

in his lectures and publications. Education, he believes, can potentially *strengthen* ones sense of self, not destroy it, because it should, if the curricula accommodate it, provide modules on Romani history, language and culture.

Here, however, is the rub. Despite their always having been multi-ethnic and diverse linguistically, such topics as bilingual education are still new in the post-socialist countries, and resistance to them is still strong in some quarters. Teachers qualified to teach multiculturalism, for example, are few. This is where Hristo finds his greatest challenge.

Besides directing his skills to the education of Romani children, he also realizes that the non-Romani world must also be educated about who and what we are. A proper understanding of our history, of the immense struggle to survive as a fragmented people kept on the fringes not only by the restrictions imposed by our own culture but by harsh, sometimes murderous, legislation, legislation that fostered slavery, deportation and genocide, might eventually perhaps provide the non-Romani peoples with a more compassionate understanding of who we are. I say perhaps, because Antigypsyism, Romaphobia, is very deeply entrenched and seems not to be lessening any time soon. The blatantly racist neo-nazi and white power websites are there for all to see. What is equally disturbing, and what Hristo has to contend with, is anti-Roma bias in the educated world. Even fellow academics can demonstrate their quite candid prejudices against Romanies.

Hristo walks a fine line, and of necessity has developed a thick skin. His ethnic identity as a Romani man sets him apart from his academic colleagues. His social identity as a professor sets him apart from many less educated Roma. His religious identity as a Muslim sets him apart in the Christian West. These are clearly the very factors that drive him.

Hristo Kyuchukov has lectured and studied and worked in many countries. His voice is heard far and wide. He has created a new journal, *The International Journal of Romani Language and Culture*. Together we have co-authored a book for children on Romani history. And together we are developing teaching packages on Romani history for schools. The changes we hope for are coming, albeit slowly, but they are coming, and they are thanks to the drive and commitment of people such as Hristo Kyuchukov.

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In reflecting on Hristo Kyuchukov, I realize it was not that long ago that I all I knew about the Romani people was from what I learned by watching “Latcho Drom” about 10 times while studying flamenco dance. Not long afterwards, Hristo was a Visiting Scholar at the University of San Francisco. (1999/2000) He gave a talk to the faculty about the education of Romani children in Bulgaria and I was shocked. I had recently completed my doctoral dissertation on Latino students in the