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Andre Liebich

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ROMA NATION? COMPETING NARRATIVES OF NATIONHOOD

ANDRE LIEBICH

Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva

This article considers two alternative accounts of Romani ethnogenesis, an ethnic narrative exuding the romance of exoticism and a functional one underpinning the pathos of deprivation. Neither of these accounts conveys the specificity of the Romani condition which cannot be defined by mythical nomadic lifestyle, by the legal and political situation of an ethnic minority, or by social economic status. The article argues that the imbrication of the twin accounts of ethnogenesis and of their corresponding structures of legitimization has distorted both analysis and policy with respect to the “Roma Question” in East Central Europe.

This article proposes to consider alternative constructions of Romani nationhood. The article has two parts. The first and longer part examines two narratives of Romani ethnogenesis. The second part considers the consequences of these narratives for discourses of Romani legitimization and empowerment. The purpose of the article is not to arbitrate between these alternative narratives. Rather, its aim is to suggest that competing accounts of ethnogenesis and the corresponding structures of legitimization underpin a fundamental cleavage between the understanding of the so-called “Roma Problem” in Western and in East Central Europe. As a result of this cleavage, categories of analysis and categories of practice with respect to Romani issues have become inherently and inextricably confounded.¹

Ethnogenesis

The term “ethnogenesis” has an archaic ring to it. True, all students of nationalism have paid attention to ethnogenesis, but, in most cases, they see it as a completed process involving past practices and (perhaps) present myths. In the case that concerns

Address correspondence to Andre Liebich, GIIIS, CP 36, CH 1211, Geneva 21, Switzerland. E-mail: liebich@hei.unige.ch

us here, the status of the Roma as a nation remains contested and their origins are the subject of ongoing construction. Broadly speaking, there are two competing approaches to the issue of Romani ethnogenesis. These gravitate, respectively, around what might be called the romance of exoticism and the pathos of deprivation. The first narrative is an ethnic or racial one whereas the second is functional or social. To borrow a term from another context, Romani origins are interpreted in terms that may be described as either “native” or “dative.”²

The “native” or ethnic narrative of Romani origins postulates a common origin, in India, and a historic migration westwards. Initiated sometime between the 5th and the 12th centuries, this great translocation brought the Roma to a terminal point in Central and Western Europe during the course of the Middle Ages.³ Such an account is grounded in the 18th century discovery of the Indo-European or Indo-Aryan origins of the Romani tongue (or tongues). “The history of the Roma is to be found in their language,” wrote the pioneer Gypsyologist Heinrich Grellman (1753–1804).⁴ Grellman is considered a scoundrel, plagiarist and racist by some scholars.⁵ Be that as it may, Grellman’s statement, with its Herderian overtones, echoes to this day. He is still widely credited with the thesis, long adopted uncritically by many other observers, that the common tongue of European Roma proves their common and Indian origins. Specific Indian origins also explain specific Romani characteristics, notably the professions they practiced. For ages, Roma have been artisans, such as blacksmiths and tinkers; entertainers, whether musicians, acrobats or animal tamers; as well as horse traders and fortune tellers. These professions have been identified with particular Indian castes. Moreover, the social structure of Romani communities has been likened to that of Indian jati or group and clan setups.⁶

What one skeptic has called the “mythical charter” of Romani Indian origins has served its designees well.⁷ As Ian Hancock, one of the most prominent Romani academics and activists has put it, “it is not true that ‘Roma have no historic homeland’. Roma have no *present-day* homeland [emphasis in original].”⁸ Being grounded in an identifiable territory, however distant in time and place, establishes the Roma as a people like others. Springing from a single soil is as unificatory as a shared etymology. An occasional side benefit is the interest that an established state,

India, has expressed in its sometime children, the Roma. Even fierce opponents of the Indian origins theory acknowledge the paradox that “the Gypsies became acceptable to some only if they could be reified as the ‘other’ from outside the West.”⁹

The monogenetic and linear account of Romani origins has proved difficult to sustain, both historically and linguistically. Ian Hancock has proposed a thesis that integrates such doubts while preserving the nation-building implications of the classical narrative. He has argued that the Romani language originated as a military koiné or composite lingua franca elaborated among soldiers and camp followers who may have left India, or been driven out by military defeat, as late as the 12th century. They acquired what might be called an ethnic identity only after their departure from India, as they merged—particularly in the eyes of outsiders—with the speakers of other diasporic Indian languages who had left their homeland earlier.¹⁰ In short, though Roma have a national homeland, they were never a nation in that homeland. An added feature of Hancock’s theory is that it proposes a significant social upgrade of Romani origins. Rather than descending from low service castes, Roma were originally soldiers of various social backgrounds. They were given honorary warrior caste status and called Rajputs or “sons of princes.” Genealogy counts, even in our egalitarian age!¹¹

A particular feature of discussion on Romani origins is the degree to which scientific genetic research has been enlisted to support ethnogenetic claims. Whereas it has become almost an article of faith among students of nationalism that nations are constructed and that biology is irrelevant, Romani studies happily appeal to genetic data. There is indeed recent research confirming that “Gypsy populations share a common biological origin,” or that the “Indian Origin hypothesis seems to be supported by the classical marker, Y-chromosome.” The same research explores other hypotheses. For instance, that these populations originated in a “genetically heterogeneous yet closely related set of subpopulations (such as might be suggested by an origin based on occupations and lifeways rather than the traditional ethnic groups) . . . alternatively [they] could have resulted from genetic drift.”¹² The latter hypothesis would confirm the homogeneity of the gene pool and it would explain the difficulty of establishing a “founder moment.” Another study entitled “A

newly discovered founder population: the Roma/Gypsies” makes clinical assertions at variance with its title: “A geneticist’s summary of these data would describe the Gypsies as a conglomerate of Asian populations of largely unknown history and current size, that may fit the observed pattern of Mendelian disorders but does not satisfy the criteria for a large founder population of serious potential for research into complex disorders.”¹³ This genetic research may be valuable in arbitrating between competing theses on Romani origins and identity; especially as the authors cited here are at pains to demarcate their work from the first genetic programs involving Roma that were promoted by Nobel prize-winner Ferdinand Sauerbach for research to be carried out at Auschwitz.¹⁴

Let me now turn to the second narrative of Romani ethnogenesis, what I have referred to as the functional or social account. “Gypsy is a job description,” is how one Derriderian analysis summarizes recent British legal decisions on Roma.¹⁵ Other students are more nuanced in advancing the thesis that Roma are characterized primarily by a way of life and a community of fate rather than by a common genetic stock. The Gypsy or Egyptian ethnonym was nothing but “an assumed identity for many persons with no foreign origins,” is how one prominent defender of this thesis put it. In her view, Roma should be seen as a group which historically “chose to reject wage-labor rather than be proletarianized.”¹⁶ And, I might add, who have paid the price for this rejection. Holders of this view point out that as Gypsies or Roma have never been isolated or self sufficient, it is only natural that they should constitute an ethnically mixed population. Moreover, their common language—or their purported common language, as this school would put it—consists, in fact, of a great number of sometimes remotely related dialects with diverse and abundant linguistic borrowings. It does not prove common descent, any more than speaking English denotes descent from common ancestors. Already in 1886, the first issue of the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society* (recently renamed *Romani Studies*) ran an article questioning the Indian origin thesis.

It is not surprising that this functional or social account of Romani origins should find many of its proponents in Britain. There, the conventional term is “Travellers,” a designation which loads the dice heavily in favor of a functional rather than an ethnic

framework of analysis. The term “gypsy,” even when written in the upper case as “Gypsy,” is increasingly seen as derogatory but it is still in common usage and also suggests a lifestyle rather than an ethnic origin. Interestingly, the ambiguities of such nomenclature have complicated British jurisprudence. In the 1959 Highways Act an earlier statutory reference to “other people travelling” was replaced with “hawker or other itinerant trader or gipsy.”¹⁷ A High Court decided that Parliament could not have intended to single out a group on the basis of ethnicity so “gipsy” could only mean any “person leading a nomadic life with no fixed employment and no fixed abode,”¹⁸ The 1968 Caravans’ Sites Act confirmed this by defining Gypsies as “persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin.” However, in 1988 a High Court decided that a “No Gypsies” sign on a pub was discriminatory since Gypsies were a racial group. “Travellers” were not tantamount to “Gypsies” but a “No Travellers” sign would still be discriminatory because its burden would fall on Gypsies more than on others. One of the judges deliberated whether “Travellers” who no longer traveled but lived a sedentary life could still call themselves “Travellers” and he decided that they could indeed do so.

Such British perplexities are conditioned by British particularities but the general thesis finds confirmation in the work of non-British scholars who consider the history of Roma on the continent. Drawing on Owen Lattimore’s observation that nomadism is not characteristic of a given tribal or ethnic group but forms an activity linking members of different groups, the noted Polish medievalist Bronisław Geremek situates Roma in the European context. He discusses their initial appearance in 15th century Central and Western Europe in the guise of pilgrims spreading various legends about their origins, notably about their Egyptian provenance, and about their place in Christian cosmography.¹⁹ He postulates that these people merged with other wandering groups in pre-industrial Europe. The ensuing mixture was all the more difficult to unravel as the separate itinerant groups were, in any case, not differentiated by the authorities and were treated as a single entity, or a single problem.

Geremek and others have traced the progressive marginalization of Roma and other itinerants. Already early popular attitudes could be described as proto-racialist. Accounts of first encounters stress the Roma’s blackness, complain about their thievery, and

express fear of the magical secrets connected with the Romani blacksmith's art.²⁰ Since the principle of localization already underpinned legislation concerning beggars and errants, Romani claims that they were not merely homeless but different ethnically (to use an anachronistic term) were viewed with suspicion, as part and parcel of their allegedly "counterfeit" speech, behavior and apparel. With the onset of modernity, however, a qualitative hardening in attitude and policy takes place. Whereas in medieval Europe, antagonism towards Roma alternated with sympathy based on curiosity about the storytelling newcomers and respect for their purported status as penitent pilgrims, in post-medieval Europe the emergence of a work ethic and state regimentation transformed Roma into outcasts.

Scholars have attempted to bridge the gap between the ethnic and the social narratives of Romani ethnogenesis. Yaron Matras, for instance suggests that there is a confusion in the popular (and even in the scholarly) mind between what he calls "Gypsy 1" which is a "social phenomenon of communities of peripatetic or commercial nomads, irrespective of origin or language" and "Gypsy 2" which is a "set of ethnonyms used by those groups whose language is a form of Romani."²¹ It is true that ethnic and social identity are not utterly incompatible. Concepts such as "ethnoclass" have been coined to describe the meshing of the ethnic with the functional, and such syncretism is of obvious relevance here.²² Each of these two narratives of ethnogenesis, however, leads in a different direction and in the following section I shall try to chart these directions in terms of their relevance to discourses of Romani legitimization and to strategies of empowerment.

Legitimation

Clearly, narratives of the past frame present visions and current claims. However, neither of the competing narratives of Romani ethnogenesis that I have invoked can account for the unique position of Roma within the societies in which they live. As we have seen, the first account of Romani ethnogenesis leads to the image of an ethnic Romani people understood in primordial terms, whereas the second account presents us with a people of uncertain origin defined by its itinerant lifestyle, alternative

values and, ultimately, by its dispossession and marginalization. There is a fundamental discrepancy between these accounts and it is this discrepancy that leads to a cacophony of legitimization discourse and to an impasse in reflection upon the situation of Roma in Europe today. To put it summarily, West European states that have absorbed their own “traveler” population (who, in most cases, are no longer traveling) see the “Roma issue” as a problem of uncontrolled migration by alien nomads, and they promote social measures in these intruders’ countries of origin to stem this migration. The Central and East European states, in turn, define Roma as an ethnic minority only marginally relevant to the national ethos, and these states engage in remedial social measures primarily with a view to assuring societal security. This East/West differentiation is visible also in European institutions, such as the European Union and the Council of Europe: they employed the term “Gypsies”, defined in terms of nomadism, in the West before discovering ethnically defined “Roma” in the East.²³ Roma themselves resist wholesale adoption of these categories, formulated by others for instrumental purposes.²⁴

The first, primordialist account of Romani ethnogenesis enjoys status as the prevailing scholarly wisdom and serves as the potential basis of a Hrochian process of nation-building.²⁵ This nation-building project has generated enthusiasm among the Romani intelligentsia, and it is promoted also by the principal Romani organization, the International Romany Union, regardless of all the difficulties of coordinating vastly different and scattered groups that have never been united.²⁶ It is, however, a specific variant of the second, the functionalist or social account that has imposed itself upon the popular and literary imagination, at least in the West. Excluded from the mainstream of modernity, Roma are seen as bearers of the pristine values of a lost world. Free beings, untrammelled by the tyranny of factory or authority, they are romantic and exotic figures in a drab and rationalistic universe. The sight of their caravans triggers our imagination as we indulge in fantasies of escape from our present cares. In societies that worship science, we bow to magic by turning to Roma to tell our fortunes. The intriguing appearance of these strange people and their mysterious origins only enhance the romance of Romani exoticism and “sometimes exoticism has been perceived as a form of romantic approval.”²⁷

Romani activists and others have long expressed unease with such attitudes.²⁸ They have pointed out that these postulate, and indeed promote, a separation between Romani and non-Romani society that overlooks the historical interconnection between the two, as evident in the types of trades and services traditionally pursued by Roma.²⁹ Referring dismissively to “Gypsyism” or “Gypsy lore-ism” Romani activists have emphasized the patronizing and “othering” nature of such enthusiasm. They have criticized it as reducing Roma to an entertainment function or to a mere outlet for the subliminal frustrations of modernity. They argue persuasively that Roma will never receive recognition, in Charles Taylor’s understanding of that term, as long as such attitudes prevail.³⁰

Above all, Romani activists and, indeed, all those concerned with Romani issues are caught in a quandary. The influential functional account of Romani ethnogenesis reposes upon the primacy of nomadism and this remains the “unarticulated assumption” structuring discourse on the Roma.³¹ Now, nomadism may be understood in different ways: individual family members may travel to earn their bread while their families remain settled; families may move seasonally or continuously; nomads may move back and forth between fixed points or wander at large. Even including all these variants, however, only a minority of Roma are nomadic by any stretch of the term. Estimates of nomadic Roma in Western Europe run from 5 to 30 percent. Inasmuch as virtually all Roma in Eastern Europe are sedentary, the overall share of Romani nomads in Europe as a whole may amount to no more than 2 percent. The functional or lifestyle definition of Romaniness refers to a mythical function.³²

Spokesmen for Roma in the West thus find themselves obliged to operate within categories that are patently unsuitable. As we have seen, British legislation takes as its subject the nomadic “Traveller.” France offers some protection to its wandering Manush. Spain will consider its Gitanos as a minority at large since they cannot be assigned a place in the structure of territorial autonomies. Such measures might do for the small number of Roma who fit this description; they do not apply to the majority. Nor are there alternative policies on the table. Inasmuch as West European countries have been reluctant to practice minority politics (some countries have been more reluctant than others)

they have shied away from recognition of Roma as an ethnic minority.³³

In East Central Europe, a quite different situation prevails. As noted above, nomadism is even more irrelevant there than it is in Western Europe. East Central European Roma have long been sedentarized and, during the Communist period, they were also proletarianized.³⁴ Moreover, there is little precedent for state protection of a functional group. There is, however, a history of national and ethnic minority protection, often imposed from the outside but eventually assimilated into the political culture of the East European countries.³⁵ With some renewed outside prodding, notably from European organizations, it would therefore be only natural for East Central European Roma to play the ethnic minority card, drawing on the first account of Romani ethnogenesis to found their ethnic difference and to establish their political claims.³⁶ This is, indeed, what some Roma in East Central European countries have attempted, though sometimes reluctantly and generally unsuccessfully.³⁷ Their lack of success has been partially explained by the argument that the minority institutions of “weak” minorities are more likely to represent the requirements of the state toward the minority rather than the contrary.³⁸ Their reluctance is due to the universal stigma attached to the ethnic minority label in nationalizing states. It is also founded on the conviction among many Roma in these countries that Romani presence and identity are co-terminous with and inseparable from those of the national majority. At a popular level such beliefs are articulated among Roma in the figurative language of religious and national mythology where Roma appear as partners in the national project from the earliest times, though such partnership is rarely acknowledged by the majority community.³⁹

The obstacles to the Romani national minority project in East Central Europe rest upon factors that can be articulated in the terms I have been discussing here. One could argue that East Central European Roma have chosen or have had imposed upon them a narrative of ethnogenesis that does not respond to their needs. They have had their identity represented in their countries of residence as that of a group characterized by alien origins. Whatever the historical (or even biogenetic) accuracy of such an account, it frames a distorted national history for countries where

the Romani presence antedates the creation of the national states by several centuries. According to other perspectives, the Romani condition in East Central Europe may be more accurately understood in terms of functional and social groups, defined by economic marginalization and social discrimination. The functional understanding cannot properly rely, however, upon the nomadic function that is singled out as the dominant Romani characteristic in prevailing Western discourse. And a de-nationalized account founded entirely on an undifferentiated pathos of deprivation is a formula for liquidating Romani specificity and with it a nascent Romani self-consciousness. Defining the Roma as an “underclass,” which is one such variant, leads directly to an impasse.⁴⁰ Similarly, importing paradigms drawn from the 1960s Civil Rights movement in the United States, which is the implicit reference of many Romani-oriented activists and non-governmental organizations, muddies the nature of discrimination suffered by the Roma.⁴¹ It may not be entirely fair to argue as some prominent Romani activists have done that the real danger for the future of the Roma lies in the “constant patronizing of people who love the Gypsies.”⁴² Their concern underscores, however, the conceptual inadequacies of international policy thinking on this issue.

Conclusion

In this article I have tried to present two narratives of Romani ethnogenesis, one founded on foreign origins and the other on alien ways. Neither narrative accounts for the specificity of the Roma: “an Asian people who have only ever existed in the West”⁴³ and a people who appear to have dispersed before they acquired even a proto-national identity so that, in the face of enormous historical and linguistic variations, a once similar mode of life emerges as their most salient identifying trait. Both narratives serve as a basis for exoticizing and othering the Roma. Both narratives can also serve to legitimize Romani claims and empower Romani activists. But neither narrative can adequately enlighten international institutions and other agents concerned with the “Roma Problem” in the countries of East Central Europe where this problem looms large. Framing the issue there in terms of Romani foreign origins forestalls acceptance in these highly nationalized states. Framing the issue in terms of a peculiar lifestyle

misapplies West European categories and thus misdiagnoses the problem at hand. A synthesis of the approaches may be even more pernicious. As one observer has warned, “ethnicization of the social issue . . . makes the Roma liable to be the scapegoat of the [East Central European] region.”⁴⁴ Brushing aside the issue of ethnogenesis altogether, however, reduces the Romani issue to a social assistance project which leaves no place for Romani identity. Clearly, neither biology nor sociology, neither history nor economics provides an adequate lens for understanding and acting upon the Romani dilemma. Deconstructing categories of analysis and integrating them with categories of practice is not an easy task and it remains an ongoing project with respect to the situation of the Roma.

Notes

1. On categories of analysis and categories of practice, Rogers Brubaker, “Re-thinking nationhood: nation as institutionalized form, practical category, contingent event,” *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the national question in the new Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 13–22.
2. Martin Thom, *Republics, Nations and Tribes* (London: Verso, 1996).
3. A temporary terminal point, to be sure. According to Ian Hancock between one-quarter and one-third of the world’s Roma live in North and South America, “Book review of Dean Ringold, Mitchell A. Orenstein and Erika Wilkens, *Roma in an Expanding Europe: Breaking the Poverty Cycle* (Washington: World Bank, 2005),” *SAIS Review of International Affairs* Summer/Fall 2005, pp. 1–2 [offprint]. According to tables in Lev Tcherenkov, Stéphane Laederich, *The Rroma: otherwise known as Gypsies, Gitanos, Γυφτοί, Tsiganes, Tigani, Cingene, Zigeuner, Bohémiens, Travellers, Fahrende*, etc., vol. 1: *History, Language, and Groups* (Basel: Schwabe, 2004), p. 511, between 200,000 and 400,000 of the world’s Roma population, estimated between 6,449,400 and 11,173,750, live in the Americas. Note that insistence on the “Europeanness” of the Roma—“Europe’s largest transnational minority” in the idiom of Brussels or Strasbourg or Roma: 15.000.000 [sic!] *European citizens*, according to the title of MEP Els de Groen’s brochure (n.p.: The Greens/European Free Alliance)—is the latest imposition of a mode of legitimization originating in non-Roma society.
4. Wim Willens, “Ethnicity as a Death-Trap: The History of Gypsy Studies,” in Leo Lucassen, Wim Willems and Annemarie Cottar, *Gypsies and Other Itinerant Groups: A Socio-historical Approach* (London: Macmillan 1998), p. 17.
5. Thomas Acton, “Modernity, Culture and ‘Gypsies’: Is There a Meta-Scientific Method for Understanding the Representation of ‘Gypsy’? And Do the

- Dutch Really Exist,” in Nicholas Saul and Susan Tebbutt (eds.), *The Role of the Romanies: Images and Counter-Images of Gypsies/Romanies in European Cultures* (Liverpool: At the University Press, 2004), p. 105.
6. Bronisław Geremek, “Cyganie w Europie średniowiecznej i nowożytnej,” *Przegląd historyczny* Vol. 74, No. 2 (1984), pp. 569–96 offers a scholarly historical overview. Rombase provides encyclopedic information, romani.uni-graz.at/rombase, consulted 7 August 2006. The connection between Romani jati social structure and genetic data (an issue to which I shall return) is presented in David Gresham et al., “Origins and Divergence of the Roma (Gypsies),” *American Journal of Human Genetics* 69 (2001), pp. 1314–31.
 7. Judith Okely, borrowing “mythical charter” from Bronislaw Malinowski, “The Invention and Inventiveness of Gypsy Culture,” paper presented at the Centennial of the Leiden University Fund Congress Conference, “The Social Construction of Minorities and their Cultural Rights in Western Europe,” Leiden 1990, pp. 7–8, cited in Ian Hancock, “Romani Origins and Romani Identity: A Reassessment of the Arguments,” <http://www.radoc.net/>, consulted 30 August 2005.
 8. Hancock, “Book review,” p. 1.
 9. Judith Okely, “Some Political Consequences of Theories of Gypsy Ethnicity: The Place of the Intellectual,” in Allison James, Jenny Hockey and Andrew Dawson (eds.), *After Writing Culture: Epistemology and Praxis in Contemporary Anthropology* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 227.
 10. Hancock argues this most recently in his unpublished paper, “On Romani Origins and Identity: Questions for Discussion,” kindly provided by the author, November 2005, as well as in his contribution “The Emergence of Romani as a Koiné outside of India,” in Thomas Acton (ed.), *Scholarship and the Gypsy Struggle: Commitment in Romani Studies* (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press), 2000, pp. 1–13. See also Ian F. Hancock, *The Pariah Syndrome: An Account of Gypsy Slavery and Persecution* (Ann Arbor: Karoma, 1987), available also in a slightly different version in the web journal *Patrin*, <http://www.geocities.com/~patrin>. Chapter 1.
 11. The theory appears to have been pioneered by Jan Kochanowski (Vania de Gila Kochanowski). See his “Black Gypsies, White Gypsies: The Gypsies within the Perspective of Indo-European Migration,” *Diogenes* 63 (July–September 1968), pp. 27–29. Competing theories are reviewed by Sir Angus Fraser, “The Present and Future of the Gypsy Past,” *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (2000), pp. 17–31.
 12. Radu P. Iovita and Theodore G. Schurr, “Reconstructing the Origins and Migrations of Diasporic Populations: The Case of the European Gypsies,” *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 106, No. 2 (2004), pp. 267–81, citations pp. 267, 275.
 13. Luba Kalaydjieva, Bharti Morar, Raphaelle Chaix and Hua Tang, “A Newly Discovered Founder Population: The Roma/Gypsies,” *BioEssays*, Vol. 27, No. 10 (2005), pp. 1084–94, citation p. 1085.
 14. Iovita and Schurr, “Reconstructing the Origins,” p. 268.

15. Ralph Sundland, "The Real, the Simulacrum, and the Construction of 'Gypsy' in Law," *Journal of Law and Society*, Vol. 23, No. 3 (1996), p. 384.
16. Judith Okely, *The Traveller-Gypsies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 3 and 14. Okely recounts the hostility her position has aroused in "Some Political Consequences of Theories of Gypsy Ethnicity," pp. 224–43.
17. Angus Fraser, *The Gypsies* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2nd ed. 1995 [1st ed.1992]), pp. 2–3.
18. Fraser, *The Gypsies*, p. 3, "A man might, they said, be a 'gipsy' on one day but not on another." For a complex (not to say complicated) analysis of this issue see Sandland, cited above.
19. Geremek, p. 584, cites legends that Roma are descended from the first wife of Adam, before Eve (!) and are therefore exempted from the obligation of toiling as they are not accomplices in original sin; or that Roma helped the Holy Family in its flight to Egypt.
20. Jean-Pierre Liégeois, *Les Tsiganes* (Paris: Seuil, 1974), p. 86, cites Mircea Eliade on the intimate link between the art of the blacksmith, the occult sciences, the art of song, dance and poetry.
21. Yaron Matras, "The Role of Language in Mystifying and Demystifying Gypsy Identity," in *The Role of the Romanies*, p. 54.
22. "Ethnoclass," in Ted Gurr and Barbara Harff, *Ethnic Conflict in World Politics* (Boulder: Westview, 1994), esp. pp. 23–5. The concept is discussed with reference to Czech and Slovak Roma by Peter Vermeersch, "Ethnic Minority Identity and Movement Politics: The Case of the Roma in the Czech Republic and Slovakia," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 5 (2003), pp. 890–92.
23. Katrin Simhandl, " 'Western Gypsies and Travellers'—'Eastern Roma': The Creation of Political Objects by the Institutions of the European Union," *Nations and Nationalisms*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (2006), pp. 97–115.
24. It is perhaps in this way that one can explain the recent trend to use the term "Rroma." The latter term is more correct phonetically and it avoids confusion with "Romanian" but it is also the reassertion of an endonym at a time when "Roma" is being used so broadly both as a noun and as an adjective that it almost threatens to become an exonym like "Gypsy."
25. Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe: A Comparative Analysis of the Social Composition of Patriotic Groups among the Smaller European Nations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).
26. Ilona Klímová-Alexander, *The Romani Voice in World Politics: The United Nations and Non-State Actors* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005).
27. Okely, "Some Political Consequences of Theories of Gypsy Ethnicity," p. 227, although Okely acknowledges in the same sentence that reification as "the other" from outside the West "has had some disabling consequences for those so classified." This dimension of the Romani "mystique" is discussed most recently in Deborah Epstein Nord, *Gypsies and the British Imagination, 1807–1930* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006). Note that even well-documented and serious recent works that create empathy and sympathy for the world of the Roma, such as Isabel Fonseca's well-received *Bury*

- Me Standing: The Gypsies and Their Journey* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995), accentuate these stereotypical images.
28. Authors as divergent as Judith Okely and Ian Hancock converge in their uneasiness: Cf. Okely, *Traveller Gypsies*, especially chapters 1 and 2, and Hancock *We Are the Romani People/Ame sam e Rromane dzene* (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2003), esp. Chapter 6.
 29. As Okely, *Traveller Gypsies*, puts it, p. 30: “The Gypsies . . . have never been self-sufficient. They are dependent on the larger economy, within which they took possession of or created their distinct niche. The Gypsies can only survive as a group within the context of larger economy and society within which they circulate supplying occasional goods and services, and exploiting geographical mobility and a multiplicity of occupations.” This argument does not rely upon the author’s advocacy of the theory of a functional rather than ethnic origin to the Roma.
 30. Charles Taylor, *Multiculturalism and “The Politics of Recognition”* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).
 31. Simhandl, “‘Western Gypsies and Travellers’—‘Eastern Roma’, p. 103.
 32. Minority statistics in general are notoriously unreliable, those on Roma populations even more so, and figures on Romani lifestyles present an almost insurmountable methodological and empirical challenge. The Migration and Roma Department of the Council of Europe was unable to offer an estimate, e-mail communication to author on 16 August 2006. In one of the Council’s publications, however, a leading expert estimates the number of Roma, Gypsies, and travellers “regularly on the move” as not higher than 20%, Jean-Pierre Liégeois, *Roma, Gypsies Travellers* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1994), p. 35. As Professor Slawomir Kapralski pointed out in a thoughtful communication to me, dated 16 August 2006, this figure probably has a West European bias. *Patrin*, consulted 6 August 2006, cites the overall figure of 5%.
 33. On the situation of Roma in individual states, see the country reports published by the European Roma Rights Centre, Budapest, <http://www.errc.org/> On the somewhat schizophrenic Western European attitude to minorities—concern in the East, complacency at home—see Andre Liebich, “Janus at Strasbourg: The Council of Europe between East and West,” *Helsinki Monitor*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (1999), pp. 9–18.
 34. On East European Roma, David Crowe and John Kolsti (eds.), *The Gypsies of Eastern Europe* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1991) and Zoltan Barany, *The East European Gypsies: Regime Change, Marginality and Ethnopolitics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
 35. Balazs Wizner, “The Four Strategies of Romany Politics” in Wojciech J. Burszta, Tomasz Kamusella, and Sebastian Wojciechowski (eds.), *Nationalisms Across the Globe: An Overview of Nationalisms in State-Endowed and Stateless Nations*, vol. 1: *Europe*, (Poznan: School of Humanities and Journalism, 2005), p. 46, argues that the long history of minority rights in this region is due not to political developments but because these countries could not realize a liberal state. On the evolution of European minority protection

- mechanisms, Jennifer Jackson Preece, *National Minorities and the European Nation-States System* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).
36. "As a result of the overarching presence and legitimacy of the discourse on minorities, partly created by its 'securisation,' the conceptualisation as 'minority' prevails over alternative ones such as a 'disadvantaged group,' " Simhandl, "Western Gypsies and Travellers"—'Eastern Roma," p. 108.
 37. Roma political parties have fared particularly poorly, after some promising beginnings recorded in Marlis Sewering-Wollanek, "Die Roma in Ostmittel- und Südosteuropa," in Georg Brunner and Hans Lemberg (eds.), *Volksgruppen in Ostmittel- und Südosteuropa* (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 1994), pp. 253–63.
 38. Wizner, "The Four Strategies of Romany Politics," p. 463.
 39. See Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, "Myth as Process," in *Scholarship and the Gypsy Struggle*, pp. 81–93; and the same authors in "The Roma—A Nation Without a State? Historical Background and Contemporary Tendencies," in *Nationalisms Across the Globe*, pp. 433–56. As an example of the failure to acknowledge partnership, one may read, "Gypsies can be removed to ghettos or camps, leaving their music to be used by the nation state." Sophie Day, Evthymios Papataxiarchis, and Michael Stewart, "Consider the Lilies of the Field," in the book edited by these authors, *Lilies of the Field: Marginal People Who Live for the Moment* (Boulder: Westview, 1999), p. 22.
 40. Michael Stewart argues this persuasively in "Deprivation, the Roma and 'the Underclass'" in C. M. Hann (ed.), *Postsocialism: Ideals, Ideologies and Practices in Eurasia* (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 133–48.
 41. Stewart points out that since discrimination in East Central Europe is not founded on a pervasive system of legal restrictions, as was race discrimination in the United States before the Civil Rights Movement, the possibilities opened by the strategy of judicialization and legal challenges are inherently limited, Stewart, pp. 145–8. For further criticism along these lines, Mark and Matthew Braham, "Romani Migrations and EU Enlargement (reply)," *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (2003), pp. 47–60.
 42. The argument bears fuller quotation: "It may sound paradoxical if we say that we feel that the real danger for the future of the Gypsies is not so much racism, anti-Gypsy attitudes and actions, or negative stereotypes. Rather it may be seen as the active interference and constant patronizing of people who love the Gypsies (or at least claim to) and in their desire to help them, imposes patterns of development which they consider best. This interference in the guise of social patronage, irrespective of the subjective intentions of its participants (idealistic or mercantile), in the long-run kills the natural mechanism of community preservation, thus turning the community into a constant social customer of professional benefactors and finally killing prospects for its natural development." Marushiakova and Popov, p. 455. Note the authors' assertive use of the term "Gypsies."
 43. I take this point from an anonymous reader of an earlier draft of this paper.
 44. Wizner, "Four Strategies of Romany Politics," p. 467.

Andre Liebich is a Professor of International History and Politics and Director of Graduate Studies at the Graduate Institute for International Studies, Geneva. He was also the Chairman of the Advisory Group on the Roma Diplomacy Project, Geneva and Brussels. He has authored *Les Minorités nationales en Europe centrale et orientale* (Georg 1997) and *From the Other Shore: Russian Social Democracy After 1921* (Harvard 1997, Fraenkel Prize).