

## CHAPTER 11

# Finland

## 11.1 Naming

### Wälttäkäämme nimeä ‘mustalainen’

Kiertolaisen tarkoitus on mikäli mahdollista wälttää niemeä ‘mustalainen!’. “Se koskee kuin pintolla leikattaisiin, kun kuulle mainittavam nimeä ‘mustalainen’”. Wälttäkäämme siis tuota wihattua nimeä!

Wälttäkäämme sen sijaan nimeä romani (huom! Ei romaani). Romanit nimittävät itseensä tällä nimellä. Tätä nimeä woimme kääntää sitä paremmin, kun se on niin ikiwanhakin ka on merkitysjelkaan niin kaunis. Se johtun Sanskriitti-sanasta Dom, romani sansasta rom, f.o. imies, ihminen. Lähetyksemme nimi ‘Mustalaislähetys’ täytyy kuitenkin eri syistä jäädä entiselleen.

Paitse nimeä ‘romani’ woimme myöskin kääntää nimeä ‘kaalo’ (musta, mustalainen). ‘Romanit’ on se puhdas, tahraamaton ja isiltä peritty isivanha nimi, mutta ‘kaalo’ (moniko ‘kaale’, kaaleita) on se tahratty, saatu ja romanien olemustilaa kuwaawa nimi. Se wastaa nimeä ‘mustalainen’, ainoastaan silla eroistuttella, että kaalo nimen tunteminen ei koske kipeää romaneitä, kun mustalaisnimi sen sijaan koskee. Kun tahdomme saada sanaa ‘mustalainen’ wastaawan nimityksen romaneille, täyttätäämme sitten ‘kaalo’, muuten ‘romanit’.

Esimerkiksi laulukjä: “Mustalaiseks olen syntynyt” romanikiellellä ei ole käytetty romani nimeä, waan ‘kaalo’. Se ei ole mitään walitettava asia romaniksi, sittä hän wäin wastoin on ylpeä, mutta sitä hän suree ja walittaa, että hän syntyi ‘mustalaiseksi’, ‘kaaloks’.

Toimitus aitoo Kiertolaisesta soittaa erritään huolellisesti käyttää nimiä ‘romanit’ ja ‘kaalo’.

O[skari] J[alkio]

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Let us avoid the word ‘Mustalainen’ (Gypsy)

Kiertolainen’s [1] aim is to avoid the name ‘Mustalainen’ (Gypsy) [2] as far as it is possible. Roma people often say: “It hurts like cutting with a knife when you hear the name *Mustalainen*” [3]. So, let us avoid that hated name.

Let us use instead the name Romani (not romaani) [4]. Roma themselves use that name. We can use this name because it is very old and its meaning is so beautiful. Its

origin is in the Sanskrit language 'dom' and in the Romani language, the word 'rom' means a man. We must still keep the name of our organisation 'Mustalaislähetys' [5], for various reasons.

Besides the name 'Romani' we can also use the name 'Kaalo' (Black, Mustalainen) [6]. 'Romani' is the clean, unstained name inherited from forefathers and is an ancient name, but 'Kaalo' (pl. Kaale, Kaaleita) is the stained name, which describes the appearance or state of being of Roma people. It means the same as 'Mustalainen', but the difference is that hearing the word 'Kaalo' does not hurt Roma as much as hearing the word 'Mustalainen'. So, if we want to find a corresponding name for 'Mustalainen', let us use the word 'Kaalo', otherwise let us use the word 'Romani'. For instance, the song "I was born to be *Mustalainen*" was translated into Romani language 'Kaalo'. In it, it is not a shame to be born Romani, on the contrary one is proud of it, but one complains and is ashamed that they were born to be 'Mustalainen', 'Kaalo'. The editorial of *Kiertolainen* wants to use the names 'Romani' or 'Kaalo' very cautiously.

Oskari Jalkio

### Notes

1. The term 'Kiertolainen' can, in this context, be approximately translated as 'traveller', though there is no identical term in English to fully capture the meaning of the original one. For this reason, the name will be maintained in its original Finnish form in all notes and commentaries. 'Kiertolainen' was also the title used by the Mustalaislähetys (The Gypsy Mission) in Finland for its main journal publication. It was preceded, in 1906, by a Christmas issue of the Mustalaislähetys, called 'Mailman kiertäjä' (World Traveller). Unlike the name of the organisation, which only changed its name in 1990, to Romano Missio, the name of the journal was shifted several times. For example, from 1949, its name changed to 'Vaeltajankansa' (The Wanderer People). Between 1956-1970 its name changed again to Kotitiellä (Home on the Road) and, finally, in 1971 it changed to its current name, 'Romano Boodos' (Roma News).
2. Similar to note above, the word 'Mustalainen' cannot be translated exactly into English, though an approximate translation would be Gypsy. In reality, 'Mustalainen' has more direct phenotypical connotations, as it refers to the colour of the skin: from the word 'musta', which means 'black' in Finnish. As such, a direct translation would be that of 'black-skinned'. For the purpose of maintaining the original terms, however, the word 'Mustalainen' will be maintained and used whenever the sources exemplify it.
3. The author of the article, Oskari Jalkio, did not specify who the quote is attributed to, nor does he make a mention of this in subsequent publications.
4. 'Romaani' would mean 'book novel' in Finnish. Jalkio was merely highlighting the distinction of the two meanings.
5. The reasons for maintaining the term 'Mustalaislähetys' were never specified.
6. Jalkio offered here a translation of the word 'kaalo' from Romani language, meaning 'black' (or 'musta' in Finnish). As such, the two words would mean the same thing, but Jalkio highlights the different meaning the words have for Roma people themselves.

**Source:** O. J. [Oskari Jalkio]. (1907a). Wälttökäämme nimeä "mustalainen". *Kiertolainen*, No. 0, 1907, p. 5.

Prepared for publication by Raluca Bianca Roman.

Translation consultation Liisa Laukkanen.

### Comments

This article was written by Anders Oskari Jalkio (1882-1952, born Storbacka, and also known as Oskari Johnsson) in the first issue of the *Gypsy Mission's* (Mustalaislähetys) newspaper, *Kiertolainen*, in 1907. As source material, it constituted what may be the first written source in what concerns the pleading for the change of name in reference to the community in Finland, from 'Mustalainen', roughly translated as 'Gypsy', to 'Roma'.

Oskari Jalkio, though not a 'Gypsy' himself, was also the founder of Mustalaislähetys (*The Gypsy Mission*). He was born in 1882 in Teerijärvi, on the Eastern coast of Finland. His faith was shaped within the Free Church (Vapaakirkko), an Evangelical Protestant movement in Finland, of which part he was and within which he acted as a pastor and a speaker. In 1900, however, he joined the 'Evangeliset ystävät' (Evangelical Friends), a revivalist movement within the Free Church, founded by Axel Alfred Skutnabb. It was within this movement that Mustalaislähetys also took shape, as Jalkio remained a member of it until its death (Mäkinen, 2014, p. 44; Tervonen, 2012, p. 125; Viita, 1967, p. 25). Besides his role as a pastor, Jalkio was also an active author of books, including a book titled 'Romanenge ñiilja – Romaanilauluja' (Roma Songs), published in 1939 (Jalkio, 1939), and a Finnish-Spanish dictionary, published in 1931, pacifist and promoter of vegetarianism (he even wrote a book in 1925, titled *The Basics of Vegetarianism*).

The 'Gypsy Mission' was founded in 1906 at Jalkio's initiative. The story goes that in 1902, he met a young Roma boy, who came to his house asking for food. Jalkio was, at the time, in preparation for his missionary trip to China and Japan and dismissed the boy in haste. When his plans to travel to China fell through in 1904, as he was not given a passport, Jalkio was reminded of the encounter with the boy, which had been lingering in his mind, and realised that his work need not be conducted in distant lands but could be done in his own country. Thus, it is said, he began his missionary work among the Kaale in Finland (Mäkinen, 2014, pp. 44-46; Tervonen, 2012, pp. 125; Viita, 1967, pp. 28-30).

Mustalaislähetys would become the first and most important organisation of the early 20th century with Roma/Kaale as their central focus. Its mission was both religious and social, with the founding of schools, orphanages, and Romani language courses across the country. For example, the first Roma School was organised in Viipuri (present-day Vyborg, in Russia), between 1905-1907 and had as one of its teacher a Roma woman under the name of Sofia Schwartz; the first Romani language course was organised in Seinäjoki (Central-Western Finland) in 1906 and the first Roma children's home was organised in Sortavala (nowadays in Russia) between 1910-1918.

The work of the 'Gypsy Mission', therefore, seemed to combine a social and a religious dimension, the latter made mostly visible also in the organisation of religious meetings in various parts of the country, with (mainly) non-Kaale preachers (the notable exceptions of Antti Palm and Herman Korpp) and with Kaale mediators connecting the organisation to Kaale across the country. Most of the members of the board and the leaders of the organisation were thus, at the beginning of the 20th century, non-Kaale.

There was one exception to this, the Viipuri branch of the organisation, which, in 1907, had a majority of its local board members Roma. This situation did not last for very long and the Roma membership of this charter gradually diminished over the years, with diminishing resources from the central organisation. Reasons for this shift are unclear, but a potential one may have been the disagreements between the religion-first approach of Jalkio and others, compared with the focus on social needs first and the higher autonomy of decisions asked for by the members of the Viipuri circle (Tervonen, 2012, pp. 128).

Besides its social and religious work, from 1906 the journal also published its own newspaper, *Kiertolainen*, where the article above was also published. Much like the article presented here, most articles in *Kiertolainen* were written by Jalkio, his wife Helmi, and members of the board or the leadership of the organisation. In addition, some recurrent Roma writers also featured on the pages of the newspaper (see below, for articles by Nikkinen, Hagert, and an anonymous 'Roma man'). Some of the key names are Antti Palm, Sofia Schwartz, Mandi Isberg, Karl Fr. Lindström, Herman Korpp, Otto and Ina Palmroth, who collaborated either as writers for *Kiertolainen* or, more broadly, as missionary workers within Mustalaislähetys. Nevertheless, articles by Roma within the pages of *Kiertolainen* were often sparse in between and shorter entries in comparison to the pages-long articles written by Jalkio and others. The other articles featured in *Kiertolainen* included "news" about Gypsies in Finland and other countries (later, especially in relation to the work of evangeliser Gypsy Smith in Britain, or news about Gypsies in Sweden and Norway), life stories of Gypsies (written by themselves or reproduced by Oskar Jalkio, his wife Helmi, or others), poems in both Romani and Finnish (often written and translated by Jalkio himself), small mini-articles by named or anonymised 'Roma girls' (named as *Romani tyttö*) about their life experiences, such as an article written by Mandi Isberg (Kiertolainen, 1913a, pp. 13-14), titled 'One Roma girl's life story', information about the work of Mustalaislähetys and events organised by the Mission, information about the organisation's financial and membership matters.

The article above, published in the first issue of the newspaper, is a reflection of Jalkio's focus on shifting both the narrative and the type of work to be conducted among Roma in the country. His pleading for the change of the name to be used within the pages of *Kiertolainen* is argued to be based on his interactions with Roma and their dislike of the term 'Mustalainen'. Thus far, it has been difficult to locate the background to Jalkio's interest in the name change or the first time he had discovered the term Roma as an alternative. While 'Romani' does appear in earlier Roma poems as used in reference to language, a self-appellation of Finnish Roma as 'Roma' was not evident prior to 1907. Instead, the term 'Kaale', which Jalkio also acknowledges, was the most common form of self-referencing in materials prior to 1907. Later poems and articles, including articles written by Roma authors in *Kiertolainen* (see below), would continue to use the term 'Roma' as the most common reference for themselves, alongside the terms 'Kaale' and, more rarely, 'Mustalainen' (the latter found mainly in songs and poems or in reference

to ‘Mustalaislähetys’). As far as we know thus far, this article may thus be a first moment of shift in the written usage of the term ‘Roma’ as a demanded alternative for the term ‘Mustalainen’. The term Roma was also used by what was possibly the first Roma-led civic organisation in the country, founded in 1917 when, after the February Revolution in the former Russian Empire, nation-building processes among numerous nations rapidly developed. This was the Suomen Romanien Sivistysseura (Finnish Roma Civilisation Society) (Työmies 1917a, p. 5; Työmies 1917b, p.9; Työmies 1917c, p.6). According to Risto Blomster, who has conducted the archival research on this matter, its chairman was Ida Blomerus (also known as I. Cingardy-Ora and I. Cingardy-Ora Blomerus), a Kaale woman, and the society had its own board of trustees, twenty members, as well as its written rules (Risto Blomster, personal communication, 27.11.2020; Blomster and Roman, 2021b). While little more is known about its official registration, this undoubtedly constitutes an important moment in the process of Roma emancipation in the country.

Raluca Bianca Roman

## 11.2 To the Roma Young People

### Romaninuorisolle

Suokaa anteeksi että uskallan esittää mielipiteeni siitä, miten voisimme kohottaa tuu sivistyskansojen tasolle!

En tiedä, mistä syystä esi-isämme ovat joutuneet kylänkujia kulkemaan. Meidän päiviemme romanit ovat vanhemmiltaan saaneet kiertelemisen perinnökseen. Yleensä romanit ovat sitkeitä isänperinnön säilyttäjiä. Hyvät isänperinnön säilyttäjät! Tämä kuulu ihanalta. Meihin nähden isänperinnön säilyttämistä ei voida ihannella. Sillä isämme ovat jättäneet perinnöksemme maantien ja paljon huonoja taipumuksia. Sen lisäksi on saamassamme perinössä hyvääkin, esimerkiksi oma kieli ja kansallisuus. Jos säilytämme vanhempiemme elintavat, jäävät varmasti jälkeläisemme samanlaiseen kurjuuteen kuin mekin, nimittäin toisten kansojen irvikuviksi ja halveksittaviksi. Isiemme sekä omiemme pahain tapaimme tähden olemme joutuneet toisten kansojen silmissä kovin halveksituiksi. Suuri taakka on harteillamme toisten kansojen kirous.

Kirouksemme postamiseksi täytyy meidän tuhlata niin sanottu isiemme perintö, täytyy jättää kiertolaisuus, alinomainen ihmisten pettäminen hevosvaihdoissa, povaimisessa, y.m.s. Pyytäkäämme Jumalain voimaa, että voisimme jättää paheemme ja omaksua hyviä tapoja. Kiertelemisemme vaihtakaamme paikallan olemiseen, kerjuun ruumiilliseen työhön, pettämisen rehellisyyteen! Taikauskon jättäkäämme tyyten pois ja uskokaamme Jumalaan! Kun uskomme Jumalaan, niin voitamme kaikki, mikä hyvää on. Jokainen ehken huomaamme, että olemme monta rappua alempana niistä kansoista, joiden keskuudessa kiertelemme. Olemme vähemmän kehittyneet aineellisen, henkisen, sekä hengellisen elämän puolelta. Vanhat romanit sanovat: ”Kuka hullu rupeaa raakaa ruumiillista työtä tekemään noitten talonpikien tavalla! En minä ainakaan sitä

tee.” Sanokaamme niille heimolaisillemme, jotka työtä halveksivat: ”Mistä olemme saaneet sen etuoikeuden, että toisten täytyy elättää meitä? Hyi sentään! On häpeä terveiden ihmisten keujuulla henkeänsä elättää, pukea itsensä kamalan aistittomaan pukuun, joka herättää ihmisissä inhoa, ei vähääkään säälin tunnetta mokomiakin kummituksia kohtaan. Usein kuulee romaneitten huokaavan: Olis se sitten hyvä olla maailmassa, jos nuo gaajeet eivät tuntisi mustalaiseksi.” On aivan turhaa huokailla. Siinä pettyvät ainakin ne, joilla on erikoisemmat vaatteet ja elintavat kuin muilla ihmisillä. Enemmistö romaninai-sista ruukkaa röjyjä, joka on samaa mallia maalaisten rusauman hatun kanssa. Hame on kovin tilava että siihen sopisi vaimo kokonaisine perheineen. Kangas on ehkem samaa, jota espanjalaiset käyttävät härkiä ärsyttäessään, kun tahtovat niitä huvitaisteluun. Eikös olisi hausempi itsemmekin katsella itseämme, kun olisimme nykyajan aistikkaseen pukuun puuet.\*

Meistä riippuu oma sekä jälkeläistemme onni. Älkäämme tuhlatko aikaa turhuuteen! Matkoillani kuulen ihmisten sanovan: ”Romaneita on koetettu taivuttaa Jumalan tuntemiseen, mutta he ovat välinpitämättömiä.” Muutamat sanovat tarjonneensa koulusivistystä omilla kustannuksillaan romaneille, mutta sekin on hyljätty. Onpa se ikävä asia, että niin ymmärtämättömiä ovat muutamat olleet. Meille jos joku sanoisi: ”Saat käydä koulua minun kustannuksellani”, ottaisimme kai jokainen ilomielin trjouksen vastaan. Oi, jos Jumala johdattaisi minulle jonkun tarjoomaan niin suurta maallista onnea, että saisin käydä koulua, ottaisın kiitollisin sydämin vastaan niin hyvään tarjouksen.

Me, jotka muodostamme romaninuorison, katsokaamme elämää suuremmilla toiveilla! Älkämme tyytykö paljaaseen olemiseen ja siihen kurjuuteen, joka keskuudessamme vallitsee! Ryhtykäämme yksissä miehin pyrkimään maailmassa parempi-  
osaisiksi! Heitäkäämme kaikki se, joka sitoo meidät tuohon kurjuuteen! Kodittomuus on suurin elämän kirous, mikä maan päällä on olemassa. Koti pienikin voi tarjota suojaa maailman myrskylviltä. Minkähän eteen oikein eläneekin sellainen ihminen, joka itse maailmassa kiertää paikasta toiseen, tietämättä missä illalla yösjän saa. Kiertolaisperhe ei tunne ihannuutta, mikä vallitsee hyvän eteen työskentelevän ihmisen sydämessä.

Romanimme eivät pidä huolta huomispäivän toimeentulosta. He eivät kasvata lapsiaan nykyajan siveyteen,\*\* eivät siis tunne velvollisuuttaan lapsiaankaan kohtaan. Käsitteeni mukaan sellaiset ihmiset, jotka eivät itse työskentele olemassaolonsa eteen, joutaisivat itsekın maailmasta pois. Älkäämme toki nuorina, ryhdikkäinä romanipo-  
kina ja tyttöinä tyykykö entisyyteemme! Pyrkikäämme siihen, että meillä jokaisella olisi kaikki kansallisoikeudet ja oma koti. Taistelu on elämää. Ihmiselämä on aivan kuollutta, jos siinä ei ole mitään pyrintää.

Taistelekaamme! Taistelekaamme niin, että saamme vastusajaimmekin tunnustuksen. Pyytäkäämme Jumalaa johtajaksemme! Hänen kauttaan saavutamme hyvän päämäärän.

Heimolaisenne Ferdinand Nikkinen

\*. Olemme toista mieltä kirjoittajan kanssa, mitä romanien pukuun ja väreihin tulee. Ne muodostavat hauskan vaihtelun jäykässä muodikkuudessamme. Ei ole ollenkaan syytä ruveta erikoisemmin seuraamaan aikamme luonnotonta muotihulluutta.

\*\**. Nykyajan siveys on mielestämme paljon huonompi vielä, kuin romanien onkaan. Siitä emme siis puolestamme kehoita romaninuorisoa ihailemaan. Seuratkaamme Kristuksen siveyttä!*

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### To the Young Roma [1] People

Forgive me, that I dare to tell my opinion of how we could rise to the level of the civilized people [2].

I do not know why our forefathers had to wander along the village roads. Roma of our time have inherited wandering from their parents. In general, Roma are persistent to keep their traditions. Good followers of traditions! It sounds lovely, but we should not admire these traditions, because our fathers have left many bad traditions to us. There are, naturally, also many good things – for instance, our own language and nationality. If we retain our parents' modes of life, our children will suffer from a similar misery and be despised by other people. Because of our bad habits, other nations despise us. This curse is a big burden on our shoulders.

To remove this curse, we must leave aside our forefathers' inheritance – give up wandering, deceiving people in the selling of horses and in future-telling also. Let us ask for God's power that we could leave our bad habits and learn good habits instead. We ought to leave wandering and live in one place. We ought to leave begging and start to work, to leave deceiving and to be honest. We ought to leave superstition and believe in God. As we believe in God, we'll win everything good.

We all know that we are many steps lower than those nations among which we live and wander. We are less advanced in a material, intellectual and spiritual meaning. Old Roma say: "Who is so foolish that does hard manual labour like those country men [3]?" Let us say to those Roma who despise work: "From where have we got such privilege that other people must support our living?" Ugh! It is a shame that young people earn their living by begging and dress senseless. Other people despise those dresses and do not feel compassion for such people. You often hear Roma sighing: "It would be nice to be in the world, if *gadžo* would not recognise that you are a Gypsy." Your sigh is in vain. You betray yourself, at least you, who has different clothes and different habits from others. Most of the Roma women wear a blouse [4], which is like rye pole in countryside. The skirt is so large that you could hide the whole family under it. The cloth is of same material as the Spanish use to irritate bulls. Would it not be nicer to look at ourselves in more modern and tasteful clothes? \*

Our and our children's happiness depends on us. Let us not waste our time with vanity. I have heard people say: "We have tried to teach Roma to know God but they do not care." Let us take Jesus to our hearts. He also gives us civilization. I have heard that many Roma children have forsaken a good offer. People have promised to pay their education, but they have refused. If somebody offered this possibility to us, we would have accepted it with joy.

We, who are a part of Roma youth, let us look at life with greater hopes. Let us not be content with misery. Let us strive for a better life. Let us throw away that which bind us to misery. Homelessness is the greatest curse in the world. A home – even a small one, can protect us from the storms of the world. For what lives a person, who does not know, where to sleep the following night? A wanderer does not know how lovely it is to work for a good life.

The Roma do not care for livelihood. They do not educate their children to be chaste\*\* in the modern way. They do not know their duty to educate their children. In my opinion, people who do not work to earn their existence could go away from the world. As young straight Roma boys and girls let us not be satisfied with our past. Let us seek that we all would have the same national rights and our own home. The fight is life. Life is dead without goals. Let us fight that also our opponents witness it. Let us ask God to be our leader. Through Him we'll get a good goal.

Tribesman [5] Ferdinand Nikkinen

\*. Editor says: We disagree as to dresses and colours. They are nice variation in our stiff fashion. It is not necessary to follow the fashion madness of our time [6].

\*\* The morality nowadays is worse than that of Roma people. We do not advise Roma youth to admire it. Let us follow Christ's morality [7].

### *Notes*

1. Connecting this source with the previous one, it is noteworthy that Nikkinen uses the term 'Roma' rather than 'Mustalainen' or 'Kaale' in this article.
2. 'Civilised' is the direct translation from the Finnish word used by Nikkinen.
3. 'Talonpoika' was an often-used term to refer to peasants folk.
4. 'Röijy' is a unique term used to refer to the types of blouses worn by Roma women. It is still used nowadays.
5. From the term 'heimo', which means 'tribe' in Finnish. It is term often used by Roma to refer to one's 'own people'. See also a similar discussion concerning the use of the word 'tribe' when referring to 'one's people' in the Chapter 3.
6. It is noteworthy that the editors of *Kiertolainen* appear to openly disagree with some of Nikkinen's ideas. This would later become more evident in the subsequent events that would make Nikkinen an adamant critic of Mustalaislähetys, especially in the post-Second World War context.
7. Ibid.

**Source:** Nikkinen, F. (1913b). Romaninuorisolle. *Kiertolainen*, No. 7-9, 1913, p. 15.

Prepared for publication by Raluca Bianca Roman.

Translation consultation Liisa Laukkanen.

### *Comments*

This article, published in a 1913 issue of *Kiertolainen*, is one of the few ones written by Ferdinand Nikkinen during his connection to Mustalaislähetys. The article highlights several issues which, on the one hand, emphasise Nikkinen's position with respect to the topics of 'wandering' and Roma 'traditions' and, on the other hand, pinpoint to the



later topics of disagreement between Nikkinen and the leadership of Mustalaislähetys. In order to understand these issues, a short background on Ferdinand Nikkinen would be needed.

Ferdinand Nikkinen was born in 1894 in Heinävesi, to a relatively well-off Roma family. He was one of seven children. His family, unlike most Roma families at the time, did not travel and owned their own farm, most likely accumulated through Nikkinen's grandparents and parents' participation in the military service (Rekola, 2010a). Again, unlike other Roma children, Nikkinen also attended elementary school for four years, where his musical talent was allegedly discovered, and he continued his education by attending the Helsinki Musical College between 1915-1921. He made most of his living from his music and performed with various artists from the country (Ibid.).

When the Mustalaislähetys was founded, Nikkinen often joined in the mission's events, as a musical performer, as supporter and collaborator, but became a vehement critic of the organisation in the post-war context. The article above is one of the clearest evidences of his ideas and perspectives in what concerned matters of Roma social work in the country. In it, he addresses Roma youth (he was himself 19 years old at the time) and pleads for the sedentarisation (or the seizing of a wandering lifestyle) of the Roma in the country, the increased attention paid to education and the abandonment of some Roma traditions which he found an impediment for social integration (such as the clothing of the women, the telling of fortunes, etc.). The article, as such, fits within the mission statements of the Mustalaislähetys, which also promoted issues of sedentarisation and education of Roma youth. Nevertheless, as evident especially from the editor's notes to Nikkinen's article, there were some clear contradictions between Nikkinen and the Mustalaislähetys leadership visions for the social work conducted among Roma in the country. This is especially made manifest in the ways in which Nikkinen criticised the Roma women's traditional dress (whereas the editors praise it) and his invitation for Roma youth to align themselves with the majority morality of the time (whereas the editors emphasise the dangers of that 'morality' and invite the readers to fit their actions with the 'Christian morality' instead). These are interesting and revelatory diverging points between Nikkinen's vision and that of the Mustalaislähetys, which would become more prominent in the post-war context.

As such, after the Second World War, Nikkinen not only detached himself from Mustalaislähetys' activities but became a vehement critic of the latter and an ardent atheist. It is unclear when and how the change occurred, but it appears to have been crucial in Nikkinen's later actions. For example, in 1946, he wrote a letter to the Ministry of the Interior, in which he collected the signatures of 364 other Roma men, and in which he was criticising the Mustalaislähetys and highlighting that Roma should be more actively involved in the shaping of Gypsy policy in the country (Pulma, 2006, p. 166; Friman-Korpela, 2014). While the letter did not lead to any actions from the recipients, Nikkinen continued his efforts for a civic Roma movement and, in 1953, founded the first non-religious Roma organisation in the country, Romanengo Staggos (Romani Liitto/Roma Association). While this organisation's life was short-lived, it nevertheless led to

the foundation of the Finnish Gypsy Society (Suomen Mustalaisyhdistys) in 1967, which, under the present-name of Finnish Roma Society (Suomen Romani Yhdistys) continues to be one of the leading Roma organisations in the country, paralleling its activities to those of Romano Missio (the current name of the former Mustalaislähetys, with a present-day Roma leadership of its board).

As such, the above article is an important source material in connection to the processes of civic emancipation of Roma in Finland (both inter- and post-war), highlighting not only specific issues targeted by Mustalaislähetys (such as the housing of Gypsies and their education) but also the diverging points between the Mission and Nikkinen, who would become a key influence in the founding of some of the main non-religious Roma-led organisations in Finland: Romanengo Staggos and, later, Suomen Mustalaisyhdistys (see more Stenroos, 2019).

Finally, it is worth mentioning that in the same issue of *Kiertolainen* (1913), two other Roma-authored articles appeared. The first one worth mentioning is an article titled 'Roma girl's thoughts' (Kiertolainen, 1913a, pp. 13-14), authored by Mandi Isberg, who had also published previous life stories or experiences from her life as a Roma girl. A second one is an article titled 'My life story', authored by Karl Fr. Lindström and written at the request of the editors. In it, Lindström, a Roma man who often worked in close cooperation with Mustalaislähetys at the beginning of the 20th century talks about his experience of finding God in the late 1900s (Kiertolainen, 1913c, pp. 6-8).

### 11.3 The Gypsy Mission

#### 11.3.1 *For the Roma Tribe*

##### Romaniheimon puolesta

Mustalaislähetys on vaikeampia tehtäviä, mitä voi kuvitella. Nimikirsittyjen keskuudessa eläesään näkee romani joka päivä kuollutta uskoa. Häneen juurtuu se käsitys, ettei uskonosta ole mitään hyvää. Kuitenkin on rakastava Vapahtaja kunastunut romanitkin, vaikka heille on rakkautta tositeossa osoitettu hyvin vähän.

Mustalaislähetystyötä on tehty maassamme vasta 23 vuotena. Ei ole nähty siitä niin suuria tuloksia kuin olisi toivottu. Vaikka eihän sitä voi suuria odottaakaan näin lyhyessä ajassa, kun otta huomioon työmaan vaikeuden ja työn pienuuden. Mustalaislähetys on tullut rakkaaksi vain muutamille henkilöille. Soisin voivani valaista sitä työtä oikealla tavalla.

Tämän kirjoittaja kuulu siihen heimoon, vaikkakaan ei elä siihen tapaan, kuin yleensä elävät siihen heimoon kuuluvat. Olen jo kolmannessa polvessa niitä, jotka eivät ole paljon kiertäneet. Isäni vanhemmat olivat talollisia ja isäni on vain vähän kiertänyt. Meidät on kasvatettu eri tavalla kuin toiset romanilapset. Kahdentoista vanhana jouduin Valkonauhan lastenkotiin. Äiti-vainaja kertoi saisastaneensa niin kovaa nivelreumatisia, ettei voinut jäseniään liikuttaa. Olin silloin vain vuoden ikäinen. Äiti ei saanut minua

muuten luoksensa, kuin hampaillaan vetämällä mekon helmasta, hänen maatessaan lattialla. Silloin hänelle sanottiin eräänä yönä: ”Jos viskaat kortit tuleen, niin paranet.” Äiti nimittäin povasi siihen asti. Varmaan äitini sai voimia ylhäältä, koskapa hän seuraavana aamuna heitti korttinsa tuleen. Sen jälkeen hän parani ja eli vielä 8 vuotta. – Soisin, että jokaisen mustalaisnainen samoin heittäisi povaamisen pois, eikä tahallan valehtelisi muille ihmisille. Sillä onhan suuri syntyy valehdella. Pyydän myös ettei kenkään, joka tämän lukee antaisi povata itsellensä. Auttakaa heitä ennemmin muulla tavalla.

Jeesus käski saarnata evankeliumia ensin Jerusalemissa, sitten Juudeassa, Samariassa ja aina maailman ääriin. Tätä työtä tehdessä on unohdettu lähellä olevat pajanat. Jo on aika herätä korjaamaan tätä laiminlyöntiä. Eikä mustalainen ole niin jäykkä omassa epäuskosaan kuin yleensä luullaan, jos vaan tosisteossa osoitetaan häntä kohtaan rakkautta.

Toivoisin, että romanilähetystyö nousisi entistä virkeämpään toimintaan. Ei pidä masentua, jos on nähty vähän hedelmää. Kauanhan kesti Nooakin arkin rakentaminen. Jos alettaisiin ottaa romanien lapsia kasvatettavaksi, niin tulos olisi suurempi kuin ennen. Nouskaamme yhdessä tähän työhön! Ja jollet muuta voi, niin rukoile tämän heimon puolesta. Jumala on sen kuuleva.

Maria Hagert

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### For the Roma Tribe

Gypsy Mission [1] is one of the most difficult tasks than you can imagine. Among Roma, who call themselves Christian, you can see “dead faith” every day. They feel that there is nothing good in religion. However, the loving Saviour has redeemed also Roma, though they have not really got much love.

Mustalaislähetys' [2] work has been done for only 23 years. We have not seen as great results as we had wished for. You cannot expect great results during such a short time, taking into account the difficulties of the work and the small resources available. Gypsy mission has become loved only by a few people. I hope I could open this work in the right way.

The writer of this article belongs to the same tribe though does not live like the people of that tribe. I am one from the third generation who has not been wandering. We have been raised in different way as Roma children. At twelve years old I was put into the Children's Home of Valkonauhaliitto [3]. My late mother said that she was so ill (joint rheumatism) that she could not move her body. I was only one year old. She could not get me to come to her in any other way than by drawing with her teeth from my dress while lying on the floor. Then someone said to her one night: “If you throw your playing cards into the fire and stop telling the future, you will be healed.” I think my mother got powers from up above, because next morning she threw her cards into fire. And she became well and lived 8 years more. I pray that every Roma woman would stop reading the future and

stop lying, because it is a great sin to lie. And I also ask you, the reader, that you do not let the Roma women tell your future. You can help them in some other way.

Jesus ordered to preach the gospel first in Jerusalem and then in Judea, Samaria and to the end of the world. Doing this we have forgotten the pagans near us [4]. It is time to wake up and repair the situation. And the “Mustalainen” [5] is not so stiff in his unfaithfulness as one may generally think, if you show love to him.

I hope that Roma mission work [6] would become livelier. You ought not to be depressed if you see little fruit. It also took a long time for Noah to build the ark. If you could take Roma children to take care of them, you could see better results [7]. Let’s do this work together. If you cannot do anything else, pray for this work. God will hear it.

Maria Hagert

### Notes

1. The term ‘Mustalaislähetys’, in this context, could mean both the name of the organisation and the actual “Gypsy mission” done by the organisation. The author may have intended it to reflect this double meaning.
2. Here, the term ‘Mustalaislähetystyö’, refers specifically to the name of the organisation, which is why the original term was maintained in the translation.
3. The name of another Christian organisation, translated as the Finnish White Ribbon Union. It is a women’s Christian organisation, founded in 1905, with its main focus being the support of families in need or those whose members suffer from substance abuse. The organisation continues its activities until present-day.
4. The direct translation from Finnish is ‘pagans’.
5. Here, the author uses specifically the term ‘Mustalainen’ to highlight the distinction. In all other cases, the word Roma appears to be used, with the exception being the reference to the Gypsy Mission (Mustalaislähetys), as an organisation.
6. Unlike in previous mentions, here the term ‘Romanilahetystyö’ is used instead of ‘Mustalaislähetystyö’. It is unclear if the terms are used interchangeably or if the final sentences are an intentional point that the author is trying to make through it.
7. The issue of taking away and raising Roma children by non-Roma families would become one of the most contentious and controversial aspects of the Mustalaislähetys in the post-war context.

Source: Hagert, M. (1929). Romaniheimon puolesta. *Kiertolainen*, No. 1, 1929, p. 8.

Prepared for publication by Raluca Bianca Roman.

Translation consultation Liisa Laukkanen.

### Comments

The article presented above was written in one of the 1929 issues of *Kiertolainen*, by a Roma woman, with the name Maria Hagert. There is no clear information about the woman’s background, apart from her own presentation as being the third generation of Roma that have become settled.

Though general in content, the article is relevant as source material on several accounts. Firstly, it is one of the several articles written by Roma women in the pages of *Kiertolainen*. Other known female Roma authors were Mandi Isberg (see previous comments) and Sofia Schwartz. The latter was also a prominent female figure within Mustalaislähetys, and a unique case as the first Roma female teacher of the first Roma

school in the Karelian city of Vyborg (Rekola, 2010b). She wrote several letters and mini entries in the 1907 issues of *Kiertolainen*. One particularly interesting example of this is the one in which she recounts her 1906 travels to Ingria (in Saint Petersburg Governorate), and in which she embarks on a comparison between Roma in Finland to Ingrian Roma (Kiertolainen, 1907b, pp. 6-7). Alongside these female authors, were also multiple anonymised poems written by a 'Roma girl' (presented simply as Romanityttö) but which could also potentially be attributed to Mandi Isberg.

In that respect, the article above shows the involvement of both Roma men and Roma women in at least some of the activities of the Mustalaislähetys and their apparent agreement with some of the aims of the organisation (such as the issue of settlement of Roma, of children's education, etc.). Secondly, and connected to the latter point, the article is interesting given in its address to both Roma and non-Roma readers, and in which the focus is clearly paid to the issue of the religious and general education of Roma children, the abandonment of some traditional practices (such as fortune-telling by women) and the highlighting of the pitfalls and limitations of wandering. Through this, the article partly resembles that written by Ferdinand Nikkinen more than a decade earlier (see above), while also emphasises the partial agreement and involvement of some Roma members within the activities of the Mustalaislähetys at the time.

Raluca Bianca Roman

### 11.3.2 *The Gypsy Mission's Rules*

Mustalaislähetysen r.y. säännät

1. Mustalailähetys r.y. on koko Suomen maata käsittävä yhdistys, jonka kotipaikka on Helsingin kaupunki.

2. Yhdistyksen tarkoitus on kristillisellä pohjalla toimia Suomen mustalaisen eli romanien henkisen ja aineellisen tilan parantamiseksi.

3. Tarkoituksensa saavuttamiseksi harjoittaa yhdistys yleistä lähetystoimintaa, toimeenotteen kokouksia ja lähetysiltamia myyjäisineen, julkaisee kirjallisuutta ja kirjallisuutta ja aikakauslehtiä, perustaa kouluja, lähetys- ja työkoteja ynnä kasvatuslaitoksia, hankkii työ, asuin- ja viljelyspaikkoja sekä avustaa kykynsä mukaan kaikin puolin jokaista hyödylliseksi ja toimeliaaksi kansalaiseksi pyrkivöä romania.

4. Jäseneksi pääsee jokainen nämä säännöt hyväksyvä Suomen kansalainen ilmoittautumalla ja suorittamalla jäsenmaksunaan vähintään viisi (5) Smk. Vuosittain tai kaksisataa (200) Smk. kerta kaikkiaan rahastonhoitajalle, jollekin johtokunnan jäsenelle tai muuten siihen valtuutetulle henkilölle. Erilään asuivilta jäseniltään on lähetys oikeutettu jäsenen kustannuksella, ellei jäsenyys jommaltakummalta puolelta ole irtisanottu edellisen kalenterivuoden kuluessa. Kuitti kuluvan vuoden jäsenmaksun suorituksesta on yhtä pätevä jäsenyyden todistus kuin jäsenkorttikin.

5. Eroava jäsen menettää yhdistykselle suorittamansa jäsenmaksut.

6. Yhdistyksen toimintaa sen hallituksessa johtaa yhdeksän (9) henkinen johtokunta, jonka puheenjohtaja, sihteeri ja rahastonhoitaja muodostavat n.k. toimikunnan, joka

päättää yhdistyksen juoksevista asioistam kuten koetoimijoiden valinnasta, raha-asiain ja kustannusliikkeen hoidosta, toimeenpanee, johtokunnan ja vuosikokouksen päätökset sekä huolehtii rekisteröimis- ja jäsenluettelo y.m. yhdistyslaissa määrätyistä tehtävistä.

7. Johtokunta, joka keskuudestaan valitsee puheenjohtajan ja varapuheenjohtajan, valvoo toimikunnan toimintaa, erottaa yhdistyksen periaatteista luopuneet tahi muuten siveellisesti moitteelliset jäsenet, jotka kuitenkin voivat vedota vuosikokouksen ratkaisuun, suunnittelee yhdistyksen toimintaa, varojen hankintaa, sekä päättää suurempia aineellisia uhrauksia kysyvistä toimenpiteistä ja hyväksyy lopullisesti lähetyksen vakinaiset toimihenkilöt.

Vakinaiset johtokunnan kokouset pidetään aina joka helmikuun kuluessa ja ylimääräisiä kokouksia, milloin toimikunta tai neljä muuta johtokunnan jäsentä sitä vaatii. Johtokunta kutsutaan kokoon kutsukorteilla ja on pääsösvaltainen, kun viisi jäsentä on saapuvilla.

8. Ensimmäinen johtokunta muodostetaan siten, että puheenjohtaja ja kaksi jäsentä valitaan vuodeksi, sihteeri ynnä kaksi jäsentä kahdeksi vuodeksi ja rahastonhoitaja sekä kaksi jäsentä kolmeksi vuodeksi. Näiden tultua erovuoroon, valitaan aina kolme jäsentä kolmeksi vuodeksi. Erovuorossa olevat voidaan valita uudelleen.

9. Rahastonhoitaja ja sihteeri jättävät päättäneen kalenterivuoden tilit viimeistään tammikuun 15 päivään mennessä tilintarkastajille, jotka kahden vikon kuluessa toimittavat tarkastuksen ja antavat lausuntonsa puheenjohtajalle.

10. Yhdistyksen ilmoitukset jäsenille julistetaan joko yhdistyksen omien julkaisuijen kautta tahi sanomalehdissä tahi kirjeellisesti.

11. Vuosikokous, jonka toimikunta kokoonkutsuu, pidetään pääsiäisen aikana Helsingissä, ellei edellinen vuosikokous nimenomaan ole toisin päättänyt.

12. Vuosikokouksessa:

- a) Esitetään johtokunnan vuosikertomus ja päätetään siitä;
- b) Luetaan tilintarkastajain lausunto ja päätetään tilivapauden myöntämisestä toimi- ja johtokunnalle;
- c) Valitaan kolme johtokunnan jäsentä kolmeksi vuodeksi erovuorossa olevien sijaan ja kolme varajäsentä vuodeksi;
- d) Valitaan kaksi tilintarkastakaa ja pöytäkirjantarkastajaa varamiehinnein;
- e) Päätetään johtokunnan esittämistä asioista; sekö;
- f) Käsitellään muita kokoukselle mahdollisesti esitettyjä asioita, jotka vähintään kaksi kuukautta ennen vuosikokousta johtokunnalle kirjallisesti on ilmoitettu.

13. Asiat ratkaistaan kaikissa yhdistyksen kokouksissa yksinkertaisella äänten enemmistöllä, enemmistön vaatiessa sitä suljetuin lipuin. Jokainen jäsenmaksunsa suorittanut jäsen on äänioikeutettu. Päätökseksi jää enemmistön kannattama mielipide, mutta äänten tasan mentyä jää asia ratkaisematta.

14. Ratkaisemattomaksi jäänyt asia voidaan ottaa uudestaan keskustelu- ja äänestyskennalaiseksi. Ellei se tässä tapauksessa saavuta enemmistön kannatusta, jääköön asia lepäämään seuraavaan kokoukseen tai rauetkoon.

15. Yhdistyksen nimen kirjoittavat puheenjohtaja ja sihteeri. Mustalaislähetyksen Keskustoimiston nimen kirjoittaa sihteeri tai joku sihteerin valtuuttama henkilö.

16. Mustalaislähetysten Keskustoimisto, joka on sihteerin valvonnan alaisena, huolehti kustannusliikkeestä, lähetysten kirjeenvaihdosta, jäsenmaksujen y.m. saatavien perimisestä ja yleensä yhdistyksen liikeyrityksistä.

17. Yhdistyksen jäsenillä on eri paikoilla maata oikeus liittyä paikallisosastoiksi omine johtokuntineen, huolehtiakseen paikkakuntansa romaneista ja edistääkseen yleensä Mustalaisyhdistyksen toimintaa. Jäsenmaksut lankeavat keskusrahastoon, mutta osasto voi paikallistoimintansa edistämiseksi vuosikokouksensa päätösten mukaan jäsenilään kantaa erikoisen paikallisjäsenmaksun sekä muutenkin laissa hyväksytyin keinoin toimia varojen hankkimiseksi. Paikallisosasto toimii yhdistyksen keskusjohtokunnan alaisena, jolle se myös on tilivelvollinen.

18. Paikallisosasto pitää vuosikokouksensa lippiaisena tai viimeistään tammikuun 20 päivänä, kolloin luetaan vuosikertomus ja tilintarkastajain lausunto, sekä päätetään tilivapaudesta y.m., josta oikeaksi todistettu pöytäkirjanote ja tilisupiste lähetetään keskus-toimistolle helmikuun 1 päivään mennessä.

19. Mustalaislähetys on oikeutettu lain sallimin keinoin hankkimaan varoja sekä vastaanottamaan lahjoja ja jälkisäädöksiä toimintansa edistämiseksi.

20. Tarkoitusta varten julkisesti johtokunnan kokoonkutsutaan jäsenkokous tai vuosikokous voi muuttaa nämä säännöt tai lopettaa yhdistyksen toiminnan sekä päättää jäljellä olevista varoista 2:ssa mainittujen tarkoitusten hyväksi, jos kaksikolmattaosaa (2/3) osanottajista sitä puoltaa ja seuraava vähintään puolen vuoden kuluttua samalla tavalla kokoonkutsuttu jäsenkokous kahden kolmaosan (2/3) enemmistöllä sen vahvistaa.

Ylläolevat säännöt hyväksyttiin Mustalaislähetys-nimisen yhdistyksen perustavassa kokouksessa, Helsingissä joulukuun 5 p:nä 1920 ja Sosialihallituksen toimesta kuulutettiin rekisterilehdessä Nö 23, 1921.

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### The Gypsy Mission's Rules

1. Mustalaislähetys r.y. is a nationwide association based in the City of Helsinki.

2. The purpose of the association is to work on a Christian basis to improve the spiritual and material condition of the Gypsies, namely Roma, in Finland.

3. To accomplish its purpose, the association engages in general missionary work, in having meetings and mission evenings with salesmen, publishes literature and literature and magazines, sets up schools, set up schools, dispatch and employment centers and educational establishments, obtain employment, housing and farming places, and assist in every way possible to help every Roma become a useful and active citizen.

4. Any Finnish citizen who accepts these rules can become a member by registering and paying at least five (5) Smk. annually or two hundred (200) Smk., once and for all, to the treasurer, to a member of the board of directors or to any other person authorized to do so. Members who are not resident shall be entitled to post at the expense of the member, unless membership has been terminated on either side during the preceding

calendar year. A receipt for payment of the membership fee for the current year is valid as a membership certificate as a membership card.

5. The resigning member forfeits membership fees to the association.

6. The association is governed by nine (9) spiritual board members, chaired by its chairman, secretary and treasurer, from now on, the Executive Committee, which decides on the day-to-day affairs of the Association, such as the selection of probationers, the management of monetary and expense matters, the Executive Board, the conclusions of the Board and the Annual Meeting; the tasks prescribed by the Association's Act.

7. The board, which elects a chairman and vice-chairman from among its members, oversees the work of the board, dismisses or otherwise blatantly repudiates members of the association, who can nevertheless still appeal to the Annual General Meeting, plan the operation of the association, raise funds, and decide upon measures of greater material sacrifice, and finally approve the permanent members of the mission.

Regular Executive Board meetings are held every February and extraordinary meetings whenever the Board or four other Executive Board members so request. The Board of Directors is convened with invitation cards and is admissible with five members present.

8. The first governing board shall be constituted by the election of a chairman and two members for a year, a secretary plus two for two years and a treasurer and two for three years. Upon their removal, three members shall be elected for a term of three years. Those who resign can be re-elected.

9. The treasurer and the secretary shall, by 15 January at the latest, submit the accounts for the previous calendar year to the auditors, who shall forward the audit to the chairman within two weeks.

10. Notices to members of the association are published either through the association's own publishers or in the newspaper or in writing.

11. The Annual Meeting convened by the commission shall be held in Helsinki during Easter, unless the previous annual meeting has expressly decided otherwise.

12. At the Annual Meeting:

- a) Present and decide on the annual report of the Governing Board;
- b) Read the statement of the auditors and decide whether to grant discharge to the Board of Directors;
- c) Elect three members of the Management Board for a term of three years instead of their term of office and three alternates for one year;
- d) Elect two auditors with their deputies;
- e) Decide on the matters proposed by the Governing Board; and
- f) Address any other matters that may have been submitted to the meeting and reported to the Board in writing at least two months before the annual meeting.

13. Issues are resolved by a simple majority of votes at all meetings of the association, with a closed majority requesting a majority. Each member who has paid his/her contribution is entitled to vote. In the end, the majority opinion remains, but when the votes are equal, the matter remains unresolved.



14. The unresolved issue can be taken up again for debate and vote. If it does not obtain the majority's support in this case either, the matter will be left to the next meeting, or it will fall.

15. In the name of the association will write the chairman and secretary. In the name of the Central Office of the Mustalaislähetys will write the secretary or someone authorized by the secretary.

16. Under the supervision of the secretary, the Central Office of the Mustalaislähetys Central Office takes care of the cost of travel, the correspondence of the mission, the payment of membership fees, etc. debt collection and general business associations.

17. Members of the association have the right in various parts of the country to join local branches with their own boards, to care for the Roma in their area, and to promote the activities of the Mustalaislähetys in general. Membership fees fall into the Central Fund, but in order to promote their local activities, the Department may, in accordance with the decisions of its annual meetings, charge its members a special local membership fee and otherwise take legal action to raise funds. The local branch is subordinate to the general board of the association and is accountable to it.

18. The local department shall hold its annual meeting on or before January 20th, with the annual report and the auditors' opinion being read, and where a decision on the financial year shall be taken, and a certified transcript and account statement shall be sent to the central office by February 1st.

19. Mustalaislähetys is entitled by law to raise funds and receive gifts and bequests to further its activities.

20. In the case the executive board have called the Members' Meeting for this purpose, or in the Annual Meeting, these association rules can be changed, or the association can be wholly terminated, in which case, they will decide also how the remaining funds will be utilized for the purpose mentioned in the article 2 if two thirds (2/3) of the members agreed and if confirmed after at least half a year with the votes of two thirds (2/3).

The above rules were approved at the founding meeting of the Mustalaislähetys, in Helsinki on December 5, 1920, and were announced by the Social Welfare Board in Register No. 23, 1921.

Source: [No Author]. (1927a). Mustalaislähetysten r.y. säännöt. *Kiertolainen*, No. 2, 1927, pp. 23-24. Prepared for publication by Raluca Bianca Roman.

### Comments

The above is a listing of the rules of the Mustalaislähetys (Gypsy Mission), which highlight both the practical and membership matters of the Association.

Though agreed upon in 1920, these rules were published in the 1927 issue of *Kiertolainen*.

This entry constitutes an important source material for three reasons. Firstly, the rules also highlight the organisation's key focus points: education, housing, and employment of

Roma, with the stated aim of making them into ‘useful and active citizens’. This approach appears to have underlined most of the early activities of the Mustalaisalähetys, starting in the early 20th century and continuing into the post-war context. Secondly, there appears to be no membership of Roma mentioned within the rules. The rules clearly state, however, that anybody who pays the membership fees can be a member of the Association. Finally, an interesting point in the rules is the possibility of forming local branches with their own boards, which nevertheless have to be under the leadership of the Central Board. This is relevant here given the unique case of the Viipuri branch of Mustalaisalähetys mentioned above, which, in 1907, appears to have been composed of a majority of Roma members. This was a short-lived distribution, however, and the Central Board appears to have disagreed with some of the ideas developed within the Viipuri circle (Tervonen, 2012, p. 128). Nevertheless, the possibility to form and develop local branches seems to have fostered also the incentive for local, de-centralised Roma leadership actions to take place, even in the context in which the final ‘authority’ lied with the central Executive Board of the Mustalaisalähetys.

It is worth mentioning that, partially mirroring these rules, partially in opposition to them, were the Romanengo Staggos rules from, 1953, set up at the founding of the latter organisation, which was led by Ferdinand Nikkinen, and which was presenting itself as an alternative to the Mustalaisalähetys.

Raluca Bianca Roman

### 11.3.3 *Suggestions*

#### Viiteitä

Tunnettua on, että ihminen vasta sitten, kun hän kehityksen kautta vapautui kahleistaan, oman itsensä orjuudesta, s.o. siirtyi pimeydestä valoon, hän alkoi pyrkiä eteenpäin ja ylöspäin. Kun hän oppi sielullisia kykyjään käyttämään, alkoi hän raivata ja rakentaa ympärisöään, sekä muovailla olosuhteitaan suotuisammiksi, niin että hänen olisi mukavampi ja parempi olla ja elää.

Niinkauan kun ihmisen sisällinen, henkinen puoli ei ole saanut kasvatusta ja kehitystä, kun jumalaiset voimat hänessä vielä uinuvat, kun hän ei ajattele eikä käytä järkeään, niin niinkauan elämä hänelle tuntuu katkeralta ja useinkin se on vain toivotonta taistelua, kurjuudesta kurjuuteen kulkemista, pimeässä haparoimista. Näin on romaniheimokin laita.

Tietääkseni romaniheimon kohtalon korjaaminen Suomessa, johon tarkoitukseen valtiokin on jonkunverran varoja myöntänyt, on tähän saakka ollut pääasiallisesti muutamien asianharrastajien enimäkseen romanien hengellisen elämän herättämiseen. Tämän ohella on tehtyt kyllä yhteiskunnalistakin työtä, mutta voimien ja varojen vähyyden tähden ei niin suuria tuloksia ole saavutettu, kuin toivottavaa ja tarpeellista olisi.

Mikäli tiedän, kohdistuu nykyaikainen pakanalähetyskin enimäkseen kasvatus-työhön: koulujen, kotien sekä kasvatustilosten perustamiseen. Heidän keskuuteensa

lähetetyt henkilöt toimivat opettajina ja johtajina ainakin siksi, kn he saavat oppilaistaan kehitetyksi itselleen apulaisia.

Romanienkin suhteen täytyy meidän myöntää, että niin tärkeä, kuin hengellisen elämän herättäminen tuon kuljeksivan joukon yksilöissä onkin, niin yhtä tärkeä ajallisen elämän kannalta on heidän sosiaalisen eli yhteiskunnallisen tilansa parantaminen. Näistä tärkein mielestäni on kasvatustöihin sekä herätystyö siihen suuntaan, että he alkaisivat elää ihmisarvoa vastaavaa elämää.

Romani

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### Suggestions

It is known that only when man is freed by evolution from his shackles, from his own slavery, when he will be moving from darkness to light, he will begin to move forward and upward. As he learned to use his soulful abilities, he began to clear and build his environment, and to shape his conditions to be more comfortable, better, and alive.

As long as the inner, spiritual aspect of man is not nurtured and developed, while the divine powers are still asleep, he is not thinking and using his mind, so long as he feels bitterness and often it is just a hopeless struggle, going from misery to misery. This is also the case with the Roma tribe.

As far as I know, the change of the fate of the Roma tribe in Finland, for which the state has granted some funds, has so far been mainly to revive the spiritual life of a few mostly devotees. Alongside this, there has been work done in society, but due to the lack of funds and resources, results have not been as great as desirable and necessary.

As far as I know, the modern missionary work among pagans is mostly focused on educational work: establishing schools, homes and educational institutions. The people who are sent to them act as teachers and leaders, at least for the sake of helping their students develop themselves into later becoming assistants.

As far as the Roma are concerned, we must recognise that, as important as reviving the spiritual life of individuals, just as important for temporal life is the improvement of their social condition and their position within society. The most important of these, in my opinion, is the upbringing children to work and the reviving the spiritual life of people in the direction of starting a life of dignity.

Romani [1]

### Notes

1. 'Romani' is an adjective of word 'Rom'. In the Romani language, 'Romani' is adjective in feminine singular form.

**Source:** Romani. (1927b). Viiteitä. *Kiertolainen*, No. 2, 1927, p. 22.  
Prepared for publication by Raluca Bianca Roman.

### *Comments*

The above article, whose authorship is anonymised (signed simply as 'Romani'), appeared in a 1927 issue of *Kiertolainen*, in a section reserved for entries from the readership. While offering a generalised perspective on the movement of people from what the author calls 'darkness' into 'light', through an analogy made with Roma, it offers an insight into the author's arguments for the focus to be placed on the upbringing of Roma children as a pathway to what she sees as an 'improvement of their social condition and their position within society'.

In fact, though making no specific or direct reference to Mustalaislähetys, the article once again summarises some of the key agendas and work of the Mustalaislähetys over the years: schooling and the establishment of children's homes. The author also highlights the partial support from the state and the ways in which lack of resources may have hindered the work done for Roma in the country.

What is especially interesting among the arguments made in the article above are its final two sentences, which highlight the author's perspective that besides the focus placed on a 'spiritual' revival, there should be a clear focus placed on the improvement of the general social situation of Roma in the country, alongside with their role and position within majority society, through an emphasis placed on the concept of 'work'.

Raluca Bianca Roman

### *Additional Comments*

The case of Finland and the processes of Roma civic emancipation in this country deserve special attention from several points of view. The inhabitants of its territory, the Kaale, are a separate subdivision of the so-called Gypsies, clearly separated from the Roma, who populated the rest of the Russian Empire. The contact zone between Kaale and Roma was Karelia, as well as the capital St. Petersburg, where many Kaale lived (or temporarily earned a living). Relations between Kaale and Roma were generally good. There was even the beginning of a process of mixing between the two communities: for example, Nikolay Pankov's mother was a Finnish Gypsy (see Chapter 12), and to this day some families of Kaale in Finland have memories about Roma relatives in Russia.

Most of the first manifestations of the process of civic emancipation among Kaale began or were concentrated in Karelia: for example, the first Roma School, which functioned between 1905-1907, was located in Vyborg and the Finnish Gypsy Mission, founded at a Tampere meeting in 1905, had shifted its headquarter and main activities, between 1911 and 1917, from the Western city of Tampere to the city of Vyborg. It can be assumed that Oskari Jalkio's proposal to replace the name of the Kaale community with Roma (Romani as written in the sources above) was influenced by the self-designation of the 'other Gypsies' in this contact zone between Kaale and Roma.

The processes of civic emancipation among Kaale are closely linked to the processes of national emancipation in Finland itself. These processes began at a time when the country was still part of the Russian Empire, where it held a special position and enjoyed

many rights of internal autonomy. At the first historic opportunity which appeared after the October Revolution, it separated as an independent state. The long years of living together in the Finnish territories have had an impact, and it is therefore only natural that the basic idea of the civic emancipation movement among Kaale was to seek their place as part of the broader society in the composition of the new Finnish civic nation.

Individual representatives among the Kaale chose another option in the development of their new civic identity through their inclusion in the Socialist and Communist movements, in which they seem to have recognised a possibility of not only class but also ethnic equality. Such is the case of Kalle Tähtelä (also known as Franzen). He was born on the 26th of May, 1891, in Leppävirta, in the Northern Savonia region of Finland. Kalle Tähtelä was an active journalist, writer, and poet. He was a devout socialist, and later among the fighters for the Socialist republic in Finland. After the failed revolt, he escaped to the USSR, where he joined the Red Naval Forces of the Baltic Sea, as a fighter pilot. During the Russian Civil War, his airplane was shut down near Petrograd on the 22nd of October 1919. He survived the crash and managed to escape overnight, but he was captured and executed two days later, on the 24th of October, 1919. His mutilated body was found after the retreat of the Whites and buried in the Common Tomb of the Revolutionary Heroes in St Petersburg (Tervonen, 2012, p. 131; Blomster & Roman, 2021a).

Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov