

## THE ROMANIES IN SERBIAN (DAILY) PRESS

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**Abstract.** *The paper deals with the presence of Romanies' concerns in Serbian daily press. More precisely, it tries to confirm the assumption that not enough space is devoted to the issue as evident in a small-scale analysis done on seven daily papers during the sample period of a week. The results show that not only mere absence of Romanies' issues is the key problem. Even more important are the ways in which the editorial strategy and the language used in the published articles turn out to be (when unbiased and non-trivial) indirect, allusive and "imbued with promises and optimism" so far as the presumed difficulties and problems of the Romanies are concerned. Thus they seem to avoid facing the reality as it is.*

**Key Words:** *Romanies, Serbian daily press*

### INTRODUCTION

In Mary Woolstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) there is an urgent imperative mentioned that can also be applied to the issue of Romanies presence in our press. Namely, she suggested that "in the present state of society it appears necessary to go back to first principles in search of the most simple truths, and to dispute with some prevailing prejudice every inch of ground." More precisely, in the case of the Romanies' presence in the press the question to be asked is what would be the "first principles" that Woolstonecraft refers to? No doubt that in this context they refer to what has always been considered the very basis of every democratic, open-minded and tolerant society, that is, the true equality of all the citizens as reflected in every aspect of the society that proclaims itself to be multi-cultural. This naturally includes the equality regarding the freedom of speech that, in most concrete terms, means an equal treatment of all the citizens in the press and other mass media.

Regarding Serbian journalism in the last few years, it is the author's subjective opinion that it is (like the society on the whole) in the state of transition from an old out-dated ideological model (that could be termed as "one-single-reliable-family-paper-we-can-all-

trust") to a highly-informative and open-dialogue model that is a true mark of any democratic society. In that sense, the "transition" virtually means that there is a variety as well as heterogeneity of the papers, some of them still pertaining to the old model whereas others trying to achieve the current world's standards. Something similar can also be noticed within the papers themselves. Regarding the editorial policy, as reflected in the organization of the columns and articles, it can be said that in the papers in which the overall coverage can be regarded as solid, informative and unbiased, there are some positive tendencies toward a more informative and critical-commentary policy while there are still traces of the old model "dragging on" as reflected if not in a biased then in an insensitive ways of dealing with particular issues. This can be seen in regarding Romanies' concerns as well. Even if not biased, the coverage tends to be off-hand, insensitive to the more troublesome aspects of the Romanies' position within our society. It needs to be said here that much more than mere occasional and non-solid reporting should be done by the media in order to draw public attention to the suffering and victimization of Romanies.

#### METHODOLOGY

The paper starts from the assumption that not enough space is devoted to Romanies issues in our daily press.<sup>2</sup> One proof of this is a content analysis done on the sample consisting of the following-up of seven papers (all daily except one that is published every day except on Sundays) during the sample period of seven days (from March, 28, till April, 3, 2000).

Still, it needs to be said that the above-presented assumption is just the starting point in dealing with the issue of the Romanies' presence in the press. It leads to other observations that should be taken into consideration in further discussions about the given topic.

#### **Content analysis**

The analysis aiming at observing the editorial strategy, that is, the physical character of articles in which there are some references to Romanies, is done on the sample comprising seven daily papers. Three of them are generally considered as the government-supporting, three of them are generally considered as the opposition-supporting while the seventh is the local daily paper (published in Niš) at the moment (April, 2000) considered as the opposition-supporting. Needless to say they all claim to be as objective and informative as possible.

All the papers appear to be diverse in their general outlook, though they share some common characteristics regarding the columns and their distribution. A matrix of their distribution would include the pattern of covering up the latest news, the domestic and the world's politics followed by the columns dealing with culture, regional news and sports.

The analysis was limited to the main section of the newspaper, that is, it did not

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<sup>2</sup> Though I personally see nothing wrong in saying that this need not be just a hypothesis; our experience with Romanies' issues allows us to say that it can as well be assumed as a given fact.

include any supplementary materials. It, however, included "Letters to the Editor"<sup>5</sup> and the obituaries.

Table 1. gives a survey of the samples during the given period.

Daily Paper	28.3.	29.3.	30.3.	31.3.	1.4.	2.4.	3.4.
Politika	–	–	*	*	–	–	–
Ekspres politika	–	–	*	*	–	–	–
Večernje novosti	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Glas javnosti	–	–	–	*	–	*	–
Blic	*	–	–	–	–	–	*
Danas <sup>3</sup>	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Narodne novine	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

Tab.1. A Survey of the Articles with Some References to the Romanies in the Given Papers During the Sample Period<sup>4</sup> /- denotes no articles with references to Romanies; \* - articles with some reference to Romanies or directly dealing with them)

The number of pages also varies just like the size of the paper. Regarding the articles on the Romanies published in the given week, it can be said that:

1) Concerning the *number* and the *source* of the articles, there were eight articles referring to the Romanies published in 49 papers during the sample period. Four of them were in the presumably government-supported papers (*Politika* and *Politika ekspres*), the other four in the presumably opposition-supported papers (*Glas javnosti* and *Blic*).

The articles are analyzed in some of the relevant aspects further on, except for the P1 article commented on in the footnote 10 since it is a "Letter to the Editor" and thus only indirectly reflects the editorial strategy.

2) Concerning *column* and *page*, the GJ1 article is published within the column "Regions", p. 8. The GJ2 article is published in the same column, p. 9. The B1 article is published in the column "Regions", p. 22. The B2 article is published within the column "Reportage", p. 12. The P2 article is published on p. 14. The E1 article is on p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> One of the letters to the editor in the daily paper *Politika* (see Appendix) makes reference to the Romanies. In discussing the current drive to start political parties, the author suggests that people should be doing other things instead of wasting their time on political activities. He mentions the Romanies and their party, the party of Romany Unity, suggesting that their leader should gather together the Romanies from Kalenić and Zelenjak (green and flea markets) and give them something else to do. The cynical remark refers, of course, to the Romanies as dealers at the black market. Obviously, for him, the Romanies are the most striking example of the presumed "time-wasters".

<sup>3</sup> It should be mentioned that this paper had an excellent series of articles dealing with Kosovo Romanies in October, 1999.

<sup>4</sup> What is lacking here is an important element needed in discussing the article features, that is, the average number of articles. This particular analysis does not give it here since the sample period is too short. In addition, if it is attempted here the results would be disastrous. It can be assumed, though, that the writings about Romanies tend to cluster at particular times when either internal or external circumstances impose them on the press (crimes or serious offenses against Romanies, serious social crisis such as the one at Kosovo, or, on the other hand, pre-election times). What we are aiming at here is rather a typical attitude in a politically relatively calm week when such exceptional occasions are missing because presumably this gives a rather fair idea of the press attention frequency.

The implied suggestion is that unless considered related to some official political event or leader, other Romanies' issues tend to appear on less attention-drawing pages.

3) Concerning the *length* of the articles in question, within the page (38 x 27 cm = 1026 square centimeters), the GJ1 article takes 10 x 4 (= 40) column centimeters (approx. 3.9%). The GJ2 article takes 9 x 6 (=54) column centimeters (=5,26%). As for the *page location* the GJ2 article is located in the lowest part of the right corner of the page. The GJ2 article is placed in the lower part of the page. As for the B1 article, regarding the given page (37 x 23,5 cm = 869,5 square centimeters), it takes 11,5 x 6 = 69 column centimeters (=7,94%); the B2 article takes 19 x 23,5 (= 446,5) column centimeters (=51,35%). As for its location, the B1 article is in the upper part of the low right corner on the page while the B2 is in the upper part of the page, visually taking over the half of it. The *Politika* page is 41 x 28 = 1148 square centimeters while the P2 article takes 18 x 11 = 198 square centimeters (=17,25%). The article is located in the low right corner. It comprises an insert with smaller font size also related to the Romanies. The *Politika ekspres* page is 43 x 28=1204 column centimeters; within it, the E1 article takes 4,5 x 16 = 72 column centimeters (=5,98%) in the upper part of the low left corner, while the E2 article takes up 18,5 x 9 = 166,5 (=13,82%) column centimeters in the middle (center) of the page.

Regarding the number of *paragraphs*, the GJ1 story takes two paragraphs, while the GJ2 takes four paragraphs. The B1 story takes three paragraphs, while the B2 story has thirteen paragraphs. The P2 article has nine paragraphs. The E1 article takes four paragraphs, while the E2 story has even eight paragraphs.

The suggestion is that very little space is devoted to Romanies' issues; moreover, the space reserved for them is usually lower part of the page (unless with an implied negative assumption as in the E2) that is less-attention drawing than the upper or middle one.

4) Concerning *headlines*, the headline of GJ1 first mentions the help provided for the Romanies, and then the Romanies. The GJ2 first mentions the action taken by the Romanies (formation of their association), and then the "happy Romanies" (without capitalization otherwise used in the name "Happy Romanies" given to their new association that is being reported on).

The B1 article has an over-heading stating that the Romanies in Kraljevo have got new tents while the heading itself does not mention them in particular; the B2 story has an over-heading announcing the Traditional Romanies' Ball stressing that the Romanies have celebrated "with food, drinks and music" their religious holiday. The under-heading announces that the competition for the "most beautiful Romany girl" is over and proceeds with a sensational reference to one of the Socialist Party leaders thus giving some political "spice" to what is supposed to be a politically uneventful thing. The heading itself leaves out Romanies; instead it is itself sensational announcing quite a large tip given to the orchestra "for a sad song".

The P2 article states in the headlines that "In Serbia the Romanies are respected as all other people." Therefore, it mentions Serbia first and then the Romanies. In the over-heading it reports that it is the statement taken from a political party meeting, while in the under-heading it directly states the name of the Minister whose words make up the headlines. The E1 article is almost the same report. The over-heading mentions the name of the same Minister, then the heading itself repeats the same thesis about equality of the Romanies (only this time leaving out Serbia). The E2 article points to the abuse of the

humanitarian aid being sold out at the markets in the city of Kruševac; the heading stresses the same while the under-heading gives more precise details (presumably shocking for the general reading public).

All in all, the headings can be grouped as: a) those leaving out the Romanies altogether, b) those using the Romanies as a pretext for someone else's action, c) those comprising sensationalist or even abusive references to the Romanies.

5) Concerning the *lead* (the first sentence of the news text), the GJ1 article starts with "Romanies" and then it proceeds with their living conditions contrasted with the kind of help given to them. The GJ2 article starts with an impersonal quotation (passive voice) beginning with the conjunction "and" (implying a series of other events of this type) giving information about a new association of the "Romanies from Svrljig". In other words, the information is not given directly, but reported on as someone else's statement. Apart from one sentence, everything else is a series of statements made by the new association officials, presumably the Romanies themselves. The first sentence of the B1 article is more precise in defining the living conditions of the Kraljevo Romanies as well as their number. In the first sentence the B2 article mentions the richest of the Romanies present at the ball who has apparently made his fortune in Brazil.

In the P2 article, the first sentence starts by mentioning the Minister who is also a member and a president of some organizations. The E1 article starts with full attention given to the Minister and his numerous political functions. The E2 article reports on the humanitarian aid abuse at the Kruševac markets aiming at shocking the reading public before directly pointing out to those presumed guilty for it.

The suggestion is that rarely the Romanies themselves are the real focus of attention; instead, others (organizations, persons, ministers) are the true object of the article.

6) As for the *photos*, the GJ1 and GJ2 articles have no photos while in the B1, apart from the fact that there are no photos, immediately under the articles stating how difficult it is for the Kraljevo Romanies there is a photo of a group of young men (non-Romanies) sunbathing and drinking in a cafe.

The B2 article has three photos illustrating the Romanies' Ball. One of them represents the very act of putting the money on the harmonica player's forehead (the focus is without any doubt only on the money); the second gives a view of the girls competing for the title (the first one having her hair dyed into blonde, while the third one is a photo of the girl who has won at the moment of proclamation. The girl is dressed in black, appears very decent, has no charming smile on her lips whereas the photo itself apparently does not show her in her best looks).

Regarding P2, E1 and E2 there are no photos.

The suggestion is that the editors obviously thought that the verbal news is enough.

### **Concluding remarks**

Considering the above-presented results, the question should be asked whether the given texts bring Romanies' concerns to wider public attention. In the author's opinion they hardly do so. The reasons for this are numerous but some of them should be especially emphasized.

First, what is striking about the attention devoted to Romanies in the daily press is not so much its absence nor is it the amount of the space taken by the texts. Rather, the

problem lies in the attitude to Romanies' concerns implied in what we can call *the presumed position* of the text within the given paper. More precisely, the articles are almost always to be found at the least attractive pages dealing with the regional news. If we try to figure out the reasons for their being the least attractive we may say that:

- they are of immediate concern only to the people living in the area,
- they are most often serious since only the "serious" things happening in the provincial areas are "worthy of being reported on",
- if there are "serious" events lacking in the region, the page is usually covered up with minor, uneventful reports, and,
- they most often lack any critical commentary (due to the amount of local information that has to be presented to the public).

Then, the *presumed motive* for writing an article about the Romanies is not the hardships they are going through, but the things *done for them* or *by them*. Another possibility is, of course, using the Romanies for most immediate political propaganda.

Moreover, as the headlines obviously show, the *presumed attitude* is also striking. In some of the papers, there is an evident effort made to stress that some things are done for the Romanies, whereas in others the intention is doubtlessly on the person or organization who tries either to do something for them or to speak for them. The sensationalist or the negative attitudes either foster the existing stereotype about the "happy" or "rich" Romanies or put off mentioning them until they arouse the readers' attention.

To add, Romanies issues that are considered "worthy of being covered", that is, that deserve a wider attention are either most trivial (like the Romanies' Traditional Ball) or the most tragic ones (like the refuge case). Even if it so, what is sometimes lacking is the way they themselves feel about it. In short, rarely there is a "voice of the Romanies" heard, at least the common everyday person.

Another striking feature which can also have far-reaching consequences is the lack of the so-called *ethnically-mixed articles*. The texts dealing with the Romanies almost *exclusively deal with the Romanies* (except, of course, when the non-Romanies are involved as those who are officially responsible to take care of Romanies' concerns). This is something best commented upon by the American historian David Gerber in a paper dealing with American Ethnic History; namely, Gerber sadly concluded that much of social history is "concentrated on groups in isolation from one another... or in conflict (...) It was easy to get the notion... that our history is the story of vaguely related groups which inhabit the same space, fail to communicate, and often get in one another's way."<sup>6</sup> When applied to Romanies and non-Romanies in our country, it can be said that their history refers to the "vaguely related groups" living (almost) close to one another and failing to communicate (as reflected in the daily press). That is why the fear that they might feel that they too often get "in one another's way" seems reasonable.

Of course, we are far from expecting the press to shape and re-shape our lives by creating a false view of inter-ethnic cooperation by paying too much attention to the very few instances of it. We are also far from expecting the press to create instances of inter-ethnic cooperation when there is none. But, in that case, we are expecting the press to

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<sup>6</sup> Kazal, Russel, A., "Revisiting Assimilation: The Rise, Fall, and Reappraisal of a Concept in American Ethnic History", *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 100, No. 2, April, 1995, p. 437/438

recognize that the lack of communication as one of its key concerns and to devote some of its space to it.

### Language analysis

Beside the editorial strategy, there is another aspect that should be considered, that is, the rhetorical one, in order to confirm the above-presented assumptions about Romanies' concern in the press. However, the space left here does impose some limitations concerning a more thorough presentation of the analysis.

Regarding the content of the given news stories and the way of reporting the following can be noticed:

1) As for the *theme*, The GJ1 article deals with improving residential and other conditions for the Romany refugees in the city of Kraljevo. The GJ2 article reports on a new association of the Romanies. The B1 article deals with the same topic as the GJ1. The B2 article aims at describing the atmosphere at the Romanies' Traditional Ball whereas in fact its underlying theme is the "Romanies' dream of success" as realized by one of the guests.

The theme of the P2 is a commentary upon the party meeting dealing with the Romanies. The same is dealt with in the E1, while E2 draws public attention to the presumed "social evil."

2) As for the *events mentioned*, the immediate occasion for the GJ1 and B1 is the provision of some winter tents with necessary sanitary conditions for the Romany refugees. The immediate occasion for GJ2 is an event presumably relevant for the Romanies living in the town of Svrljig.

The religious meaning of the celebration described in the B2 article is explained to us by one of the guests (as quotation). He stressed that the patron saint celebrated is "to the Romanies what the Serbian Saint Paraskeva is to the Serbs or Mother Theresa to the Roman Catholics." Within the context of the sensationalist article, this reference seems ironical if not worse.

In the P2 there are no particular events mentioned since the whole text is a political commentary. The same is with the E1, while the E2 describes a presumably ongoing process of abusing the humanitarian aid.

3) As for the *persons involved*, in the GJ1 article the Romanies are mentioned as a collective three times (Romany refugees, the Romany refugees from Obili}, and, the Romanies living in "'improvised housings', that is shacks near the bus station"). The second sentence starts with "thanks to" the organizations providing help. Though the problems that the Romanies are faced with are stressed, no Romany person is mentioned or quoted. The only person quoted (beginning of the second paragraph) is the official (non-Romany) stating the kind of help they are about to receive. His statement is in the future tense implying the actions are yet to be taken.

In the GJ1 article the name of the city is mentioned five times, the Romanies are mentioned four times, the tents also four times, the sanitary conditions twice. The B1 article dealing with the same topic is almost the same as the GJ1 only there are references to the "Romanies who are living in the extremely non-human conditions." Moreover, what in the GJ1 is just use of the future tense, in the B1 is precisely stated as "the works to be completed in ten days."

In the GJ2 article the Romanies (and derivatives) are mentioned twelve times, including the name of their association given in the Romany language and in its Serbian translation. The Romanies' association (either federal or local) is mentioned six times.

In the sensationalist B2 article there are many persons mentioned as joined together for the occasion: the richest Romany guest of all (and his successful life story), the leading political figures of the region, the members of the French humanitarian organization "Against Hunger", the "common people" referred to as kinsmen and "best men", the singers, the Miss Beauty contestants and others. The word "Romany" is mentioned five times, whereas the word "Gypsy" seven times. The general tendency is to use the word "Romany" in more informative parts of the text, whereas the "Gypsy" tends to be used in more light-hearted parts of the text.

In the P2 article no other person is mentioned except for the Minister. The same is in the E1. The E2 article, however, mentions "dark-skinned sellers, mostly young" ("crnpurasti prodavci, uglavnom mlađi") in the first paragraph, while the whole of the short fourth paragraph emphatically states that "almost all of the sellers of these goods are Romanies". Thus, it starts with a metonymic reference to the color-line (racial prejudice) in order to make the point much clearer later on.

4) As for the *attitude*, the GJ1 article tends to be affirmative to the efforts made to improve the Romany refugee situation. At the same time, it lacks everything else. The B1 does the same, only the refugee situation and the troubles that the officials faced in trying to arrange for the help are more emphasized.

The GJ2 article would have been considered to be affirmative to the efforts made by the Romanies themselves unless it had not been all in quotations. The intention is either to let them have their saying or...?

The B2 article changes its emotional/sensationalist mood from benevolent to much sharper irony. For instance, at one point the author does not refrain from mentioning that two other beauty contest winners "have blue eyes".

The attitude of the P2 is highly persuasive, as in the E1 article. No other views but the Minister's own is presented. The E2 has a negative attitude to the Romanies; doubtless, the abuse of the humanitarian aid *is* a social "evil" but its roots are totally neglected except for an allusive reference that these are "the people driven away from their homes" getting only some of the things they need and nothing else. This is, however, stated only in the last paragraph, far too late to change the first impression.

5) As for the *form*, the GJ1 article tends to be an objective or dry report just like the B2. The GJ2 is tends to be as objective as possible since it is all in quotations. Unlike them the B2 article is a dramatized narrative that mixes several registers in order to make the story more dynamic. That is makes it also biased and even offensive is disregarded for the sake of making an amusing story.

The way of reporting is a way of expressing attitude. The narrative and dramatized stories more likely express their attitude than the dry reports.

The P2 and the E1 are dry reports on one single opinion (let it be the Minister's). The E2 is colorful and vivid to make the story more sensational.

6) As for the *up-lifted aspects*, in the GJ1 article entitled "Tents for the Romanies" the "tents" are given the first place, whereas the headline itself states the help given to the Romanies. The B2 stresses the fact that the people in question lived in the underground shelters and are about to move to better places. The fact that the Romanies are not



stressed here can be regarded as acceptable. The GJ2 article entitled "United are the Happy Romanies" leaves some ambiguity to the reader because of the lack of capitalization of "Happy" in Serbian. Are they "happy" since they are finally managed to organize their association or is it...?

The B2 article is announced as a sensationalist especially at the times when a lot of people (Romanies and non-Romanies alike) are on the verge of starvation.

The P2 is a series of clichés with no facts or concrete evidence except for the fact that the Minister himself is a Romany.

7) Regarding the *vocabulary*, the GJ1 article alludes to the possibility of the Romanies living under desperate conditions (if read between the lines) as explained further on. The B1 emphasizes the conditions more precisely though the sense of the Romanies as victims is altogether missing. The GJ2 articles is full of the statements, names and titles of the Romanies' organizations and their presidents. Thus, it looks too formal.

In the B2 article the Romanies are all but victims. Moreover, they are the symbols of success at quite difficult times.

The P2 refuses to concede the possibility of Romanies being in any way maltreated within the society they live in. The same stands for the E1, while in the E2 the Romanies can be considered as active factors in the socially troublesome times we are living in.

#### COMMENTARIES

##### **GJ1**

Read between the lines, the GJ1 article can point to the reader the devastating situation of the Romany refugees. Though not directly, there is gradation in mentioning Romanies problems. The headline mentions the "winter tents" stressing the poor residential conditions; the very first sentence mentions the non-sanitary conditions; the paragraph ends with a reference to the "shacks" while the official mentions first the problems with public toilets and then he uses an emphatic sentence structure to stress the importance of the provision of the garbage disposal containers. Read in this way, the reader, if willing, can grasp the full meaning of the article. It will be slightly easier for him to do that if reading the B1 article though direct references are again lacking.

##### **GJ2**

Read between the lines, the GJ2 article dealing with the "Happy Romanies" also moves from the promising to less promising aspects of the Romanies' life. The headline indicates a happy occasion; the first paragraph gives a piece of good news just as it mentions the "solemn concert" that the Cultural-artistic Romanies' association also participated in. Then it proceeds with the optimistic words of the President of the Romanies' Union of Yugoslavia who also mentions "the problems" of the Romanies. The third paragraph stresses some important cultural achievement of the Romanies (including the translation of the Bible). Only the last paragraph mentions the need for an easier and faster way of dealing with the problems of social needs, employment and education of the Romanies. Read between the lines, the gradation may give some indication of the problems that the new "Happy Romanies" association will be faced with.

**B2**

We must admit that any sensationalist kind of writing cannot be viewed from the same perspective as a purely informative one. However, if any sensation is going to be made using the Romanies as the subjects, then we have to expect a lot of prejudice as well as references to the traditional offensive stereotypes that can be highly offensive if read with different attitudes in mind. There are all sorts of references ranging from "love of horses and women" to the "thieves"; the Romanies as presented here are big spenders drinking thirty year old whiskey. There is no doubt that some of these things did happen at the Ball. However, at least one sentence of direct critical commentary that they are not the only people who have made or spent their fortune in this way could have "saved the honor" of the paper. But there was not any.

**P2 and E1**

The P2 and E1 articles stresses all the political functions held by the Minister in the first paragraph. The fact that he himself is a Romany "who has made it in political terms" is mentioned in the third paragraphs of both the articles which should imbue the reading public with doubtless optimism. The words concerning the "equal respect" and "equal rights" of the Romanies with others are repeated, in various forms, even four times. The first paragraph in both the articles concludes with the statement that the political programs of the Republican government and the political party that the Minister belongs to are very "affirmative" for the Romany population. What more is to expect from a minister? From the press we can, however, expect more.

**E2**

The E2 article obviously deals with a presumed social malpractice such as selling the humanitarian aid. However, the order of presentation of the problem (that should normally start with the causes to the consequences) is inverted and it starts with the dramatized and vivid presentation of the problem and it ends with just slight allusion to possible more profound causes for it never trying to probe into them. At the same time, those who are obviously involved in the process forced by the social-economic situation (their being refugees), as can be read "between the lines" are turned into the guilty party; in other words, instead of being the victims they are turned into the "dark-skinned sellers" which directly reveals a racial prejudice. This way of writing can be considered as highly biased and far damaging.

**CONCLUSION**

The American political philosopher James Madison once stated that "popular government without popular information and access to it would be but tragedy or a farce." In dealing with the presence of Romanies' concerns in the press we can see that what is lacking is "popular information" about them, that is, the kind of information that would refer to the most essential aspects of their existence within the Serbian society. It is most unfortunate to note, to use Madison's expression, that they are dealt with only when their lives have turned out to be either a tragedy or a farce most often ideological one.

In the context of the mass media, especially the (daily) press, it is necessary to devote more column space to Romanies' issues. In addition, what is required is open-minded investigation of their more serious and complex problems. Since these problems are not possible to handle unless viewed within the context of the society the Romanies live in (and regarding the overall society's tendencies toward multi-ethnic tolerance) it is indispensable that the articles of ethnically-mixed type should be fostered. The Romanies should not be approached as an isolated group that is the matter of concern of only some people at some places at some particular time when their problems seem to be most difficult and urgent; they should be included in everyday life of the society as its all-present, precious and useful members. And *vice versa*: in writing about the majority it is also necessary to refer to the minorities. It is this interaction that is crucial for the future media (press) orientation.

#### APPENDIX

##### List of the referred articles and their abbreviations

- GL1 - "Šatori za Rome", *Glas javnosti*, March, 31, 2000, p. 8
- GL2 - "Udružili se srećni Romi", *Glas javnosti*, April, 2, 2000, p. 9
- B1 - "Iz skloništa pod šatore", *Blic*, March, 28, 2000, p. 22
- B2 - "Hiljadu maraka za tužnu pesmu", *Blic*, April, 3, 2000, p. 12
- P1 - "Svi bi u političare", *Politika*, March, 30, 2000, p. 12
- P2 - "U Srbiji Romi uvažavani kao svi drugi narodi", *Politika*, March, 31, 2000, p. 14
- E1 - "Romi uvažavani kao svi drugi narodi", *Ekspres politika*, March, 31, 2000, p. 4
- E2 - "Humanitarna pomoć - na pijaci", *Ekspres politika*, March, 30, 2000, p. 13

## ROMI U SRPSKOJ (DNEVNOJ) ŠTAMPI

### Dragana Mašović

*Rad se bavi prisustvom romskih pitanja u srpskoj dnevnoj štampi. Tačnije, on nastoji da potvrdi pretpostavku da se ovim pitanjima ne posvećuje dovoljna pažnja kao što pokazuje i analiza rađena u malom opsegu na uzorku od sedam dnevnih listova, praćenih u periodu od nedelju dana. Rezultati pokazuju da nije samo odsustvo romskih tema ključni problem. Još važnija izgleda da je činjenica da urednička politika i retorika objavljenih tekstova, onda kada nisu pristrasni i trivijalni, ipak jesu indirektni, aluzivni i ispunjeni obećanjima i optimizmom kada se radi o pretpostavljenim teškoćama i problemima Roma. Na taj način kao da se izbegava suočavanje sa stvarnošću.*

Ključne reči: Romi, Srpska dnevna štampa