the non-Gypsy managers, record companies, musicologists etc who work with them) all use the term Gypsy without any negative associations. Indeed, there is a belief amongst some members of the Gypsy- community that while “Gypsy” may have once been employed as a pejorative term it can now be a title of empowerment. The irony here is that in Romania the Gypsy people are called Tziganes – a term derived from an ancient Greek religious cult that has as little connection with the Gypsies origins as does the title Gypsy: from (E)gypt, another mistaken belief associated with the nomads when they first entered Europe. Thus my use of Gypsy is, I guess, very much a reflection on my Occidental status.

Reading this report you will find the terms “Roma” and “Romani” appearing in quotes.

Finally, please note that I endorse Roma as an appellation and hope no offence is caused by my choice of Gypsy throughout this report.

ABSTRACT

The people of Romania have experienced a radical upheaval in their way of life since the revolution, which toppled the totalitarian regime of Nicolae Ceausescu in December 1989. While former communists still run Romania's government it is now a free market economy, albeit one of Europe's poorest and least efficient. If the economy remains stagnant Romanians' now finally have the opportunity to express themselves both politically and artistically without undue fear of censorship and/or persecution. This has led to Western rock and pop bands touring Romania – unthinkable in Ceausescu's time – and Romanians' leading their own pop, metal and hip-hop outfits.

In this sense, Romania is not a nation that suffers unduly from musical censorship – the same debates and controversies tackled in Western nations over the image/language/attitude of rock and hip-hop stars can be found there. Yet 11% of Romania's population is of Gypsy ethnicity. Western European readers will be well aware of the controversies surrounding the large scale migration of Romanian Gypsies across the last decade – especially over the last two years – towards Germany, France and the UK. Many of these migrants refer to themselves as refugees and ask for political asylum when reaching Western European shores.

For the Gypsy community it appears that life under the post-Ceausescu regimes has got worse, not better. This involves everything from discrimination in the work place, through police brutality to fiery pogroms intended to ethnically cleanse entire Gypsy communities. It is these incidents – alongside the terrible state of the Romanian economy – that has driven tens of thousands of Romanian Gypsies to embark on an arduous, dangerous and often futile journey of migration.

Yet what of Romania's Gypsy musicians? In all of Central and Eastern Europe no country posits a greater wealth of traditional musics than that of Romania. And most of Romania's traditional music is now played by Gypsy musicians.

This report aims to look at how Romania's Gypsy musical culture is surviving today. With the international success (on the world music circuit) of Taraf De Haidouks, Romanian Gypsy music has its highest international profile ever. Yet the success of the Taraf is not reflected back in Romania where their Gypsy status still lends them a degree of pariah status.

As I try and show in this report, although Gypsies have lived within Romania's borders for at least eight hundred years they are still regarded by the majority of Romanians as little more than squatters. This is heard in a common sentiment of "we are Romanians, they are Gypsies and should go back to where they came from." This peasant mentality alongside an aversion to dark skinned individuals – and Gypsies often, due to their Asian origins, possess darker skin and features than European Romanians – means the Gypsy community as a whole suffers from discrimination.

Romania, I should note, is by no means the only European community to persecute its Gypsy citizens. Indeed, other human rights reports (Helsinki Watch, Index On Censorship, The PatrIn Web Journal) note that the situation in Slovakia and The Czech Republic is even worse than Romania's. While the governments of Spain, France, Greece and the UK have all been criticised for less than fair dealings with their Gypsy citizens.

Yet Romania remains the focus of this report simply because it has an active and organic Gypsy musical culture of greater vitality than anywhere else in Europe. Ironically, Romania's Gypsy musicians often fare better than other members of the Gypsy community due to their skills being in demand by the non-Gypsy community. In a sense, Taraf De Haidouks and the more prosperous Gypsy musicians occupy a niche similar to what Louis Armstrong (and other African-American musicians) did in the US pre-Civil Rights.

I look at whether this demand will enable the music to survive or whether it simply turns it into a museum piece so offering the same relationship to Romania's Gypsy community as jazz/blues/soul does to the contemporary African-American community.

Romania's politicians and governing bodies are little concerned with the nation's Gypsy music. Instead of attempting to ban it they treat the music with an indifference bordering on contempt, offering little (or no) support for the musicians both in Romania and when they venture abroad (Gypsies are not seen as suitable ambassadors for Romania). In this sense, Romania's Gypsy musicians are struggling to exist in a society hostile to them. Can they and their music survive in the 21st Century? If Romania can build a civil society then the answer is yes; if not then like klezmer the great sounds that have echoed across Romania for centuries could soon be silenced.

This report concludes with a number of recommendations intended to counteract the effects of discrimination – and thus censorship – upon Romania's Gypsy communities.



Areas: 92.043 sq. miles (237.500 sq. km). ⁽¹⁾

Population: 22.810.000 (1992). ⁽¹⁾

Capital: Bucharest (population: 2.027.000). ⁽¹⁾

Head of state and government: President of the republic; multiparty democracy. ⁽¹⁾

Annual income per person: \$ 1.420. ⁽²⁾

Main industries: agriculture, natural gas, timber, mining, crude oil. ⁽¹⁾

Ethnic composition: 89.4 Romanian, 7.1 Hungarian, 1.7 Gypsy, 0.5 German, 0.3 Ukranian, 0.04 Jewish and others (1992 census). ⁽¹⁾

Main export partners: Italy, Germany, France, and Turkey. ⁽³⁾

Main import partners: USA, Russia, Italy, Germany, France, and Egypt. ⁽³⁾

Infant mortality: 18.6 per 1.000 births. ⁽³⁾

Life expectancy: male 65.70, female 73.36 ⁽¹⁾

Adult literacy: 97.6 ⁽¹⁾

Source:

1) *Whitaker's Almanac 2001*
(The Stationery Office)

2) *Phillip's Atlas Of The World - 1999*
(George Phillips, London)

3) *Regional Surveys Of The World: Central and South-Eastern Europe*
(Europa Publications 2000)

1. ROMANIA

1.1 COUNTRY PROFILE

The republic of Romania occupies 237.500 sq km in South East Europe. It has borders with the Black Sea, Bulgaria, Hungary, Moldova, Ukraine and former Yugoslavia and within its own borders lies across a geographical, historical and cultural barrier that separates central Europe from the Balkans. It consists chiefly of a great central arc of the Carpathian Mountains and Western Carpathians/Transylvanian Alps, with the plains of Walachia, Moldavia and Dobriya on the south and east and the Pannonian Plain in the West. Its official language is Romanian although Hungarian and Romani (the language of the Gypsy people) are both widely spoken in certain regions. Orthodox Christianity is the nation's prevailing religion.

Romania's history offers up a chequered past: its geographical situation has led to the region being fought over across the centuries by armies from the south and north. Officially coming into nation state form in 1859-62 from the unification of Wallachia and Moldavia – Transylvania, Bessarabia, and Bucovina were united with Romania in 1918. Romania lent its support to Germany during World War II and was occupied by Soviet forces from 1944. The monarchy was abolished and a People's Republic declared in 1947. Romania was declared a Socialist Republic in 1965 and became increasingly independent from the USSR with the Romanian Communist Party, under the leadership of the dictator Nicolae Ceaucescu, pioneering a form of nationalistic communism, which became increasingly oppressive and erratic across the 1980s.

Ceaucescu began to see himself more as a divine being – a king of sorts – than head of the Communist Party. His grandiose schemes – paying off Romania's national debt, rapidly industrializing the country, turning capital Bucharest into a mock Versailles, building palaces for himself – bankrupted the country and found him attempting to raise revenue by exporting the nation's food supplies so implementing rationing of food for ordinary Romanians. Any dissent was crushed by his nightmarish secret police The Securitat. When, in 1989, the gov-

ernments of the Eastern Bloc nations peacefully gave up power Ceaucescu refused to so fuelling a bloody revolution fought between government forces and protesters in December 1989.

Ceaucescu was summarily executed and democracy proclaimed yet the last decade has found Romania uneasily finding its way as a modern European country – it retains most of the industrial infrastructure of the communist period so leaving the economy stagnant. This means that Romania's GDP remains amongst the lowest in Europe, the government is largely lead by former communists who think nothing of employing violent tactics against students (President Ion Iliescu brought miners twice into Bucharest to attack students, intellectuals and Gypsies during the early 1990s) and rampant expressions of nationalism have lead to outbursts of ethnic violence and pogroms.

Romania's population is estimated at 22 million people, the majority of whom claim European Romanian heritage. Romania's minorities consist of two million Hungarians as well as small German, Ukranian, Bulgarian and Turkish communities. How many Gypsies actually live in Romania is widely disputed: the Romanian government's census puts the number of Gypsies at around 450,000 people while the European Roma Rights Centre estimates the figure is closer to 2.5 million Gypsies.

Why the discrepancy? Beyond blatant prejudice – mayors of towns and villages have been known to falsely claim that no Gypsies live within their administrative boundaries – many Gypsies feel so intimidated by Romania's anti-Gypsy sentiment that they refer to themselves as ethnic Romanian on the census in the hope of not attracting more attention from the authorities. What is certain about Romania is it houses the largest Gypsy population of any European nation. And the majority of non-Gypsy Romanian citizens – and their political leaders – remain very unhappy about this.

Since arriving in Europe from Asia around eight hundred years ago, the Gypsy (or Roma – the now preferred appellation – it being a Sanskrit term for "Man") people have occupied an unenviable position in European culture. Both valued for their skills (music, metal working, weaving etc) and ostracized for their dark skin colour and different cultural values, they have survived through Europe's darkest times.

Scholars now determine that the Gypsy people left the area of India now known as Rajasthan more than a thousand years ago and made their way through West Asia into Armenia. They may have been employed as soldiers or for their above mentioned skills and, once in Europe, they spread across the continent – the majority still live in Eastern Europe but historical records prove Gypsies have been in Spain, France, Scandinavia and the UK for over five hundred years.

Official Romanian Gypsy history begins in 1387 with a document of Mircea the Great of Wallachia indicating Gypsies have been in that country for over one hundred years. In 1445 Prince Vlad Dracul of Wallachia transported some 12,000 persons “who looked like Egyptians” from Bulgaria for slave labour.

This was the beginning of a system of Gypsy slavery that existed throughout the regions we now know as Romania and did not legally end until 1864. Landowners – including the monasteries – kept large communities of Gypsies and, historical records suggest, treated them with extreme cruelty.

After the ending of official slavery in 1864 many Gypsies fled Romania, both for Western Europe and the United States. Those that stayed often remained working for the same land owners who were their masters when slaves. These unenviable circumstances helped foster within Romania a climate of contempt amongst European Romanians to their fellow Gypsy citizens – an attitude which is little changed from that of their ancestors who believed Gypsies to be sub-human.

Gypsy communities in Romania struggled for recognition and by the 1930s were forming organizations and promoting their culture. The fascist regime of Marshal Ion Antonescu was soon to eradicate these new organizations and freedoms. When Antonescu aligned Romania with the Nazis during World War II tens of thousands of Gypsies were sent to concentration camps in the same pogroms that destroyed Romania’s Jewish community.

The communist regime that followed the end of the war initially attempted to practice fairer treatment of Romania’s Gypsy citizens, outlawing racial prejudice and encouraging education and employment possibilities. At the same time, the communists set about trying to eliminate Gypsy cultural identity by forcing Gypsies to live in the same social environment as non-Gypsy Romanians. This involved forced settlement (both in villages and cities), removal of horses and caravans, theft of their gold jewellery (which, for many Romanian Gypsies, was their savings) and the banning of the Romani language.

The 1989 revolution and its aftermath has proved a time of mixed blessings for Romania's Gypsies.

The removal of communism's totalitarian structures has found Gypsies benefiting from employing their trading skills, publishing in Romani, travelling beyond Romania's borders and – for certain musicians – earning a generous living from recordings and touring on the international world music circuit.

Yet the majority of Romania's Gypsies find themselves now mired in even deeper poverty and social exclusion – an upsurge of nationalism has found Gypsy communities suffering widespread police brutality, indiscriminate acts of violence and pogroms (see below) intent on burning Gypsies out of villages and towns. These conditions have caused thousands of Gypsies to flee Romania – the arrival in Dover, England, of several hundred Romanian Gypsies claiming political asylum in early 2000 caused a furore amongst right wing UK politicians and newspapers.

Few were granted asylum and those who returned to Romania would have found the situation there even more inhospitable with the November 2000 Romanian presidential elections contested by former communist and ex-President Ion Iliescu (whose 1990-96 rule of Romania presided over the worst of the pogroms) and Corneliu Vadim Tudor whose Greater Romania Party pursued an extreme nationalist campaign that mixed a virulent anti-Semitism and anti-Gypsy commentary. Iliescu won yet few in Romania appear optimistic about the country's future.

"In a democracy, people can say what they want," notes Taraf co-manager Michel Winter, *"which means that racism can be expressed more than before. The economic situation in Romania is very difficult at the moment, and the Gypsies are the most marginalized. If anything is wrong, it has to be someone's fault, so it is easy to say that it is the fault of the Gypsies."*

1.1.1 GYPSY IDENTITY

Although Romania's Gypsy people left India a millennium ago their culture still bears strong traces of Hinduism's caste and cleanliness laws. There are thought to be forty tribes (or groups) in Romania. Originally a general division of corturari (nomadic tent dwellers) and vatrasi (settled) marked two quite separate communities yet the communist regime's enforced settlement means few Romanian Gypsy communities now spend much of their year travelling. A more

important division that reaches back to India is the division of communities through trade: traditionally these included (amongst others) the lautari (musicians), fierari (blacksmiths), ursari (bear-tamers), argintari (jewellers), caldarari (tin/coppersmiths), rudari (woodworkers). Today the titles and social groupings remain although many of the trades (eg bear-tamers) no longer exist. Different trades involve different degrees of social status and the lautari are generally amongst the most favoured of Gypsy groups.

Gypsy beliefs and taboos regarding cleanliness are another Hindu legacy and are one of the few binding qualities across the majority of Europe's Gypsy communities. Everything is defined as either wuzho (clean), or marime or mochadi (unclean) – these tightly woven taboos guard against contamination – of the group, the person, the reputation. Relations with non-Gypsies (gadje) may be seen as unclean – although this varies between different communities (some have no problem with intermarriage, others will banish any Gypsy who practices such) – while the upper half of the body is regarded as clean while the lower half is not. This means underwear must be washed separately from other clothes, mens and womens clothes also must be washed separately and fragments into a variety of rules involving women having to wear long skirts and head scarfs upon reaching puberty, not being allowed to cook while menstruating or during pregnancy, marriage taking place for women while in their early teens etc. Again, these laws are liquid and different

Gypsy communities in Romania apply them with different degrees of fervour. Clejani, for example, is relatively lax in its application of these laws, whether this is due to it being a lautari community, which has always had a lot of contact with gadje society I am unsure.

These long entrenched social divisions between groups and the fact that some Romanian Gypsy communities speak Romani while others speak Romanian helps underscore how fragmented Romania's Gypsy communities are. This makes it difficult for Gypsy activists to focus the national Gypsy community on political or social issues so blunting any impact they may have. Unlike the Hungarian or Jewish minorities in Romania, the Gypsy community has rarely been able to speak as one group. In Sibiu Ion Cioaba is the self-proclaimed King of the Gypsies. Cioaba, a successful scrap metal merchant, has long prospered and enjoyed Western media attention when he proclaimed himself "King of the Romanian Gypsies" in 1992 but both his position and status appear to have no bearing on wider social events. Put simply, Cioaba is a statesman solely for the

benefit of his immediate family. This fragmentation amongst Romanian Gypsies and the leadership vacuum means while the Gypsies may remain Romania's largest minority they are amongst its most politically impotent.

1.1.2 POGROMS

Pogroms note: The European Roma Rights Center (ERRC), acting on behalf of 21 Gypsy victims of a 1993 community violence incident in Romania, has filed an application with the European Court of Human Rights asserting numerous violations of the European Convention on Human Rights. The applicants, Romanian citizens of Romani ethnicity, are victims of mob violence which resulted in the murder of three Romani men and in the destruction of Romani houses, property and belongings in the village of Hadareni, Mures County, Romania.

Seven years later, the victims of this horrific attack on the Romani community have yet to be provided with comprehensive redress for the violations they suffered at the hands of a mob that included members of the local police force. The Hadareni pogrom received wide international attention and has come to stand, for many, as the paradigmatic event of the post-1989 Gypsies Rights world. Since opening offices in 1996, the ERRC has been determined to pursue justice in the Hadareni case, and has expended considerable effort pushing for a just settlement.

On September 20, 1993, Mr. Aurel Pardalian Lacatus, Mr. Rupa Lupian Lacatus and Mr. Mircea Zoltan, three Romani men, were killed by a mob in the village of Hadareni. The lynching occurred after an ethnic Romanian had been stabbed to death by one of the Romani men during a conflict that arose earlier that day. The men attempted to seek refuge in a neighbour's house but were eventually found by the mob.

The villagers demanded they come out and then set fire to the house. Mr. Aurel Pardalian Lacatus and Mr. Rupa Lucian Lacatus tried to escape but were caught and beaten to death. Mr. Aurel Pardalian Lacatus died as a result of 89 distinct wounds to his body, while Mr. Rupa Lucian Lacatus died from shock caused by surface wounds covering almost 70% of his body. Mr. Mircea Zoltan remained in the house where he died as a result of the fire. After the murders, a mob of ethnic Romanian and Hungarian villagers proceeded to set fire to other Romani homes and property in Hadareni. In total, 14 Roma homes were scorched and

another five were demolished. Additional Romani property such as cars, stables and other possessions were also destroyed that evening and the following day.

There is ample evidence to suggest that police officers present that evening instigated the incident and then stood idly by and watched as the three Romani men were killed by non-Romani villagers. Following the deaths of the three men, the police did nothing to prevent the villagers from setting out on a campaign of violence and destruction of Romani houses and property in Hadareni. Indeed, various witnesses have testified in Romanian courts before prosecutors and judges that police officials arrived at the house where the three Romani men were hiding that evening and actually urged the mob to set fire to the house. Statements by victims reveal that police present that night actually urged the crowd to set fire to other Romani houses in the village.

Of the eleven civilian defendants finally charged, only four were convicted of murder; and the remaining seven of arson. In June 2000, two of those convicted for murder were granted a presidential pardon, and both were set free. Despite testimony in court provided by victims and witnesses implicating police officials in the crimes committed during the Hadareni pogrom, no police officer has ever been held criminally responsible. Throughout the investigation and at all stages of court proceedings in this case, the applicants repeatedly attempted to raise the issue of police involvement, but the Romanian justice system ignored their pleas.

Having exhausted all domestic remedies, the applicants are now turning to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. Their application asserts, among other things, that Romanian authorities violated Article 3 of the Convention by failing to investigate properly the participation of all police officials implicated in the attacks. It argues that the incident at issue, i.e. the death of the three Romani men and the community violence to which the Romani community in Hadareni was subjected, is sufficient to constitute the minimal level of severity required by the case law pertaining to Article 3 and thus amounts to "inhuman and/or degrading treatment". It further asserts that the incident at issue discloses an unequivocal violation of their rights to respect for their home, and their private and family lives, as protected under Article 8, and that Romanian authorities have failed to provide comprehensive redress for the destruction of their homes and possessions." (Report care of European Roma Rights Center)

1.2 MUSIC PROFILE

Romania possesses the richest traditional music culture in all of Eastern Europe. While much of the music produced has rarely been heard beyond its immediate community, the likes of Hungarian composer Bela Bartok recorded and transcribed Transylvanian Gypsy string music and used it as a basis for many of his own compositions pre-World War II. Yet the isolation that surrounded Romania from the late-1930s on until 1990 means little of this music was heard.

Pre-1990 only musicologists were permitted to record the Gypsy musicians of Transylvanian and Wallachian villages – some of these recordings were issued in the West through French world music labels such as Ocora and helped generate West European interest in the music. Until Taraf De Haidouk reached an international audience in the mid-1990s, the most well known Romanian musician was Gheorghe Zamfir, a master of the pan pipes and noted as composer of the soundtrack to the film *Picnic At Hanging Rock*. Zamfir, I should note, is not a Gypsy.

Historically and culturally the elements, which have lead to a continued diversity and wealth of traditional Romanian musics are, according to Romanian musicologist Speranta Radulescu, the arrival during *“the first Millennium, the Barbarian of an Eastern and/or Asian origin (who brought in Romania the oldest “oriental” musical strata); beginning with the XIVth century Gypsies (who brought here newer “oriental” strata); later on Turkish and Greek court music; occidental classical and (later) popular music.”*

Isabel Fonseca, author of Gypsy history *Bury Me Standing*, writes *“most Gypsy songs are plangent in tone and in subject, they speak of rootlessness and the “lungo drom”, or long road, of no particular place to go – and of no turning back.”*

Gypsy musicians have long occupied a curious position in Balkan society: they were at once more powerful and, by the nineteenth century, less free than they ever have been since. Both conditions had to do with the structure of rural feudalism. The Gypsies were wanted, and detained – not for their crimes, but for their talents. Tinsmiths and coppersmiths, locksmiths, blacksmiths especially, as well as the esteemed musicians among them, were valued and even fought over. Fonseca suggests a parallel, at least so far as early Gypsy-peasant relations in the Balkans goes, might be found in the experience of the Central European Jews who migrated to the American South after the Civil War, and made their living selling door-to-door to recently freed slaves.

In Romania and Hungary, Gypsy musicians were serfs or slaves in the services of great and minor kings, princes and landowners, and were forcibly enlisted in the Magyar and Turkish armies. Musicologist Alain Weber writes *"The small tarafuri (plural of taraf – an Arabic word for band), the groups of lautari (the Romanian name for the Gypsy musician's caste) musicians, were also to be found in the salons of Greek and Turkish aristocrats who governed the Danube principalities from 1711 to 1821. These groups which might exist in a multitude of forms quickly developed in Moldavia, Wallachia and Transylvania."*

This initial celebration of Gypsy music followed the popularity in Russia of Gypsy musicians – one which emerged during the reign of Catherine the Great. According to legend, Count Orlov had heard Gypsy musicians in Moldavia. He brought a group of singers and dancers under the direction of Ivan Trofimov back with him. Soon St Petersburg's aristocracy were Gypsy crazy and Gypsy musicians were in high demand for the court and banquets and balls. This was noted in Romania and Gypsy musicians began to enjoy a degree of status above that of serf/slave, if still rarely free to determine their own destiny.

Musicologist Christian Scholze writes *"Cantec De Mahala is a song genre closely associated with Romanian Gypsy music – translated it roughly means "songs from the outskirts" – which developed under the influence of Turkish music played at the Wallachian and Moldovian courts in the sixteenth century. Typical of this type of song is the enormous vocal range, the specific falsetta sound and the many onomatopoeic adornments. The instruments are mainly violin, accordion, cymbalon and double bass."*

While there is little on record about the growth of Gypsy music throughout Romania it appears that the demise of courtly festivities in Romania and the end of enslavement found the lautari beginning to spread out across Romania. As popular musicians they became involved in rural and village festivities and celebrations – thus the legendary reputation of Gypsy musicians as providers of music at weddings, harvest festivals and, occasionally, funerals.

"What people should realise is that in the Balkans there is no social event without musicians – baptisms, birthdays, weddings, funerals," states Taraf member Neculae Neac-su. *"Music is part of life, part of the ritual of life. In our tradition, we pass on this music from father to son by mouth. We don't read or write music, but we start learning when we are very, very young."*

Why does the village of Clejani possess so many gifted musicians when other Gypsy villages in the Wallachian region may possess none? Speranta Radulescu's theory is that Clejani was settled by lautari formerly belonging to one important landlord and/or a monastery existent in the vicinity after the abolition of slavery. They were very numerous and every time they (Gypsy musicians) are numerous, they found a kind of musical school. Thus the musical traditions remain rooted in the village's very existence.

1.3 MEDIA AND INDUSTRY SYSTEM

Romania's media under Ceausescu remained totally state controlled. Nothing was allowed to be recorded, printed or broadcast without the approval of communist party censors. With the demise of communism this has changed – although not to the degree one would hope. Much of the television, radio and print media remains centralized and government controlled or, if not government controlled, retains the aesthetic norm of the previous regime.

While the censors have eased off since 1990 these mediums all remain targeted towards providing music and cultural coverage that applies only to ethnic Romanians. Hungarian Romanians have managed to receive some media space for their cultural activities yet Romanian Gypsies so far receive no mainstream radio, television or newspaper coverage. While the Romani language is no longer banned from use and certain Gypsy organizations have set up occasional Gypsy newsletters/newspapers in Romani the increasingly nationalistic mainstream media only appear willing to provide coverage of Gypsies when they are associated with crime or the subject of anti-Gypsy editorial campaigns.

Romanian state owned TV promotes folklore and classical music. While Romania's Gypsy musicians would fit well into the hours of folklore music that are broadcast in the evening they are excluded. This appears to be a continuation of Ceausescu's policy to promote a nationalist folklore featuring only white Romanians. The music played on these folklore TV shows is largely sub-cabaret sing-song; while it deprives Gypsy musicians of work these shows do not provide genuine opportunities for creative endeavour and are viewed as ridiculous by music loving Romanians, both Gypsy and European.

There appears no history of Gypsy musicians working with Romania's classical orchestras.

Romania has several privately owned music TV channels – the most prominent of which is MTV Europe. MTV Europe is owned by a US corporation and plays no Romanian music of any kind. Other Romanian owned music video channels play Romanian produced rock, pop and rap videos but, so far, show no acknowledgment of Romanian Gypsy music. Here it should be noted that Romania's Gypsy artists tend to record for independent record labels in France/Belgium/Germany – there is, so far, very little interest in Romania's fledgling music industry of recording, distributing and promoting Romanian Gypsy music. And the West European record labels generally do not make videos as it is very rare that "world music" videos get any television play.

The exclusion of Romanian Gypsy music from Romanian radio and video involves both a silent censorship on the Romanian media's part and the unavailability of CDs/videos to the Romanian media – even if they wished to play the CDs/videos.

Most Romanian music is issued on tape only – CD players remain a luxury in Romania – and these tapes are either produced and distributed by small Romanian companies or by the musicians themselves (who sell them at performances). They sell cheaply and are, if popular, often bootlegged. The interest shown by Romanian musicologists in Gypsy music means field recordings of Gypsy musicians by such musicologists as Speranta Radulescu are issued on CD and sold at museums and university bookstores – their audience being primarily Western visitors to Romania. The Western labels that record Romanian Gypsy artists have no distribution deal for their CDs in Romania. Belgium's Crammed Discs handle Taraf de Haidouks and when I questioned them as to why the Taraf CDs remained unavailable in Romania they replied that a distribution deal with an Eastern European company had quickly soured – Crammed were never paid for the Taraf CDs provided – and as of December 2000 they had not found another reliable distributor. Thus Taraf de Haidouks, Romania's most popular musical outfit on the international circuit, remain largely unavailable on CD/cassette within Romania.

The Gypsy music, which is most prominent in Romania, has been that made in a very commercial manner. What must be noted is most Romanians still have very little idea of Gypsy music – they rarely get to hear it (it being given no media coverage) thus it remains a music mainly played within the Gypsy community or for traditional weddings and festivals (and here, as in the West, a DJ is now often considered more cost effective and modern).

2. MUSIC CENSORSHIP

2.1 LEGAL SYSTEM

Romania's legal system under Ceausescu was totalitarian in structure and execution. Only music approved by the state was allowed to be performed and the bias against Gypsies that informs Romanian society meant Gypsy musicians suffered even greater privations. Thus singing in Romani was banned and any song to be performed (even at a wedding) had to be censored by a communist party apparatchik.

That said, musicologist Speranta Radulescu notes that these laws were often ignored and many Gypsy musicians did make a fair living during the communist era. Since 1990 these laws have been removed and there are no legal statutes aimed at prohibiting Gypsy musicians from making music. The persecution of Gypsy society as a whole is not done through an official apartheid system; instead, everything – police, education, courts, employment etc – is aligned against the Gypsies. As I report later, Amnesty International and Helsinki Watch have documented and protested to the Romanian government about such yet, so far, the state appears to be unwilling to implement any pro-active legislation/activities.

2.1.1 PENALTY

Prior to 1990 the Romani language was not taught in Romanian schools. Gypsy history and culture were never part of the school curriculum. No newspapers were printed in the Romani language, and there were no publications specifically for Gypsies in Romanian or Hungarian.

Ceausescu's cultural policies became increasingly nationalistic during the 1980s, emphasising Romanian culture at the expense of the cultures of minorities within Romania. As one Hungarian described it to Helsinki Watch: *"Ceausescu's cultural policy was one of homogenisation of the Romanian society at any cost."*

The cost for Gypsy culture was great.

The ending of the Ceausescu regime freed up the Gypsy community only for them to face nationalist-instigated terror and violence. While there is no record of Gypsy musicians being specifically targeted in any of these attacks – or music being a reason for the attacks – Romania remains a segregated society and the suffering of the Gypsy community as a whole certainly affects their ability to make music.

The European Roma Rights Centre's missions to Romania during 1996 revealed a major change has occurred in the kind of abuse the Gypsies of Romania suffer – replacing village pogroms/burnings are systematic police raids conducted in Gypsies communities. Nineteen cases of police brutality towards Gypsies have been reported in Romania yet not one prosecution of a police officer followed.

2.2 OFFICIAL PRACTISES

How Romanian music was perceived under Ceausescu remains one of the 20th century's more bizarre media events. Ceausescu attempted to invent an extreme Romanian nationalism and much of this was built upon manipulating and presenting the country's folk/traditional music in a manner that glorified the dictator and state socialism. The regime created huge shows called *Cintarea Romaniei* (Singing Romania), which involved thousands of peasants dressed in traditional garb being bussed out to picturesque hillsides to perform songs and dances. All the material performed had been heavily censored so leaving the impression of endlessly grinning, badly dancing peasants singing banal odes to socialism and tractors. These were shown on television every Sunday.

Gypsies were rarely involved with *Cintarea Romaniei* – the communists not wishing to employ Gypsies to represent Romania – which may explain why their music survived relatively unscathed. Other Romanian traditional musics fared less well with this process of banalification: even today a late night television version of *Cintarea Romaniei* appears on Romanian TV – shorn of the hymns to socialism – and remains compellingly bizarre viewing.

Musicologist Speranta Radulescu describes that era as *"The 'folklore' promoted during Ceasescu's period was a fictionalised music, BUT it draw upon genuine Romanian music. Because being promoted through the media, it imposed itself as the 'superior' form of popular music, fitted to take its place."*

Radulescu says that Gypsy music under Ceausescu was *“both a) highly considered AND b) marginalized. Highly considered (especially in theory) because it “expressed” the “pure” national character; and marginalized because it was considered rough, vulgar, un-polished music, which had to be replaced by the official, standardised folklore.”*

The communists censored music heavily – Gypsy wedding bands had to submit lists of the songs they would play to a local communist party authority for vetting and performances were expected to include songs in praise of the party. Radulescu adds *“But of course, the musicians always found ways of avoiding, at least partially, the censure.”*

Radulescu now believes that since the fall of communism the large influx of Western pop styles has *“influenced the oral music. Nevertheless, the most clear influence was that of the other Balkanic oral musics. Now, one can see a kind of “globalisation” of all oral musics.”*

Tamas Francisc, an ethnic Hungarian professor of music and member of many folk music groups, reported: *“As the approach to culture became more nationalistic, Ceausescu decided that there were too many Gypsies in folk groups. I would estimate that Gypsies made up approximately 60 percent of such groups. Around 1978-79, Gypsies began to be kicked out of folk music groups. It was gradual, but it was no coincidence.”* Radelescu admits this was practised but adds that Ceausescu could not kick all the Gypsy musicians out of the folk groups, as they were the best musicians.

Gypsy performers were also denied on occasion the right to appear on television solely because of their *“Gypsy appearance”*. Ion Onoriu, President of the Democratic Union of Roma in Romania, was a popular musician. He described what he observed during the 1970s-1980s: *“It was often the case after 1978 that if a Gypsy was a great musician, he would be recorded, but a Romanian would be put on the television to play along to the previously recorded music. It was a decision of the (state-owned) television studios.”*

Onoriu and his wife, singer Gabi Lunca, found themselves penalised under these rulings with white Romanians appearing on TV to mime to their recordings.

Gypsies interviewed by Helsinki Watch also reported that under Ceausescu they were not able to play traditional Gypsy music and were not able to sing in the Romani language on state radio and television.

Gabi Lunca, a famous Gypsy singer, explained: *"We weren't allowed to sing in Romani, only in Romanian. I don't know what would have happened if we had, but we were afraid to have troubles."*

Professor Tamas, although not himself a Gypsy, was able to confirm what Ms Lunca had described: *"At the local level there were orders not to allow Gypsies to perform their own music. It was simply not allowed."*

Helsinki Watch noted that *"significant improvements in the area of cultural rights in the 20 months since the revolution."* Newspapers printed in Romani are now available, there is a Democratic Union of Roma – the first cultural union for Gypsies in over forty years in Romania. While Gypsies are not accorded a regularly scheduled slot on television Helsinki Watch concluded that this was due more to *"a lack of resources and not to any discriminatory policy"*.

Helsinki Watch also observed that the Romanian national Gypsy music gathering at Cotesti *"has been revived and is attended by thousands."*

Speranta Radulescu is Romania's leading ethnomusicologist and has done more than any other individual to make Romanian Gypsy music available through field recordings. She engaged in the 1986 recording of the Taraf with Swiss ethnomusicologist Laurent Aubert, which was to give the musicians of Clejani their first opportunity to be heard internationally when the recordings were issued by French label Ocara in 1988. Aubert and Radulescu then went to take some of the musicians to Switzerland and France for concerts and ran into serious difficulties with the Romanian Culture Ministry who were very unhappy that impoverished Gypsy musicians would be representing Romania abroad. The Ministry kept suggesting other non-Gypsy musicians although they eventually agreed to grant the Clejani musicians visas.

These days Taraf de Haidouks do not need to apply for visas to leave Romania. Yet when they tour the West a constant story is of how reluctant Romanian embassies are to get involved with promoting the group. Embassies have been known to complain to concert promoters that there are better non-Gypsy Romanian musicians available. The Romanian Embassy in Belgium complained "not those damn Gypsies again"; when the Embassy in Germany was invited to attend the Taraf's five night sold out stint at Hanover 2000 they did not respond to the invite; the Embassy in Japan declined to promote their first Japanese concerts in 2000 – yet after being invited to the concert they were so impressed they put the band on a government sightseeing booklet.

“Romanians don’t realise that bands like ours are the last people who know how to play this traditional music which is among the best anywhere in Europe,” notes Taraf member Dumitru Baicu. *“Because we Gypsies are playing it, we have become ambassadors of Romanian culture. It is difficult for Romanians to accept that, being represented by these brown people who are not really white. It is not easy.”*

When Taraf de Haidouks attempted to play two December 2000 concerts in Bucharest’s Arcube Theatre they ran up against Romanian officialdom that had no wish to promote Gypsy music. While the promoters had booked and paid for the theatre once it became clear to the theatre’s director that it was Gypsy musicians playing he tried to void the contract and – when this proved impossible – attempted to enforce a rule that the performance had to finish at 9pm. Taraf de Haidouks co-manager Michel Winter quotes one of Arcube Theatre’s employees statement *“The Director says they are Gypsies and they will make problems.”* Again, the idea of a Romanian public space – the Arcube Theatre – being open to the Gypsy community (both performers and public) is considered outrageous and, although there are no Romanian laws enforcing segregation, efforts were made to discourage such. In the end, the concerts went ahead as planned and the theatre suffered no disruption or vandalism.

Gypsy musicians throughout Romania can find themselves subject to boycotts of this kind at any time: musicians I spoke to recalled venues being made unavailable to them yet allowed to operate for rock/discos; threats from local thugs towards the musicians (both pre-concert and at concert) and a tendency to overlook them when hiring musicians for dance bands, TV performances etc. While Gypsy musicians are still in demand for exclusive Romanian weddings where a Gypsy string band is a tradition these same musicians now often find themselves expected to play a more pop oriented music: as noted in the following section, Gypsy musicians are famously eclectic yet this recent phase of playing pop, lambada, salsa etc has only served to devalue the music and musicians.

The Romanian government pays lip service to international human rights declarations – there are no specific policies discriminating against the Gypsy community as there were under the fascist and communist regimes – yet it has, time and time again, allowed its Gypsy community – both musicians and other citizens – to be persecuted and deprived of opportunity. Taraf accordionist Manole Ionitsa suggested to me that while his position as a professional touring musician was currently very agreeable any Gypsy who did not have money in their pocket

found themselves at the very bottom of Romanian society. This appears a truism alongside the often stated fact that when a Romanian factory is making workers redundant it is the Gypsy who is first let go.

2.2.1 INFORMAL CENSORSHIP

Ever since they first arrived in Europe in the fifteenth century, Gypsy musicians have invariably adapted their style with enormous versatility to the cultures they encountered on their travels. Are the Gypsies plagiarists or inventors, purists or mould breakers? Even Bela Bartok joined the debate, writing in 1933: *"The designation 'Gypsy music' is strictly speaking inaccurate, and that which is described as Gypsy music is in fact Hungarian music played by Gypsies."* This nationalist sentiment remains prevalent throughout Romania – often in conversation with Romanians I found they tended to deride the Gypsies musical abilities, protesting that the Gypsies were playing Romanian music – as if they were stealing the music! This attitude gives no credit to the cultural, historic and imaginative skills the Gypsies bring to any music and also tends to detract from the conservationist role played by Gypsies.

The negative image Romanians hold of Gypsy music is expressed perfectly in Alina Mungiu's book *Romania After 1989*. Mungiu found the common attitude toward Gypsies, especially in relation to "Romania's reputation" in the eyes of the world, is one of contempt and a sense of injustice. This was demonstrated in the incident when a France Presse journalist, not knowing the pejorative connotation of "Tzigan," made a comparison between the virtuosity of the Romanian soccer team during the 1994 World Cup and the music of the Gypsies. The reaction was one of shock and disgust that the *"Occident sees us as Tzigani"* wrote one Romanian journalist. Another Romanian journalist reported, *"Gypsies are Gypsies, even those born in Romania, and Romanians are Romanians."*

Gypsies enjoy little political or economic power in Romania. They are, as I hope I have documented, given very little access to the media. While their musical abilities are often appreciated by white Romanians this rarely extends to a shared affection in any other way. While the Romani language is no longer banned it is not taught in schools (there are no Romanian Gypsy educational institutes as of writing) and beyond the interest of ethnomusicologists there appears no effort from academia to recognize the worth of the music, musicians and culture. In

this sense, Gypsy musicians are largely ignored and the informal censorship of their music is a token of the everyday harassment the Gypsy community receives. When a press conference was held for Romanian journalists to coincide with the Taraf de Haidouks concerts the journalists general reaction was bemusement that a Gypsy band could attract so much international attention. Of the reports that followed in Bucharest newspapers most simply detailed the band's success and only one chose to exaggerate, suggesting the wealth of the band was far greater than in actual fact.

Emilla Deika, a 23-year old Gypsy singer from Bucharest (now based in Paris), stated that in Romanian society the Gypsy musician continues to enjoy a greater social standing than other Gypsies – just as in slavery days. *“Gypsies who work with music are a little bit special as they are the only ones accepted by the gadjo (non-Gypsy). They make the good music, kiss the hand, smile, sing. But the Gypsies who work with metal, with horses, with business, they suffer so much. They are not valued. They are discriminated against.”* Dieka also noted that when presenting herself to Romanian TV and radio employees as a Romanian singer based in Paris she was welcomed. Yet when she insisted on establishing her Gypsy identity the same journalists attempted to discourage her.

3. HUMAN RIGHTS RECORDS

As I stated above “Gypsy musicians are largely ignored and the informal harassment they receive is a token of the everyday harassment the Gypsy community receive.” Gypsy musicians in Romania are allowed to make music and express themselves however they want – Taraf de Haidouks sing ‘Ballad Of The Dictator’ about Ceausescu and suffer no repercussions – instead the suffering and censorship they are familiar with is that of being a Gypsy in Romania. What follows are quotes from reports prepared by human rights organizations on the plight of the Gypsy citizens of Romania.

“Amnesty International remains concerned about the lack of progress in the protection of some fundamental human rights guaranteed by the Constitution of Romania, international treaties and domestic law.

The organization continues to receive reports of human rights violations including the imprisonment of prisoners of conscience, torture and ill-treatment of detainees as well as police shootings in disputed circumstances. Over the years Amnesty International has urged Romania to bring a number of laws into line with its international human rights commitments. Legislative reforms that would safeguard some fundamental rights and freedoms were not introduced in 1997 in the Romanian Parliament, and in view of the current political situation the eventual success of any current proposals is uncertain.

“Racial prejudice and the neglect of the needs of the Roma community is evident not only in Romania but throughout the region. The rise in nationalism in Romania since 1990 has had a particular impact on the Roma.

Amnesty International has documented human rights violations ranging from imprisonment solely because of ethnic background, to a nationwide pattern of police failure to protect Roma from racist violence.

The responsibility for these human rights violations ultimately lies with the Romanian Government and other national authorities, including the General Prosecutor of Romania.

"In its May 1995 Report Amnesty International stated that in its view the relatively small number of official complaints by Romani victims resulted from their lack of awareness of their legal rights or their belief that, should they complain, their situation would only further deteriorate. The failure to investigate these human rights violations is not only a breach of Romania's international commitments: when governments fail to take lesson from their past mistakes they risk repeating them. The repercussions of the Romanian authorities failings will affect those most vulnerable: the Romani victims of human rights abuses."

Amnesty International: ROMANIA – A summary of human rights concerns, March 1998

"The Roma are present throughout Europe. They are its largest minority and, some say, the only truly European community. Although separated by different histories, dialects, degree of integration into the majority community and, at times, with considerable distance between groups, adversity at the hands of non-Roma society has given the Roma a sense of community and common identity. This 'negative identity' is balanced by the strength and solidarity within the extended family, the basic social unit.

To speak of the Roma as a monolithic group or culture is absurd: yet the persistence of negative stereotypes, allied with the animosity and violence against them, makes it not only possible but necessary to consider them as a single ethnic unit, a visible minority."

Index On Censorship, 4/1998, Roma – Life On The Edge

"The world's Gypsy population is increasingly becoming part of a process of political mobilisation, manifest throughout Europe. Cultural affirmation is a component of such a process. We can identify among Gypsy communities in various countries the indicators (or symptoms) of the cultural mobilisation, which preceded and accompanied the process of nation and state-building described above. An emerging Gypsy political elite is now engaged in a type of "self-rallying" process. Here and there we are witnessing cultural festivals, publications in and about the Romani language, readings in Gypsy folklore, textbooks for Gypsy children in schools, advertising of Gypsy groups and events, etc. In this article we will provide the conceptual background of the strategies used by Roma (Gypsy) associations in different countries to promote the Gypsies' interests in social and political contexts marked by ambiguities of attitude if not by overt group conflict. The main point of our argument is that Gypsy history and present-day social realities are rather "deviant" cases, in respect of the historic pattern which shaped the cultural nationalism and the tools of cultural policy currently used both by the

administrators of the national states and by the active elite of various national minorities. While we are looking for the “uniqueness” and the unity of a people’s culture as a prerequisite for promoting distinct cultural entities and a distinct cultural policy within territorially confined administrative units, the Gypsy people is presenting itself as a huge Diaspora embracing five continents, sharing the citizenship of a multitude of states, while lacking a territory of its own. The Gypsy “archipelago” is formed by a mosaic of various groups speaking both different dialects of Romani as an oral language and a variety of languages of the surrounding societies. The Gypsy communities share a number of religions and church affiliations; they maintain cultural boundaries not only between themselves and the surrounding environment, but also between various Roma groups themselves. Multiculturalism might be an appropriate concept to describe the basic reality of the Gypsy people. While Multiculturalism could form the basis of an enlightened policy in specific local communities where several ethnic and cultural groups interact and co-exist, it is still difficult to imagine how Multiculturalism and multi-territoriality could become the basis for the cultural affirmation and development of people, or at least of communities, which strive to identify themselves in respect of other groups in terms of unity and specificity”

Dealing with Multiculturalism: Minority, Ethnic, National and Human Rights
• Nicolae Gheorghe and Thomas Acton, 1992

The European Roma Rights Center (ERRC) announces publication of State of Impunity: Human Rights Abuse of Roma in Romania, an ERRC Country Report (September 2001):

“Impunity is an unwritten covenant according to which actions against Roma are not governed by the same rules as those for non-Roma. Actions against Roma – by violent attack, denial of basic rights, or by the blatant or subtle forces of racial discrimination – as a rule go unpunished or inadequately punished in Romania. Major episodes of community violence against Roma – deadly pogroms featuring mass arson and mob killing – have resulted in travesties of justice, where legal action has been taken at all. Impunity extends to nearly all spheres of social life in Romania: even those Roma spared the indignity and suffering of racially motivated violence live daily in a state of impunity, in practice unprotected from unequal treatment.

ERRC monitoring of Roma rights in Romania has established that Roma victims have been overwhelmingly denied the right to justice and compensation for crimes committed against them, including crimes committed during the savage

pogroms in the early 1990s. Intensive field missions conducted in May 2000 and January 2001, as well as regular reporting by ERRC local monitors in Romania, reveal that when Roma rights violations occur, non-prosecution of perpetrators is the norm. Immunity from prosecution is nearly guaranteed when the suspected culprits are police officers.

As a result of a climate of impunity, violence against Roma continues to be reported with worrying frequency and intensity. The majority of serious abuses reported concern incidents involving police officers. Reported police abuse of Roma includes:

- abusive police raids targeting Romani communities;
- torture and ill-treatment of Roma in police custody;
- racist intimidation and harassment of Roma victims of police abuse;
- instances of unwarranted use of firearms causing injury and sometimes death.

ERRC monitoring of police attitudes towards Roma in Romania suggests that racial prejudice on the part of law enforcement authorities is a determining factor in the abusive treatment of Roma by the police. Police violence against Roma in Romania persists in an environment in which racist stereotyping of Roma is rampant. The relationship between Roma and the police in Romania is burdened from the outset by the widely held belief that Roma are criminals. Police abuse proceeds from a basic suspicion of guilt of the Roma by police officers, as well as an overall tendency to use force as a component of criminal investigations. Judicial authorities tacitly endorse such practices by lending undue weight to confessions in, criminal cases, as well as by their inactivity in prosecuting officers for reported physical abuse of suspects. The status of the police as an organ of the military, and its concomitant position within the jurisdiction of military courts, also contributes to its insulation from accountability.

The climate of impunity pervading the Romanian criminal justice system is not hermetically sealed from the rest of Romanian society. Little effective work has been undertaken to date by Romanian authorities on issues such as:

- Abuse of political rights of Roma in Romania;
- Child homelessness;
- Child Institutionalisation;
- Denial of the right to education.

Finally, racial discrimination against Roma occurs with alarming frequency in Romania. Areas of particular concern include:

- Discrimination in the provision of housing;
- Discrimination in employment;
- Discrimination in access to goods and services;
- The present inadequacy of Romania's legal provisions in the area of anti-discrimination.

The ERRC report concludes with a number of recommendations to the Romanian government, aimed at improving the human rights situation of Roma in Romania. The ERRC report is published simultaneously in English and Romanian.

The Executive Summary of State of Impunity: Human Rights Abuse of Roma in Romania is available, in English and Romanian from ERRC (see Selected Bibliography).

At the 1999 Istanbul Summit, the OSCE Heads of State declared that:

"We deplore violence and other manifestations of racism and discrimination against minorities, including Roma and Sinti. We commit ourselves to ensure that laws and policies fully respect the rights of Roma and Sinti and, where necessary, to promote anti-discrimination legislation to this effect."

Publication of State of Impunity: Human Rights Abuse of Roma in Romania is timed to coincide with an ad hoc meeting on Roma issues of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), held in Bucharest September 10-13, 2001. In January 2001, Romania took up the chair of the OSCE. On the occasion of publication of the ERRC report, ERRC Executive Director Dimitrina Petrova said: *"The OSCE chair offers an excellent opportunity to the Romanian government to improve its record on Roma rights. The Romanian government must ensure that ERRC concerns are carefully examined and ERRC recommendations adopted in full."*

SUMMARY

The Rough Guide To World Music proclaims; *“today, traditional music still flourishes throughout Romania – and perhaps more than anywhere else in Europe. The isolation of the country and its almost medieval lifestyle preserved traditions that have been modernized out of existence elsewhere.”* While this is true, Gypsy music has always adapted and in 21st century Romania it can be found employing synthesizers and drum machines as well as in its traditional format. Yet the invasion of Western pop music has led to a lessening in demand for these musicians at weddings and other such festivities (DJs and pop bands replacing them). Speranta Radulescu states *“lately the situation of the Gypsy musicians is worse than ever. The reason: the Romanians and ethnic Hungarians have less money and cannot afford to hire them for festivals. There are also other reasons: a part of the common people prefers to hire a disc-jockey or small groups with electronic instruments. I assure you that the situation of the Gypsy musicians is dramatic. Their profession is now disappearing and with it the music they used to play.”*

Still, Romania possesses a musical culture – one that remains largely Gypsy – now attracting the attention of the West. As interest dies at home and discrimination increases it appears that Western enthusiasm for Gypsy music may keep the music alive.

Yet the international success of a handful of musicians does not necessarily mean all Romanian Gypsy musicians will benefit – or even the Gypsy community in Romania will benefit. Indeed, much of the West’s interest in Gypsy music from Romania remains informed by the same romantic enthusiasm, which informed

Russia’s courts centuries ago – it is the Gypsy musicians’ virtuosity and exoticism that appeals; the reality of their community’s existence within Romania is ignored. Indeed, if the Gypsies of Romania end up shaping their music for a Western audience this may finally negate the music’s value amongst the Romanian Gypsy community – a community with low literacy rates where the music acts as a transmitter of oral history, entertainment and news.

As I hope I have shown in this report, the problem for Gypsy musicians in Romania is not one simply of being a musician; instead, the Gypsy community as a whole continues to suffer extreme discrimination.

For this there are no easy solutions – beyond encouraging the efforts of such human rights organizations as Amnesty International and Helsinki Watch it remains a case of concentrated efforts to break down the walls of prejudice and discrimination in a society as isolated and hermetic as Romania. While Romania's entry into the European Union is unforeseeable in the near future, efforts could be made by the EU to counter discrimination in all levels of society. While the post-Civil Rights USA is no land of racial harmony there have been dramatic improvements in the access of African Americans to educational, employment and media institutions. In that sense, Romania's current endemic racism and social divisions need not be seen as unchanging. Yet: the US's wealth and history of liberal activism helped combat racism. Romania lacks both. As it does charismatic, visionary leaders from both Romanian and Gypsy communities.

On an elemental level, the record companies who profit from selling Gypsy music could take a more pro-active role – perhaps working with the likes of The European Roma Rights Center to establish anti-racism campaigns to work within Romania or educational funds for Gypsy communities. Yet: it must be noted that the sales of Gypsy CDs are not in the huge numbers which generate large revenues.

Instead, perhaps the record companies could work with human rights organizations and philanthropists such as George Soros (whose endeavours have often concentrated on Eastern Europe).

For now, Gypsies – and their music – remain a minority of whom the Romanian state appears to have no wish to empower. Beyond the political efforts of Roma rights groups it is the Gypsy musicians and refugees who currently attract most international attention. Support of these musicians should connect with campaigning for refugee rights and highlighting of Roma rights groups.

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Pete Clark

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