

small, however scattered, however unrelated to the 'real (sic) Gypsies' of Lipi and Cohn, however alien to the agendas of academics, do constitute an embryonic organization. Whether this eventually evolves into a larger and more powerful body, or whether Gypsies become a 'conventional ethnic minority,' whether a 'real' Gypsy nationalism can be created or not—all this is uncertain. But what is certain, is that Dr Lipi's and Professor Cohn's assertions that Gypsy Nationalism *cannot and should not* happen, must be challenged, shown to be erroneous, and rejected.

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To the Editor:

I am writing this letter in response to the statements by Mr. Werner Cohn and Mr. Jiri Lipa. By way of identification, I am 100% Gypsy, and to the best of my knowledge my ancestors were also 100% Gypsy, Russian Kalderash.

The comments of the letters suggested that Gypsies have to meet a set of behavior standards to be considered true Gypsies. This is a totally thoughtless statement. Do you stop being a Gypsy once you get educated? I have met thousands of Gypsies in the United States and Europe who range the social spectrum just as any other people. The big difference is that those who reach a higher standard of living and education often feel that they have to hide their identity, and in most of the circumstances that is understandable.

I have a video of the meeting of the most recent World Romani Congress. The conference was well represented from many countries, including the United States. More recently, I attended a conference in Romania at which there were representatives from every part of that country. I estimate that there were over 200 Gypsies there, ranging from peasants to factory foremen and teachers. The topic of this meeting was to try to form some type of alliance, to have one Gypsy voice at voting time in the upcoming national elections.

It is true that we Gypsies are not as well organized as we should be, but that is due to the conditions of our people: lack of funds and education, racism, *etc.*, and not because we do not have the desire to accomplish this goal. Gypsies such as Ian Hancock, Nicolae Gheorghe, Vasile Costel and Mateo Maximoff have made many things possible for our people because of their efforts. What they are doing should be supported.

At present, we are applying to different human rights foundations to fund or contribute to a conference by Romani activists meeting some time this winter. Such a conference is very important at this time. Since the fall of communism, the attacks on Gypsies in Eastern Europe have increased tragically,

and the chances for another holocaust similar to the one suffered at the hands of Nazi Germany are becoming more possible with each passing day. Contrary to the opinions of the Gypsy Lore Society and Mr. Werner Cohn, we can begin the long and difficult process of improving the image that the world has of Gypsies once we (12 million Gypsies worldwide) are able to communicate with each other on a regular basis.

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