

**Home is where the  
hurt is:  
historical factors in the  
migration of eastern  
European Roma**

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# A. Did it all start in 1989?

- 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1989
- The EU Council of Ministers passes its most radical ever resolutions in favour of Roma and Travellers.

9 Nov 1989  
Fall of the Berlin  
Wall

1994 report on 1989  
resolutions found lost  
in a cupboard in  
Brussels

**But anyone working with Roma needs to go a bit further back than the resurgent racism post-1989 to understand the sources of difference.**

- Because of the query “Is this behaviour an individual pathology or a cultural aberration?” Social workers make errors both ways: and because child protection and other social service reports are always confidential, building cumulative wisdom is hard.
- So we compare the behaviour with a series of narratives about cultural norms.

**BUT**

**Between different groups the culture varies  
100% - every generalisation is wrong.**

- AND
- It is families who have problems who turn to social workers and the police
- SO
- Social worker and police and narratives are biased towards families in the process of dropping out of Romani Culture, and tend to reinforce negative stereotypes. These sometimes conflict with idealisation by educationalists
- AND
- Families who are self-reliant are even more likely to remain hidden from view.

# So – how do we approach the understanding of culture? Through history.

- Why did they migrate from India? Traditional explanation was they were pariah nomads who wandered a bit further, *but why is a mystery*.
- Challenged by Romani nationalism: We were warriors who adventured to Europe – *but why is a mystery*.
- The solution of historical revisionism “Mystery” is unacceptable, even racist: any speculation must be sociologically plausible – as is the theory of a multi-cultural Indian militia in the service of Mahmud of Ghazni, with Romani language emerging from a military koine.
- Social collectivities with some military-political autonomy give rise to continuing identities in a way in which individual migrants do not.

# Diversity is only understandable historically

- What happens to the original Romani-speaking collectivity?
- It accretes other Indic migrant populations.
- It loses any political autonomy by 1361 at the latest
- Its component sections – metal workers, musicians, grooms, carpet specialists pursue their traditional non-military survival strategies under other local feudal rulers.
- It runs into the catastrophe of the 16th century W.European invention of the genocidal nation-state.



# How do Roma/Gypsies Travellers survive the 16th century catastrophe?

- a) As slaves: (Christian Ottoman fringes, esp. Romania and Serbia)
- b) As taxable communities (Ottoman heartlands, Poland, Russia, Baltic)
- c) As marginalised commercial nomads (N.Western Europe – but also in small minorities combined with (1) and (2))

## **And then came industrial capitalism (and the steam engine)**

- From the late 19th century the ghetto/caravan marginalisation is no longer acceptable:
- the 20th century genocides render unviable the survival strategies from the 16th century genocides:
- post 1945 comes the new Gypsy politics, gathering pace from the 1960s.





The first CIT delegation to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg in 1969, holding the earlier version of the Romani flag, blue and green diagonal.

*Left to right: Jimmy Hanrahan (Ireland), Leulea Rouda, General Secretary of the CIT, Manfred Wood, President of the Gypsy Council, Tommy O'Doherty, Maisa Rouda (wife of Vanko Rouda), Nuknu (wife of Jimmy Hanrahan), Charles Douglas (Scotland), Mehmet Sakijevic (Yugoslavia), Grattan Puxon, then Secretary of the Gypsy Council.*

**But the Eighth World Romani Congress, in Sibiu is responding to a different situation.**



# What are the sources and dimensions of Roma Gypsy Cultural Diversity today?

- Tradition vs Consensus vs Personal Autonomy in structures of social control (related to Sedentarism vs Nomadism) (So most Polish Roma have different social control norms to most Romanian Roma – but there are crossovers – it depends on sub-ethnic group, not nationality as such )
- European Regional Origin

# **What are the sources and dimensions of Roma Gypsy Cultural Diversity today? (2)**

- Religion: Muslim, Orthodox, Catholic, (nominal Lutheran and Anglican), Pentecostal, Jehovahs Witnesses.
- Education: The legacy of state socialism
- Language and Dialect
- Politics and Class



# **“Old” Roma communities in UK:**

**Kalderasha, Romungre, Cypriot  
Khorakhane, Rudari**

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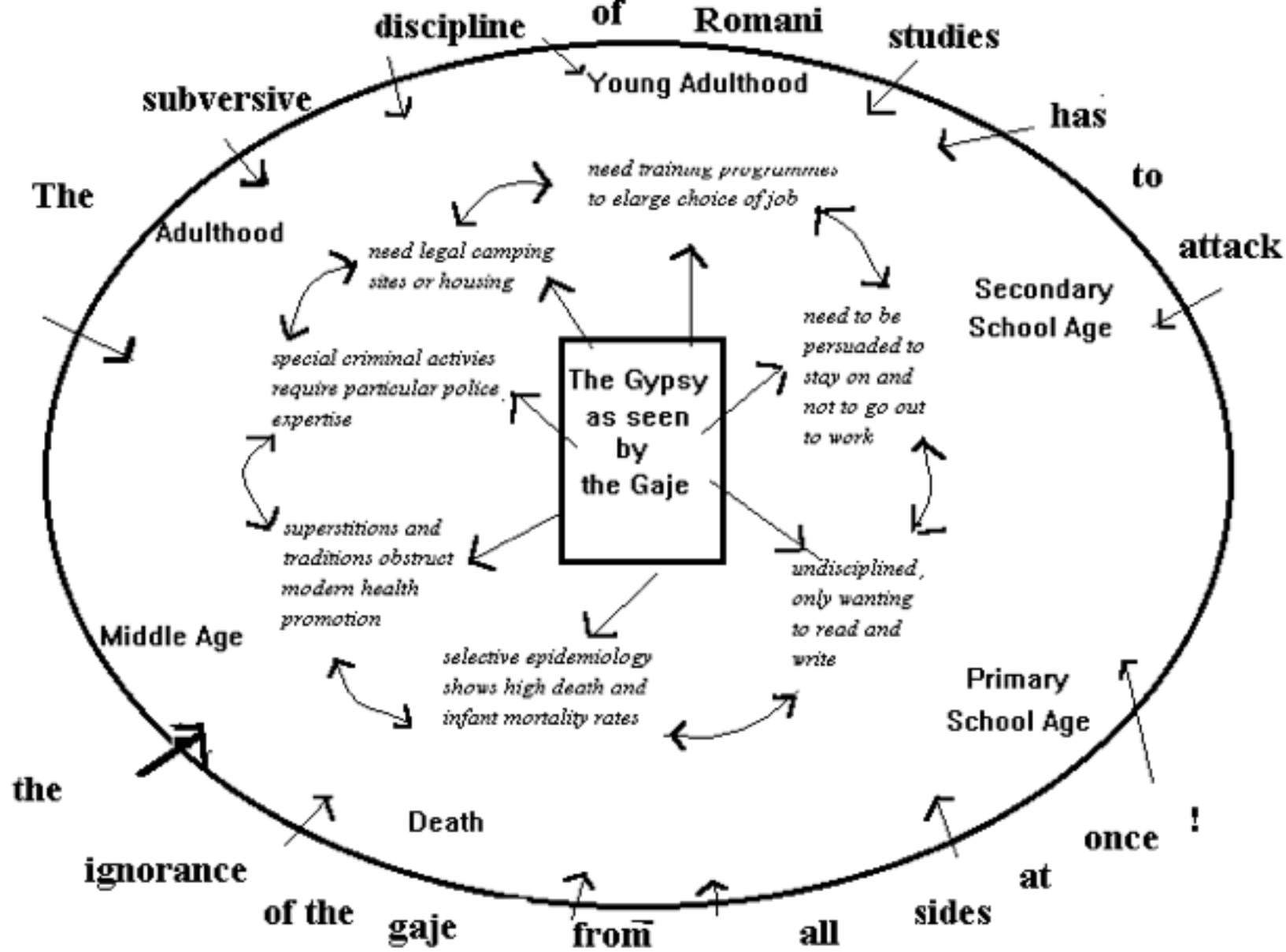
## **“New Roma” since 1989**

Some Communities:

- Bosnian Chergashe
- Polska Roma and Lovari
- Kosovar Khorakhane + Albanian Roma
- Slovakian Romungre
- Romanian Roma
- Bulgarian Khorakhane/Arlija Roma

- **Some organisations:**
- Slovak, Bulgarian and Romanian Roma organisations: Lobbying and civil liberties approaches, often ephemeral/ and/or linked to church work.
- Roma Support Group: A casework + cultural politics approach
- Church groups: Pentecostal self-help now linking tentatively with the Churches Network, esp. in Luton





2000 - ?

1950 - 2000

1550 - 1950

