

The Elimination of the Tibolddaróc Cave Dwellings; Non-Gypsies in the CS Housing Program¹

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Abstract: This paper presents the case of the elimination of cave houses in Tibolddaróc in the socialist era with the help of the affordable housing program implemented by the 2/1965 ÉM-PM regulation. The housing program aimed to eliminate poor living condition in slums where Gypsy* and non-Gypsy people lived. Contrary to popular belief, 30% of the people living in the settlements “not complying with social requirements” were non-Gypsies, according to the settlement survey of 1964. Most surveyed non-Gypsy dwellers lived in cave houses, barracks, miner colonies or family houses. To provide a comparison, the author found it important to investigate the case of cave-dwellings in Tibolddaróc, where a well-definable group of non-Gypsies were accepted into the affordable housing program. In addition to demonstrating the elimination process in the locality, the author describes the discrepancies in the execution of the affordable housing program as compared to the original plan aimed at the Gypsy population. Furthermore, the paper reflects on the role of the socialist regime and its responsibility in the favorable or detrimental outcome of the elimination program.

Keywords: socialist era, forced assimilation policy of gypsies, affordable housing program, cave houses

* Proof-reader’s note: The term “Gypsy” was the standard expression denoting the ethnic group in question in the historical period examined in this study. Today, the same ethnic group is generally designated with the term “Roma”.

¹ I owe thanks to Dr. András Hajnáczy, in addition to the residents of Tibolddaróc, for without them this study would not have been possible. This paper was first published in 2013: A tibolddaróci barlanglakások felszámolása avagy nem cigányok a CS-lakás programban. *Valóság* 56(10):80–98.

On the hillside standing at attention
 the damp, mouldy, stank, dark cellar caves,
 announcing for centuries accusation,
 darkness from their dumb miserable graves.
 Frightened, startled children's quiet crying sighs
 in the walls and corners sits silent.
 This is where we past! For everyone's eyes
 yesterday's history exposed, defiant...²

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study, is to present the story of the elimination of cave dwellings in Tibolddaróc during the Socialist period. The township included non-gypsies in the CS Housing program (CS = *csökkentett értékű, csökkentett komfortfokozatú*, decreased value, decreased comfort level), which may seem surprising in light of the academic literature to date. Despite the perception in academic circles, thirty percent of those living in “*settlements with unacceptable social circumstances*” were classified in the 1964 settlement survey as not being Gypsies. That is to say that non-Gypsies were included in co-directive number 2/1965. (II. 18.) by the Construction Ministry and Finance Ministry CS housing program. The non-Gypsies documented during the survey typically lived in cave dwellings, parade barracks, mining colonies or servants' housing. Furthermore, it often happened that both Gypsies and those classified as non-Gypsies lived together in slum settlements.

In light of the statistics mentioned above, I felt it important to study the elimination of the Tibolddaróc cave dwellings, because a well definable group of non-Gypsies in the township were included in the social housing program. That is to say that those living in the Tibolddaróc caves can be viewed as control group. In addition to the examination of the settlement elimination it made it possible for me to seek an answer to the issue of whether a substantial difference appeared in the execution of the CS housing program in the examined township compared to the initiatives affecting the Gypsy populace. To put the question another way, to what degree did the prejudices relating to the Gypsy populace deform the execution and results of a social housing program. The latter approach is important because via the examination of the Tibolddaróc cave dwellings the CS housing program can be examined without the factors of ethnic conflicts and prejudice. In other words, the focus can be placed on the CS housing program itself, thus placing the social housing program at the centre of this approach rather than discrimination facing the Gypsy populace.

In the course of my research, I examined documents kept in the National Archives of Hungary, the Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County archives and in the mayoral office of Tibolddaróc. Furthermore, I engaged in two weeks of on-site research in the township, during which I conducted eight half-hour interviews in addition to surveying numerous cave dwellings and taking photographs of them.

² Detail from “Tibolddaróc” poem by Gyula Borsodi, September 25, 1955, translated by Andrew Mile. In: SZALAY – G. NAGY 1988:4. Gyula Borsodi (a.k.a. Gyula Pléh) (1925-1990), journalist, broadcast reporter, teacher, agricultural expert. He worked as a staff member of the Hungarian news agency MTI and the daily newspaper Észak-Magyarország (Northern Hungary).

ABOUT CAVE DWELLINGS

Artificial cave dwellings and farm buildings have been created in several parts of Hungary in rocks or loess walls according to the given environment. In the northeastern parts of Hungary, at the foot of the Bükk Mountains and in Zemplén, the caverns were carved into rhyolite tuff, near Budapest and in the mountains of northeastern Transdanubia, in the Gerecse and Vértes Mountains, into limestone. The caverns, whether revealed during a boom in stone quarrying or intentionally constructed, served as a temporary and later permanent accommodation for the miners and later the residents of settlements surrounding the mines.

At the turn of the 20th century, in the Budafok area near Budapest and in the Kőbánya area on the Pest side, cellars carved into limestone were created not only by quarrying activities but also for grape production. The cellar systems that have formed over the centuries were from the end of the 19th century also used as a wine storage by wholesalers. In the 1870-80s, phylloxera destroyed a large part of the vineyards, and the former cellars received a new function. At the end of the 19th century, the mining, manufacturing and construction industry needed a mass workforce, which they recruited from among poor agrarians. The new settlers created hundreds of cave dwellings from the cellars that lost their function due to the phylloxera epidemic, some of which were in use until the middle of the 20th century. In Budafok and Tétény, pits were dug into large flat surfaces of limestone, thus forming the inner courtyards from which several apartments opened. In 1896, English traveler Ellen Browning was reminded by the living conditions of the 2500 cave-dwellers living in the Budafok promontory of the Granada Gypsies, but she



Figure 1. Cave house carved into rhyolite tuff in Sirok (1939) (FORTEPAN: 11485) http://download.fortepan.hu/_photo/download/fortepan_11485.jpg (accessed January 8, 2018.)



Figure 2. Cave house carved into loess (1932) (FORTEPAN: 58227) Photo of Lajos Horváth http://download.fortepan.hu/_photo/download/fortepan_58227.jpg (accessed January 8, 2018.)

was surprised to find that the apartments were cleaner and more livable than she had imagined, and she became enthused about renting an apartment for herself.³

The cave dwellings in Bükkalja reveal the high level of expertise of the builders, having provided living conditions that met the needs of the era. Although most of the dwellers came from the impoverished layers, in some settlements even wealthier families lived in such constructions.

Caves built into loess walls have long existed in many parts of the country, mainly in the hills of Transdanubia, on the banks of the Danube, and on the shores of Lake Balaton. Like the caves carved into stone, the mining of the sand used for construction also created the caves used as cellars and dwellings. Although these caves were used mostly by poorer people (e.g., in Somogy), vineyard farming occasionally provided a higher standard of living, therefore in many settlements they preferred to move to such a habitat. Along the Danube, settlements and streets were built in this way. Houses carved into loess are less timeless than those carved into stone, thus most of them are now ruined.

Throughout the 20th century, the inhabitants of cave dwellings were gradually replaced everywhere by the poorer layers due to phylloxera, industrialization and social changes. In the second half of the 20th century, during socialism, the leaders of the settlements sought to eradicate the cave dwellings for social and health reasons.

Some of the stone cave dwellings now serve as museums, tourist accommodations, and artist colonies. Such a replica of a cave dwelling can be visited at the Skanzen Open Air Ethnographic Museum in Szentendre. A small museum in Budafok and Szomolya can also be visited. In Noszvaj, the abandoned cave dwellings are used by sculptors as an artist colony.

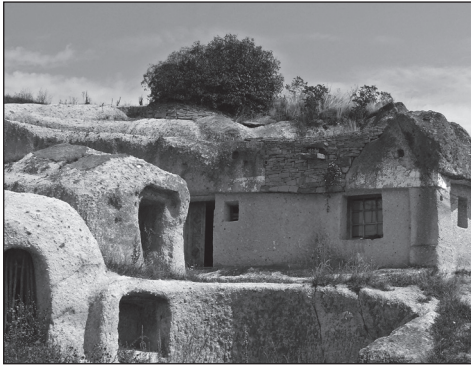
³ HOLLÓ 1998.10.



Figure 3. Cave house in Noszvaj (1935) (FORTEPAN: 130112) Photo of Károly Nagy http://download.fortepan.hu/_photo/download/fortepan_130112.jpg (accessed January 8, 2018.)



Figure 4. The living room of the cave dwelling museum in Szomolya. www.szomolya.net (accessed January 8, 2018.)



Figures 5-6. Noszvaj cave dwellings used as an artist colony (fotó: wikimedia)

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Noszvaj#/media/File:Noszvaj_cave-dwellings.jpg (accessed January 8, 2018.)

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Noszvaj#/media/File:Barlanglak%C3%A1sok_Noszvajon19.jpg (accessed January 8, 2018.)

PREVIOUSLY

“Caves in the Bükk Mountains. Ottó Herman, [...] just as on the Heves side of the Bükk, a whole system of cave dwellings were discovered on the Borsod (side). The cave dwellings are inhabited by good Hungarian people.”⁴ – as reported to the sensation of the public by the *Természettudományi Közlöny* (Natural Sciences Journal). Ottó Herman was the first to academically approach the cave dwellings on the south side of the Bükk. He did not publish the findings of his research, but the journal he kept during his field work preserved his collected knowledge for later generations (BAKÓ 1977:77).⁵

A few years later, the first academic discourse appeared, penned by Zsigmond Bátky in the columns of the *Néprajzi Értesítő* (Ethnographic Notice). This short text, entitled *Cave Dwellings in Borsod County*, contained ethnographic and topographic data and presented the cave dwelling of Szomolya, including photographs (BÁTKY 1906:216–217). Moreover, it provided some reference to the time when the cave dwellings on the south side of the Bükk were dug: “It is said that they came into fashion 60-70 years ago through residents moving in.”⁶

In the fifth volume of the 1922 monograph by Dezső Malonyay, entitled *The Art of the Hungarian People*, he summarised the knowledge to date of the cave dwellings in Hungary. The short article had data concerning the cave dwellings at the foot of the Bükk Mountains, in addition to photographs, which seem mainly to have been taken from the study by Zsigmond Bátky (MALONYAY 1922:197–202).

⁴ *Természettudományi Közlöny*, 1901. XXXIII. volume 377. book, 54.

⁵ Ottó Herman’s journal can be found in the Néprajzi Múzeum (Museum of Ethnography) collections under the code: EA 000182/4. Ottó Hermann examined the Bükk cave dwelling twice, on 20 December 1900, and in July 1901.

⁶ *Ibid* 216.

Table 1. Cave dwellings in Bükkalja in light of the 1930 census (MEZEY 1934:212)

Settlement name	Dwellings			Population		
	Total dwellings by number	Cave dwellings		Total population by number	Cave dwellers	
		By number	Total population in %		By number	Total population in %
Andornak	172	2	1,16	789	3	0,38
Bogács	515	3	0,58	2278	12	0,53
Cserépfalu	500	12	2,40	2077	36	1,73
Cserépváralja	213	50	23,47	973	216	22,19
Kács	169	22	13,01	818	114	13,93
Kristály	295	76	25,76	1470	366	24,89
Noszvaj	406	70	17,24	1249	249	19,93
Ostoros	454	120	26,43	1925	450	23,37
Sály	403	55	13,64	2043	270	13,21
Szomolya	502	188	37,45	2204	866	39,29
Tibolddaróc	453	215	47,46	2439	1459	59,82
Total	4082	813	19,92	18265	4041	22,12

The circumstance of cave dwellings became more widely known to the general public through the example of Tibolddaróc in 1929, with the help of the daily paper *Magyar Jövő* (Hungarian Future). The author of the published article painted a relatively positive image of the cave dwellings in Tibolddaróc: “1,150 souls live in 168 cave dwellings in Tibolddaróc, in the most primitive of circumstances. (...) The inhabitants are attached to the cave dwellings and do not desire properly built homes (...) the inhabitants, in terms of development and lifespan, do not fall behind other residents of the village (...) they cling to the cave dwellings, where their ancestors lived.” Quoted by (BAKÓ 1977:31–32)

In the 1930's, the *Zöld Kereszt* (Green Cross) journal published several studies dealing with the social and public health situation in the model township Mezőkövesd. Among these, a 1934 article by Margit Mezey, entitled *Cave Dwellings*, stands out. In contrast to the author of the Hungarian Future article, Mezey brutally confronts the readers in great detail with regards to the world of the cave dwellings in the Mezőkövesd township: “Their lifestyle is primitive, and limited to achieving only the basic necessities. (...) The damp, airless caves are a den for rachitis, and glandular tuberculosis is common in

children, who are often anaemic and of weak build.” (MEZEY 1934:214) Furthermore, the author of the study tries to indicate the weight of this problem by calling attention to the fact that more than eight hundred cave dwellings were found in only fourteen of the thirty villages in the Mezőkövesd township surveyed during the 1930 census. In the attached table, it was evident that the majority of cellar dwellings were noted in Tibolddaróc. Almost a third of the cave dwellers in Mezőkövesd township lived in Tibolddaróc, and more than a fourth of the cave dwellings were located there (MEZEY 1934:211–222).

In the 1930s, 60% of the population lived in cave dwellings carved into the side of the vineyards above the village of Tibolddaróc. The cave dwellings of Tibolddaróc gained publicity in the mid-1930s through the mediation of the Minister of the Interior, whose initiative stimulated the influential personalities of the era, politicians, various companies and organizations. The charitableness of the statesmen was influenced not only by their social sensitivity but also by the recognition of the propaganda value of the action. As a result of the country-wide donation drive, many houses were built for the cave-dwellers of Bükkalja. Courtesy of the Révai Institute of Literature, a whole colony, twenty Miklós Kozma-designed model houses were built in Tibolddaróc (CSÍKVÁRY 1939:123–124). “Mikszáthfalva” opened on September 24, 1936 for 40 families.⁷ The dedication ceremony was combined with a rotund press conference.⁸ Zoltán Szabó, an influential sociographer and folk writer of the era, strongly criticized the initiative for its propaganda character and its shortcomings, both in the journal *Magyar Szemle* (Hungarian Review) and in his book *Cifra nyomorúság* (Flashy Penury, 1938). He gave a detailed account of the status of the cave dwellings in Tibolddaróc, which he mainly based on the Green Cross journal’s report. In addition, his book also gave readers a glimpse of the conflicts taking place during the construction of Mikszáthfalva (SZABÓ 1986:84–93). The writer drew attention to the fact that the parcel selected for the construction of the houses and plots was bought from the owner at a very high price. The landowner “made a significant profit from the fact that they needed his land for this social initiative. Of course, it did not even occur to him that his estate also contributed to the fact that the people of Daróc were living in such a state, because more than half of the land around the village is occupied by large estates, so they should have some social duties in that regard” (SZABÓ 1986:91).

Residents of the newly built houses had to pay twenty *pengő* a year for thirty years, which put a heavy burden on the residents involved. The residents were not allowed to furnish the houses with any of their “scrappy” furniture – they had to have furniture made by a carpenter in Mezőkövesd for serious prices. In addition, the heating and higher taxation of the houses meant an unpredictable burden for the beneficiary families, while

⁷ According to the original concept, Mikszáthfalva would have been built in the southern area of Somogy County, along the Dráva river, almost like a pioneer settlement, largely in part to the Révai Irodalmi Rt. [Révai Literary Rt.]. (SZABÓ 1937:151–158)

⁸ Some of the headlines: Megszületett Mikszáthfalva a borsodi „Abesszínia” helyén [Mikszáthfalva is born in the place of Borsod’s Abessynia] *Függetlenség* 1936, September 25. 3., Tibolddaróctól Mikszáthfalváig! [From Tibolddaróc to Mikszáthfalva!] *Új Nemzedék* 1936, September 25. 7., Felépül a borsodi barlanglakók első új lakóhelye: Mikszáthfalva [The first new residence of the Borsod cave dwellers is built: Mikszáthfalva] *Pesti Hírlap* 1936, September 25. 4., Falu épült... [A village was built...] *Függetlenség* 1936, September 25. 1.

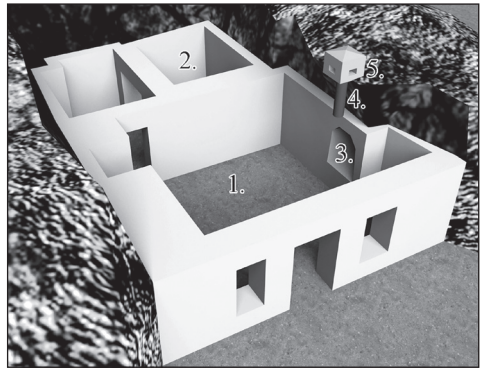
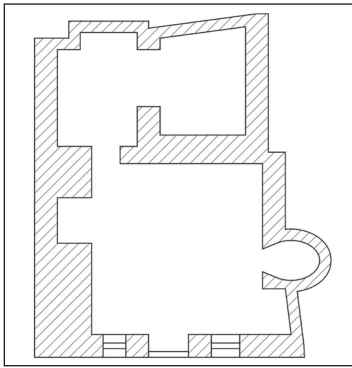


Figure 7. Layout and reconstruction drawings of apartment “A” (design by Bence Koós based on the author’s research)

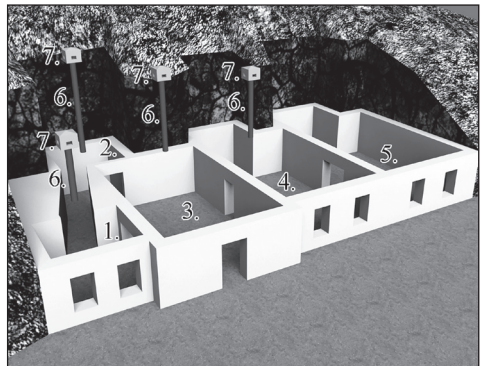
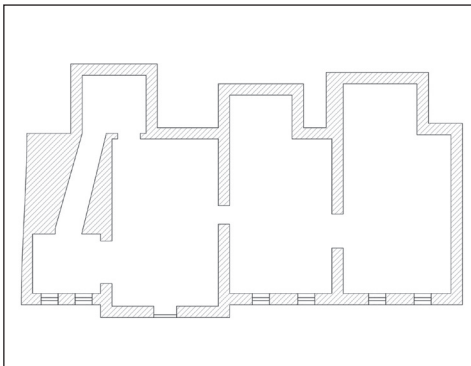


Figure 8. Layout and reconstruction drawings of apartment “B” (design by Bence Koós based on the author’s research)

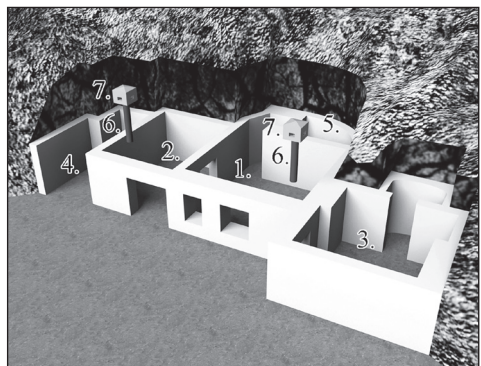
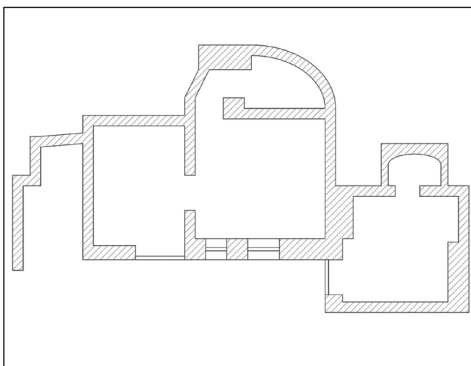


Figure 9. Layout and reconstruction drawings of apartment “C” (design by Bence Koós based on the author’s research)

the cave dwellings were taxed at much lower rates, and the heating was also cheaper as the rock held the heat well. That is why the abandoned cave dwellings were blown up by the county authorities, so that the residents of the Kozma model houses would not return to the cave dwellings.

The initiative did not solve the fundamental problem of the cave dwellers at all. On the one hand, only part of the cave dwellers was able to move to a more humane environment, and on the other hand, the reason causing them to move into the earth dwellings did not disappear. Without land reform, they did not acquire land, so the monopoly of the large estate remained, and the wages paid for their day labor were not sufficient to meet their daily needs (SZABÓ 1986:91–92). Zoltán Szabó summarized the main feature of the construction saddled with serious propaganda as follows:

“Beggars are dressed in better clothes, the poor of Tibolddaróc receive houses that eradicate poverty instead of shouting it like cave dwellings. (...) Because – and this is the saddest part – Tibolddaróc and others are not curiosities, cave dwellings are not exotic specialties of penury. They are an expressive form in the shape of a dwelling of the life manual labor affords the agricultural poverty” (SZABÓ 1937:156).

Surprisingly, despite the serious publicity, the first volume of the work entitled *The Ethnography of the Hungarians*, published in 1941, only had a few lines about the cave dwellings at the foot of the Bükk. Like the monograph entitled *The Art of the Hungarians*, it also relied on the study by Zsigmond Bátky (BÁTKY et al. 1941:146–148).

THE 1961 PARTY DECISION

On the 20th of June, 1961, the Political Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party Central Committee issued the decision entitled “Various tasks in connection with the improvement of the circumstances of the Gypsy populace”, which, among other such directives, made it a goal to eliminate Gypsy settlements. The political committee’s decision estimated the Gypsy populace to be 200,000 and classified them into three categories in terms of “*integration*”.⁹ In the given period, integration was taken to mean what today would be termed assimilation, a form of integration where culture would have been maintained did not even occur to higher bodies.

The single party state’s decision subtly portrayed its image of an acceptable and useful Gypsy, which looked like the following: “The integrated Gypsy has reached the general economic and cultural level of the populace, has abandoned the Gypsy way of life, and lives dispersed (among the majority population).”¹⁰ About those “*in the process of integrating*”, in addition to those Gypsies who “*have not integrated*”, it stated that they mainly live in Gypsy settlements, or wander, that is to say they live apart from the non-Gypsy populace. Furthermore, according to the documentation, in terms of employment and schooling, the latter two groups were characterised as having a “*low*

⁹ MNL OL M-KS-288. f. 5/1961/233 ö. e.

¹⁰ MNL OL M-KS-288. f. 5/1961/233 ö. e.

cultural level” and “*being a burdensome existence on society*”.¹¹ In classification, it was obvious that a defining factor was the type of housing, from which the given degree of assimilation (wandering Gypsy – living separately in a Gypsy settlement – dispersed among non-Gypsy populace) could be deduced. Therefore, the desired result was that the population of Gypsy settlements be dispersed among the non-Gypsy populace.

The party decision officially stated that the Gypsy populace was not to be viewed as a nationality (national minority),¹² and therefore they were condemned to assimilation, a tool of which was to be the elimination of Gypsy settlements labelled as hotbeds of epidemics (BERNÁTH 2002) and crime (HORVÁTH 1963:74–80; PURCSI 2004:74–80).

In addition to the intention of forced assimilation, the other important reason was to hide from the eyes of “*capitalist media agencies*”¹³ the fact that in Socialist Hungary masses of human beings were living in slums well under the minimum standard of living.

Along with the factors listed above, the true problem was pushed to the back, namely the fact that a significant portion of Hungary’s Gypsy populace were living in unacceptable and decidedly unhealthy circumstances, about which the party decree wrote the following lines:

“The number of Gypsy settlements is 2,100. As a rule, these are unhealthy, located in areas which are almost unapproachable from autumn to spring (forests, next to marshes) and where the inhabitants live in dwellings unfit for human inhabitation, in some cases in huts cut into the ground. The communal infrastructure of Gypsy settlements is extremely low and the levels of public hygiene frightening. The non-existent or poor water supply, the lack of outhouses and the neglected environment make for a hotbed for various communicable diseases.”¹⁴

¹¹ MNL OL M-KS-288. f. 5/1961/233 ő. e. This quoted statement is more informative as relates to the attitude of the authorities towards the Gypsy populace and is also informative for future generations rather than giving factual information on the situation of Gypsies.

¹² See further: (HAJNÁCZKY 2015a, 2015b)

¹³ MNL OL XXVIII-M-8 1d 3.

¹⁴ MNL OL M-KS 288. f. 5/1961/233 ő. e. According to Gabriella Lengyel, the quoted passage, in contrast to other portions of the party decision, gave an accurate description of the circumstances at a Gypsy settlement: “The description of settlement circumstances, though, is perceptive and realistic, and this should be noted in favour of the author.” (LENGYEL 2006:71) The Gypsy research done under István Kemény in 1971 also confirms the accuracy of the quoted passage. The following passage is from the conclusion on the general situation at Gypsy settlements: “The settlement’s houses are built by the Gypsies themselves, from daub or loam. They do not dig foundations and the walls are not insulated. The floors are earth, the doors and windows are bad, as most come from demolition sites. The rooms are 9-12 square meters in area. The dampness coming from the walls and floor penetrates and rots away clothing and what few and poor furnishings there are. The defective doors and windows are the sources of strong drafts, and the small size of the windows means airing out cannot be done properly. The roofing is often deficient, and so the rain falls in, and even where it is not deficient, it still soaks through. Heating is provided with a cooking range, which only warms as long as the fire is burning. Mould is common, the air is heavy and musty smelling. Colds are common, as are rheumatism, illness of the joints, tuberculosis and asthma. The lack of healthy drinking water and outhouses as well as garbage strewn about all lead to many infectious diseases, dysentery, typhus, and liver infections. The number of those with intestinal worms is high, 90 percent of the children are infected. Infant mortality is more than twice the average of the non-Gypsy populace.” (KEMÉNY et al. 1976:26)

The vice-president of the Hungarian Revolutionary Worker and Peasant Party, Gyula Kállai, issued the following directive, no. 1-72/1961, on November 8, 1961, concerning the party decision in relation to the Gypsy settlements, to the councils affected:

“Steps must be taken that those Gypsies with regular employment asking for housing be judged equally with others asking for housing. Gypsies seeking to build their own homes need to be assisted more than previously (...) Until the elimination of the Gypsy settlements, a greater degree of attention needs to be paid to increasing communal services. Health inspection and education work needs to be increased.” (HAJNÁCZY 2013:245–246)

The source mentioned above gives witness to two shocking facts: a lack of knowledge among the upper leadership of the single party state given that the free allotment of housing posts had been ended by a government directive¹⁵ in 1957, and secondly, the fact that the Gypsy populace was not only “forgotten” during the land allotment (BÁRSONY 2008:229–231), but also in the granting of council housing.

The Political Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party Central Committee put the execution of the 20 June 1961 party decision on the agenda for debate. The proposal debated at the meeting dealt especially with the lack of results in the elimination of Gypsy settlements, the background to which was the end of free housing grants and the fact that only a fraction of the those living in Gypsy settlements could meet the requirements for the offered OTP (National Savings Bank) loan. For this reason, the Political Committee instructed the Construction Ministry and the Finance Ministry to prepare a plan on how the Gypsy populace could receive preferential credit conditions for “*simpler houses*” and furthermore to provide them with “*simpler furnishings*”.¹⁶

The plan prepared by the ministries, entitled *Plan for the improvement of living conditions of the populace living in Gypsy settlements*, came before the Political Committee on 12 November, 1963.¹⁷ During the debate on the proposal, one of those present agreed with the criticism of the Construction Minister, who made the following observation:

“I hold it necessary to amend the proposal with a suggestion that the planned benefits be given to those workers who live in unhealthy or cityscape-defacing temporary housing and who meet the required conditions, and who, because of their social circumstances, are unable to improve their living conditions through their own effort. Lacking this amendment, the benefits given the Gypsy populace would not be available for the non-Gypsy populace living in similar circumstances and this could lead to tensions.”¹⁸

¹⁵ Gov’t directive 35/1957 (VI. 21.) concerning regulations on the sale of housing plots. In: *Törvények és rendeletek hivatalos gyűjteménye 1957* [Official collection of laws and directives 1957]. Budapest: Közgazdasági és Jogi Könyvkiadó, 1958. 292. The allotment of free housing plots was made possible in a 1951 directive. In: Directive no. 155/1951. (VII. 14.) M. T. concerning regulatory questions on the building of individual family homes (Közigazgatási rendszám: 3.270.) (Törvények és rendeletek... 1952:259–260.)

¹⁶ MNL OL M-KS-288. f. 5/1963/293 ö. e.

¹⁷ MNL OL M-KS-288. f. 5/1963/319 ö. e.

¹⁸ MNL OL M-KS-288. f. 5/1963/319 ö. e.



Figure 10. Family photo in the yard of the cave house in Tibolddaróc in the early 1960s (In author's possession)

The passage in the quoted document resulted in non-Gypsies being included in the CS Housing program, with the good intent of avoiding any possible tensions between the Gypsy and non-Gypsy populace. Later sociological study results clearly show that a significant portion of the non-Gypsy populace felt the support lent the gypsy populace in this area to be unjust anyway, despite what had been hoped (PÁRTOS 1979:45–69; ТОМКА 1991:8–36). In part due to the aforementioned factors, the stereotypes concerning Gypsy housing culture became widespread, the symbolic one in reference to how “Gypsies burn hardwood flooring”.¹⁹

GOVERNMENT DECISION NO. 2014/1964

As a result of long discussions and organisational work by the respective ministries, the president of the Hungarian Revolutionary Workers Peasants government issued decision no. 2014/1964 on 4 May, 1964, concerning the “*the elimination of settlements with unacceptable social circumstances*”.²⁰ The proposed decision was the first such document which made it a goal to eliminate the cave dwellings, similar to the Gypsy settlements, within the framework of the CS housing program: “Of the 200,000 Gypsies in our homeland, about 140,000 still live in 2,100 Gypsy settlements. 25,000 homes would be needed for the housing of these individuals. Furthermore, a few thousand families live in circumstances akin to those at the Gypsy settlements, for example in cave dwellings,

¹⁹ The stereotypes of the given period were shared by some of the researchers still referenced today. (DIÓSI 1981:83; ERDŐS 1989:132)

²⁰ MNL OL XIX-A-83-b 2014/1964 (367d)

parade barracks; their housing also has to be taken care of.”²¹ In the socialist period, most of the cave dwellings in question were not occupied by Gypsies (BAKÓ 1977; GERELYES 1987; MEDNYÁNSZKY 2009), that is to say basically that non-Gypsies were included in the social housing program created for Gypsies. The name of the government decision name reflected the fact that it extended the scope of the directive to include non-Gypsies. In place of Gypsy settlements the term “*settlements with unacceptable social circumstances*” was used in the documents issued by the party organisations, under which they denoted “*Gypsy, cave, and other similar housing settlements*”.²²

In July 1964, the Implementation Committee of the Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County Council debated as the second item on its agenda the report entitled *The situation of the Gypsy populace in our county*. According to the minutes, the reception of the government decision²³ for the elimination of the settlements was especially good.²⁴ The decision was partly seen as a possible way to end the cave dwellings: “According to the head of the construction-transportation and water department, government directive no. 20145 will provide a mode and possibility to solve the situation of the cave dwellings.”²⁵ Surprisingly, at the Implementation Committee meeting, where members were supposed to be discussing the situation of the Gypsy populace, the initial comments and then the rest reveal that the topic primarily tabled was the situation of non-Gypsies living in the cave dwellings.

As an amendment to decision no. 2014/1964 (V. 4.), the Hungarian Revolutionary Worker and Peasant Government issued decision no. 3162/1964 on 29 April 29, 1964, the first point of which proscribed the following: “The Construction Ministry, through its appropriate council bodies, should survey in detail those settlements falling under gov’t decision no. 2014/1964 and in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, and the National Planning Office decide upon the pace of their elimination. This work must take into account the factor of tourism.”²⁶ The background to this might be that the top authorities did not have exact data on the number of settlements, their types and their distribution within the country. Furthermore, the earlier council reports only provided data about Gypsy settlements, in which they did not describe slums and cave dwellings inhabited by non-Gypsies.

In the interest of implementing the government decision, the Construction Ministry composed circular no. 17/1964, which ordered the councils to list all the settlements falling under the government decision. During the survey, the ministries only gave brief instructions on what was necessary for something to be classified as a settlement and whom was to be considered a Gypsy.²⁷ Government directive no. 17/1964 only wrote that: “in the interest of executing the decision, those settlements falling under its scope where at least five homes are located need to be surveyed and listed.”²⁸ In addition, the respective councils also needed to denote which of the four categories the given settlement belonged to: “*Gypsy*

²¹ MNL OL XIX-A-83-b 2014/1964 (367d)

²² MNL OL XIX-A-83-b 2014/1964 (367d)

²³ MNL BAZML XXIII-2a 71/1964

²⁴ “The Implementation Committee accords great significance to government decision no. 2014/1964./V.4./, the implementation of which will fundamentally improve the situation.” MNL BAZML XXIII-2a 71/1964

²⁵ MNL BAZML XXIII-2a 71/1964

²⁶ MNL OL XIX-A-83-b 3162/1964 (351d)

²⁷ MNL OL XIX-A-83-b 2014/1964 (367d)

²⁸ MNL OL XIX-A-83-b 2014/1964 (367d)

settlement”, “*mixed settlement*”, “*cave settlement*”, and “*other settlement*”. In defining the Gypsy populace, the authorities did not even proscribe this much; the classification was completely entrusted to the respective council (KERTESI – KÉZDI 1998:297). This was the reason for the imprecision to which Tünde Virág called attention in her book entitled, *Kirekesztve* (Excluded); several townships that, according to reliable sources, had Gypsy settlements, had none according to the 1964 survey (VIRÁG 2012:124).

According to the 1964 Construction Ministry survey, 222,160 individuals – 55,425 families – lived in 48,966 homes of some sort in “*settlements without acceptable social circumstances*”²⁹, among whom 70 percent were Gypsies, while 30 percent were classified by the respective councils as being of non-Gypsy decent (KOVÁCS 1975:19–23).

Table 2. The number of settlements with unacceptable social circumstances in 1964

County	Number of homes	
	Total ³⁰	Cave dwellings ³¹
Baranya	1,608	-
Bács-Kiskun	1,408	-
Békés	873	-
Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén	4,792/4,350 ³³	253
Csongrád	1,801	-
Fejér	1,025	-
Győr-Sopron	463	-
Hajdú-Bihar	2,417	-
Heves	2,375	170
Komárom	755	23
Nógrád	2,941	-
Pest	2,362	195
Somogy	1,287	-
Szabolcs-Szatmár	3,161	-
Szolnok	2,508	-
Tolna	1,401	-
Vas	685	-
Veszprém	4,268	-
Zala	739	-
Counties in total	36,767	601
Budapest	12,199	-
Total	48,966	601

²⁹ MNL OL XIX-A-83-b 2019/1969 (494 d)

³⁰ (Bencsik 1988:31)

³¹ (Berey 1991:37)

³² (Hajnáczky 2013:270)

From the above chart it is obvious that, with the exception of Budapest, Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County was surveyed as having by far the largest number of unacceptable settlement buildings. In addition to pressure from higher bodies, this is the reason why the elimination of settlements became a burning issue in the county. Due to all of the above, the MTVB made the government decision a point on its agenda in April 1965, in addition to the execution of the 17/1964 circular. According to the proposal prepared by the Construction, Transportation, and Water Department there were 43,50 types of housing of some sorts, where 5,006 families and 23,793 individuals lived in “*settlements with unacceptable social conditions*”. (HAJNÁCZY 2013:270) The report summarised the survey of the settlements thus: “These settlements do not even meet the minimum health standards. Toilets are missing, running water, electricity and connecting roads do not exist. It would not be practical for these settlements to develop. Due to their bad reputation and because of city planning and tourism perspectives, it is desirable that these settlements be eliminated and ended.” (HAJNÁCZY 2013:270)

The implementation of the CS Housing program did not actually begin until co-directive 2/1965 (II. 18.) by the Construction Ministry and the Finance Ministry entitled “*The elimination of settlements with unacceptable social conditions*” on the implementation of government decision no. 2014/1964 (V. 4.) was issued. The directive stated the possibilities for the elimination of these settlements, in addition to going into detail on the modes of housing construction with preferential loans and their conditions. The necessary 100-150 square fathoms (1 fathom = 3.6 metres squared) was to be ensured for free by the respective councils from state owned lands. The houses were to be built by the construction cooperatives charged, or by small tradesmen according to the architectural plans and budgets provided for free by the Construction Ministry. Those individuals were eligible to participate in the CS Housing Program who lived in the area defined by the directive, had at least two years of employment, had an income of more than 1000 forints a month, and had 10 percent of the approved construction costs. If those targeted met the above conditions, they received up to 90 percent of the building costs in an interest free loan, which had to be repaid in equal amounts over a period of thirty years. After five years of continuous employment, 5 thousand forints of the remaining debt was forgiven; after 10 years 8 thousand, and after fifteen years of continuous employment 12 thousand.³³

THE ELIMINATION OF THE TIBOLDDARÓC CAVE DWELLINGS

Tibolddaróc is a village in the Mezőkövesd agglomeration in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County, at the foot of the Bükk Mountain, that had a population of 2,444 in 1960. More precise data about the number of people living in cave dwellings is not available from this period; the only point of reference is that they lived in nearly sixty dwellings carved into the earth. The cave dwellings were inhabited by the poorest layer of the village,

³³ Construction Ministry and Finance Ministry co-directive 2/1965. (II. 18.) ÉM-PM on the elimination of settlements with unacceptable social conditions. In: *Törvények és rendeletek hivatalos gyűjteménye 1965* [Official collection of laws and directives 1965]. Budapest: Közgazdasági és Jogi Könyvkiadó, 1966:368–371.



Figure 11. Chimney hatch in the ground surface, 2011. (Photo of Tamás Hajnáczy)

usually by solitary elderly people and families with many children, where it was not uncommon for some of the children to be taken into custody by the state. Since the 1960s, the population of the settlement has declined steadily, the primary targets of emigration being the county industrial centers and Budapest. The background of the aforementioned is that a significant portion of the population of Tibolddaróc, considered to be an agricultural village, worked in the cooperative, but when it was mechanized, many people lost their livelihood. There were not many job opportunities in the village apart from the cooperative, so those who did not take up commuting were forced to move. The number of commuters reached 250 at the time, all of whom found employment in industry and in mining (KISS 1982:41–42).

The cave dwellings of Tibolddaróc were on seven levels of the so-called hillside area at the outskirts of the town. The current remains of the cave dwellings today, recollections, and the writings of ethnographer Ferenc Bakó (BAKÓ 1977:31–34) indicate that the size and shape of these homes carved into the ground was quite varied. Dug in the relatively easily worked rhyolite turf, the size of these residences ranged from having one room to several rooms, a pantry and a kitchen.

In the kitchens – which most dwellings had – there was a cooking range or an open fireplace cut into the stone and plastered with clay. An exit for the smoke was made by drilling chimneys through the stone, the surface opening of which was usually covered with a chimney top carved from stone, or through a chimney pipe from the stove exiting through the exterior wall. With the exception of the pantry, every room had a chimney passage through which the stoves used for heating the rooms could release the smoke. Heating the cave dwellings was very cheap, as the stone held the heat excellently. The walls of the cave dwelling were plastered thickly with cob and painted with lye. There



Figure 12. Open fireplace, 2011. (Photo of Tamás Hajnáczy)

were even places where the wall was painted with colour or had a pattern rolled into it. The floors of the rooms were also covered in cob and then pounded smooth, after which they were painted black, so to speak, with coal.

The 1961 party decision, and the vice-presidential directive 1-72 on its implementation did not cover the Tibolddaróc cave dwellings as they were not occupied by Gypsies. Therefore, a few years passed before the town council made the elimination of the cave dwellings, the construction of garbage collectors or toilets a priority task.

It was in the first half of the 1960s, in January of 1963, that the Tibolddaróc council first began to deal with the conditions of the cave dwellings. The report on the health condition of the village inhabitants gave account of the unhealthy circumstances of the shore area, amongst which was the danger of epidemic.³⁴

A passage from a report a few months later summarises the untenable conditions in the cave dwellings:

“The council faces an important and untenable health problem. It is well known to all that the shore area cave dwellings have no garbage collection bins. The garbage, animal and human excrement are strewn all over the place by the inhabitants. In this case the last (...) complaint was made to the Health Ministry by a resident of Vörösmarty Street. During the inquiry, the neighbours and others living farther away also strew their waste about. Water streaming down takes the waste into the garden and even into the house.”³⁵

The remaining archival sources and recollections make no mention of Public Health and Epidemiology Station employees executing forced bathing as they did at Gypsy settlements, where health officials regularly conducted disinfection procedures, and often without cause, claiming prevention (BERNÁTH 2002; BERNÁTH – POLYÁK:38–45).

To solve the public health situation, the town council’s implementation committee made a decision which instructed its head to prepare a plan for the construction of toilets

³⁴ Tibolddaróc VB. ülés jegyzőkönyv [Implementation Committee meetings minutes] 1963, January 17. Sources relating to the town can be found in the Office of the Mayor in Tibolddaróc.

³⁵ Tibolddaróc Tanácsülés jegyzőkönyv [Council meeting minutes] 1963, April 23.



Figure 13. Abandoned cave house in Tibolddaróc, 2011. (Photo of Tamás Hajnáczy)

and large garbage collectors, with the inclusion of the residents of the hillside area.³⁶ A later decision also ordered that the respective council members organise health education work in their districts as well as public meetings about the placement of the garbage collectors.³⁷ By the end of 1963, the town council had ensured 8 garbage collection areas³⁸ and one public toilet³⁹ for those living in the caves.

The image drawn from the interviews done in Tibolddaróc seems to differ from that in the archival material. Those asked, without exception, stated that the cave dwellings were painted with lye several times a year, regularly cleaned, and that the immediate environment was kept clean as much as possible. A more serious problem was the acquisition of water, since no well could be dug in the hillside area, and therefore water for cooking and bathing⁴⁰ had to be carried up to the cave dwellings in buckets. From the information we have at hand, it can be ascertained that those living in cave dwellings were not a homogenous group in terms of health and socialisation. Presumably, a large portion of those families living in the hillside area took care as best they could to create a healthier environment, though a small portion lived in “*substandard health*” conditions.

Partly taking into account the above, and that most of the cave dwellings were inhabited by “elderly individuals, those incapable of work, or large families”, the Tibolddaróc council issued a directive in 1963 which cancelled the property tax on

³⁶ Tibolddaróc VB. ülés jegyzőkönyv [Implementation Committee meeting minutes] 1963, January 17.

³⁷ Tibolddaróc VB. ülés jegyzőkönyv [Implementation Committee meeting minutes] 1963, April 23.

³⁸ Tibolddaróc VB. ülés jegyzőkönyv [Implementation Committee meeting minutes] 1963, August 22.

³⁹ Tibolddaróc VB. ülés jegyzőkönyv [Implementation Committee meeting minutes] 1963, September 24.

⁴⁰ For more on bathing habits see (JUHÁSZ 2006)



Figure 14. Cave house used as storage in Tibolddaróc, 2011. (Photo of Tamás Hajnáczy)

houses cut into the earth.⁴¹ In the interest of executing this decision, the financial officer was entrusted with listing the cave dwellings. After several modifications, the completed list contained the addresses of 59 cave dwellings and owners.⁴² The document did not have exact information on the number of cave inhabitants. Nonetheless, it can be seen that in terms of the entire country, quite a large “*settlement with unacceptable social conditions*” was located in the area of the town (KERTESI – KÉZDI 1998:297–312).

Of the projected 800 CS House allowances (KOVÁCS 1974:46) in 1965, 70 were given to the Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County Council. The county leadership would have liked the entire CS housing allowance to be used exclusively for the elimination of the Tibolddaróc cave dwellings. Even so, the village council did not request the entire housing allowance,⁴³ and therefore the County Council used the remaining allowance towards helping to eliminate the Sátoraljaújhely Gypsy settlement.⁴⁴ It persisted in relocating the Gypsies among the non-Gypsy populace for the purpose of assimilation: “The Gypsy populace should not be located in closed communities, but spread out so that the changed environment would have an educational impact on them.”⁴⁵ In accordance with the previous quote, the County Council carried through its decision – which came to light in the 1964 Implementation Committee meeting – that a program meant primarily to improve the circumstances of the Gypsy populace would give the advantage to non-Gypsies.

⁴¹ Tibolddaróc VB. ülés jegyzőkönyv [Implementation Committee meeting minutes] 1963, July 9.

⁴² Tibolddaróc VB. ülés jegyzőkönyv [Implementation Committee meeting minutes] 1963, November 26.

⁴³ Tibolddaróc VB. ülés jegyzőkönyv [Implementation Committee meeting minutes] 1964, May 11.

⁴⁴ MNL BAZML XXIII-2a 74/1965

⁴⁵ MNL BAZML XXIII-2a 74/1965



Figure 15. Abandoned cave house in Tibolddaróc, 2011. (Photo of Tamás Hajnáczy)

In the weeks following the County Council decision on the elimination of cave dwellings, there was complete uncertainty in the town as the council had no information on how the elimination would take place or the exact time frame. Furthermore, the “horrible news” that the beneficiaries of the CS Housing Program would be Gypsies living in the Bogács cave dwellings spread among the residents.⁴⁶ In order to clarify the concerns above, the Tibolddaróc council implementation committee turned to the township’s implementation committee.⁴⁷

The further fate of the homes dug into the earth on the hillside began to clarify by the beginning of summer. The local council carried on serious propaganda work in order to convince the residents of the hillside area to take part in the CS housing program: “(...) through loudspeakers and personal talks, the attention of the cave inhabitants was called to the benefits of construction. Of course they cannot be forced; if they do not accept it voluntarily, then they will continue to live and reside in such inhumane conditions as they live now.”⁴⁸ Despite the strong propaganda, a part of those targeted were wary of taking part in the preferential loan schemes, viewing the plots of land set aside for construction as being small.⁴⁹

The council leadership of Tibolddaróc continued its fight to convince the residents, citing as a reason that within the foreseeable future there would be no other way to end the cave dwellings: “(...) we have to again call the attention of the cave residents to

⁴⁶ For more information of the Bogács Gypsies see further: (BAKÓ 1977:28–29; SZUHAY 2004:146–148)

⁴⁷ Tibolddaróc VB. ülés jegyzőkönyv [Implementation Committee meeting minutes] 1964, May 11.

⁴⁸ Tibolddaróc VB. ülés jegyzőkönyv [Implementation Committee meeting minutes] 1964, June 8.

⁴⁹ Tibolddaróc VB. ülés jegyzőkönyv [Implementation Committee meeting minutes] 1964, June 8.



Figure 16. Abandoned cave houses in Tibolddaróc, 2011. (Photo of Tamás Hajnáczy)

this very advantageous opportunity to build, because in all probability there will not be another such opportunity soon to eliminate the cave dwellings.”⁵⁰

It is obvious from the above that the town’s council wanted to improve the living conditions of those living in the shore area, and according to the academic literature and all the archival material available, its efforts to do so were especially strong. The background to this may have been that in the housing zone of the village the pressure from higher party bodies was not to relocate Gypsies, but to integrate them completely throughout the village. In addition to this, several members of the Tibolddaróc council lived in cave dwellings, which is to say that those living on the hillside had sufficient representation of their interests.

Colleagues at the Construction, Transportation and Water Department of the county council informed the Tibolddaróc council in October of the time to launch construction and of the relevant details.⁵¹ In the interest of acquiring the necessary stone, the county Construction, Transportation and Water Department fought for the temporary reopening of the Tibolddaróc stone mine⁵² in addition to ordering the following tasks for the village council: “The free plot grants must be taken care of this year, and the applications for the OTP loans must be started so that construction may start at the earliest possible date in the spring of 1965 (...) At present, the village council’s related task is to again survey those individuals who live in the cave dwellings and want to build, and the list of names has to be sent to both the township and county council.”⁵³

⁵⁰ Tibolddaróc VB. ülés jegyzőkönyv [Implementation Committee meeting minutes] 1964, June 8.

⁵¹ Tibolddaróc VB. ülés jegyzőkönyv [Implementation Committee meeting minutes] 1964, October 19.

⁵² Tibolddaróc VB. ülés jegyzőkönyv [Implementation Committee meeting minutes] 1964, June 8.

⁵³ Tibolddaróc VB. ülés jegyzőkönyv [Implementation Committee meeting minutes] 1964, October 19.

The respective council compiled the list of names, but had to deal with several difficulties. They were not able to allot the complete CS housing allowance because there were only 41 applicants who had the ten percent private capital required, as proscribed in the Construction Ministry and Finance Ministry Co-directive no. 2/1965 (II. 18.). Furthermore, a portion of the applicants were able to collect the required ten percent and then sold the cave dwelling condemned to demolition for a few thousand forints, and so the number of cave dwellings in the hillside area was not able to fall below the expected number.⁵⁴

The council leadership, relying on the opinion of the head of the Construction, Transportation and Water Department, entrusted the Borsod County Council Construction Company⁵⁵ with the building task, even though Construction and Finances Ministry co-directive no. 2/1965 (II. 18.) did not make this possible.⁵⁶ This may, in part, have been due to the fact that the village of Tibolddaróc - like Mikszáthfalva before it - and the still inhabited cave dwellings had received public attention in the given period, and therefore the elimination of the cave dwellings and the construction of the “model” CS housing settlement was unavoidable. The government company could have been seen as a channel for the authorities to exert greater pressure so as to ensure the efficiency of the building work and the proper construction of the houses. Secondly, the fact must not be forgotten that the CS houses were built by non-Gypsies, some of whom held more important offices in the local councils. Furthermore, in the village they counted on the communal help of other villagers⁵⁷ – despite this being a hindrance to the later construction of the doctor’s house – since a majority of the residents helped build the CS houses on the basis of family relations.⁵⁸

Following the long period of organisational work, the council held the start to the CS housing construction work in the spring of 1965 to be an explicitly positive result: “It was also on the suggestion of the council members that we made a proposal in 1963 to eliminate the cave dwellings in some way. It is a great pleasure that in 1964 we had several successful discussions and foreseeably the construction of 50 homes for the inhabitants of the cave dwellings can begin this spring.”⁵⁹ During 1965, 51 CS houses were built in one area along the connecting road to Tibolddaróc, next to what was once called Mikszáthfalva. During construction, it was mainly the number I architectural plan that was used, since the social circumstances of those building did not allow for anything else. CS home plan I comprised an 18 m² room, a 12 m² kitchen, a 3 m² pantry and a 2 m² front hall.⁶⁰

⁵⁴ MNL BAZML XXIII-2a 74/1965

⁵⁵ MNL BAZML XXIII-2a 74/1965

⁵⁶ “The construction of the houses can be commissioned by construction trade cooperatives (mixed trade cooperatives having a construction division), – if the builder is a farming cooperative member, or farming cooperative building brigade – or small construction tradesmen. The construction – under responsible technical direction – can be done by the builders themselves.” In: 2/1965. (II. 18.) ÉM-PM számú együttes rendelet a szociális követelményeknek meg nem felelő telepek felszámolásáról. [Construction and Finance Ministries co-directive on settlements without acceptable social conditions] In: *Törvények és rendeletek hivatalos gyűjteménye 1965* [Official collection of laws and directives 1965]. Közgazdasági és Jogi Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 1966. 370.

⁵⁷ See further: (Sík 1988)

⁵⁸ Tibolddaróc VB. ülés jegyzőkönyv [Implementation Committee meeting minutes] 1964, June 8.

⁵⁹ Tibolddaróc VB. ülés jegyzőkönyv [Implementation Committee meeting minutes] 1964, January 18.

⁶⁰ MNL BAZML XXIII-2a 74/1965

Based on the interviews done in Tibolddaróc, it was obvious that the participants had risen above their early suspicions and were highly appreciative of their newly built houses; though living in a reduced comfort house, they were in healthier conditions than the cave dwellings.

According to the known archival material, in addition to the interviews done on site, the group of CS houses in Tibolddaróc were built differently from CS houses constructed for the inhabitants of the Gypsy settlements, with significant differences in quality, location and the discourse that accompanied the construction.

Numerous problems arose throughout the entire period of the social housing construction program, especially with regards to the shoddy quality of the CS houses for the Gypsy populace. In the background of this lay the applicants' lack of ability to represent their interests in addition to the small tradesmen's desire for extra profit (BERKOVITS 1980:18–21; LENGYEL 1982:151–152). The sloppy work of the small tradesmen might also be assumed to be due to prejudice facing the Gypsy populace, although it should be remembered that during the Socialist era numerous incidences of neglect were also apparent in the houses intended for the non-Gypsy populace (BERKOVITS 1980:65–72; CSIZMADY 2008:54). In contrast, the construction and quality of the CS houses in Tibolddaróc had no faults. The reason for this may in part be that for propaganda reasons the Borsod County Council Construction Company was entrusted with building a model CS housing area. Furthermore, the housing applicants took part in the construction work as a community, thus affecting the quality of the houses being built, and there interests were better represented due to the community involvement (SÍK 1988:118–135). In her book entitled *The elimination of settlements with unacceptable social circumstances*, Katalin Berey concluded that problems with the quality of the built CS houses could have been prevented best with communal work, but during her research she observed a lack of this factor (BEREY 1991:15).

The built CS houses were not erected on the peripheries of the village or far from the town in areas with high ground water and unfit for construction, but along the access road. That is to say that those arriving in the village, or a “stranger” passing through, would immediately see the CS houses. The CS houses built for the Gypsy populace in Gypsy settlements (FALUDI 1964:17–18; LEMLE n. y.:215) were mainly hidden from the eyes of outsiders by the respective councils.

The quoted sources are important to approach from the perspective of discourse analysis as it also calls attention to another important difference. The sources reveal that the local representatives of the authorities were especially positive about the elimination of the Tibolddaróc cave dwellings: “that the construction work can begin all the earlier”, “also the initiative of the council members”, “we happily announce”. The opposite appears in the documentation connected to the elimination of the Gypsy settlements since the councils had to deal with the question of settlement elimination under pressure from higher authorities and as a part of the system of central planning with constant reproach and evaluation. Therefore, the discourse is defined by “must” in addition to making excuses for sabotaging the elimination of the Gypsy settlements.⁶¹

⁶¹ For more on the discussion of the period see further: (FEITL 2008: 257–272; FÜZES – MÁRFI 2003; FÜZES – MÁRFI – ROZS – VÖRÖS 2005; KOZÁRY 2008: 265–274; MAJTÉNYI 2008: 456–474; MEZEY 1986: 237–318; NAGY 2010)

With the elimination of a portion of the Tibolddaróc cave dwellings the respective council had to confront the fact that the abandoned cave homes were beginning to be inhabited again within a short time. The reason for this was that the participants in the CS housing program had to have 10 percent of the building costs beforehand, sums which they were often only able to amass by selling or renting out the cave homes.⁶² Another reason for the minimal decrease in the number of inhabited cave dwellings may have been that in these earthen homes dug into the side of the hill several generations often lived together and only the nuclear family moved into the CS houses, leaving the grandparents behind.

The difficulty of eliminating the cave dwellings was also discussed by the County Council Implementation Committee, which approved the Township Council Implementation Committee secretary's suggestion that a declaration be signed by the cave inhabitants that they agree either to the implosion of their cave home or its being rendered uninhabitable following their move. Furthermore, the County Council's Implementation Committee stipulated that the Tibolddaróc council take effective measures against the re-habitation of the cave dwellings in addition to composing a directive forbidding the re-occupation of a cave dwelling.⁶³

In November 1965, the village council, in order to implement the position of the county leadership, issued decision no. 37/1965, effective immediately, which ordered the following:

“The cave dwelling shall become empty once vacated. As the cave dwellings are unhealthy, the council forbids moving into the empty cave dwellings. It orders the council's implementation committee to bring this to the attention of the populace via loudspeaker, stating that occupancy of the empty cave dwellings is hereby forbidden and that if someone does move into an empty cave dwelling despite the notification, the implementation committee will take immediate steps to ensure that the given cave dwelling is vacated.”⁶⁴

The County council's position and the decision quoted above seems to have handled the issue radically, but in relation to the Gypsy settlements it was much less so: “The experience in Felsőzsolca showed that the demolition of the emptied buildings was only possible with help from armed authorities in order to stop individuals from moving into the settlement and to decrease the number of inhabitants.”⁶⁵ An obvious difference is that while non-Gypsies were asked to sign a declaration and were governed by a regulation, armed authorities were mobilised for the inhabitants of the Gypsy settlement.

Later, during the elimination of the Gypsy settlements, the use of armed force was made legal by “top secret” document no. 3254/1967 issued by the Hungarian Revolutionary Workers Peasant Government (HAJNÁČZKY 2013b:30–31).⁶⁶ Moreover, this was the government that made the forced resettlement of Gypsy settlement communities possible

⁶² MNL BAZML XXIII-2a 74/1965

⁶³ MNL BAZML XXIII-2/a 74/1965

⁶⁴ Tibolddaróc Tanácsülés [Council meeting minutes] 1965, November 22.

⁶⁵ MNL BAZML XXIII-2a 74/1965 In Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county, in the early 1960s, before the CS-housing program the Felsőzsolca Gypsy settlement was eliminated first.

⁶⁶ MNL OL XIX-A-83-b 3254/1967 (429 d)

at the end of the 1960's, as uncovered by the 1971 Gypsy study done by István Kemény (KEMÉNY et al. 1976:27–30).

The Tibolddaróc council ordered the elimination of the remaining cave dwellings in December 1969, and within a short time began the preparatory work. It ensured 23 housing plots in the area of Mikszáthfalva in addition to a few throughout the area of the village. Furthermore, the council acquainted the applicants with Construction and Urban Development Ministry directive no. 10/1969⁶⁷ concerning the construction procedure in addition to launching talks with higher political bodies regarding construction of a new CS housing area.

According to a council report composed in 1970, there were still 25 cave dwellings inhabited in that period. It concluded the following about the homes at the hillside:

“Among those still living in the caves, there are quite a few elderly, retired pensioners, or individuals living on benefits who do not want to come down from there or move to a new home. There are younger ones with large families, who must move in order to raise healthy children, even more so since most of the cave dwellings are damp, crumbling and completely harmful to health. There are often cases of young couples getting married - not wanting to live with their parents - who move temporarily into the old cave dwelling left empty by their parents.”⁶⁸

Because of the above quoted lines, most of those living in caves could not participate in the CS housing program, as they did not have the 10 percent capital necessary for construction costs or the property purchase. Therefore, the village rejected the idea of constructing a new CS housing area and planned to solve the situation of the cave inhabitants with preferential loans for housing purchase.

The co-directive issued by the Construction and Finance ministries, no. 2/1965 (II. 18.) in 1966, amended the Construction Ministry's Communal Economics Head Office's circular that the CS housing allowance could be used for the purchase of homes.⁶⁹

In addition to the guaranteed benefits, the conditions for the CS housing-purchase program were the same as those for the CS housing program. One substantial difference between the two opportunities was that for the CS housing purchase the applicant could only receive a smaller loan (BERÉY 1991:10; KOVÁCS 1974:45). Purchasing a home instead of building one was more attractive for the villagers, despite the decreased amount of loan available, because even with that amount they were able to buy themselves a suitable home into which they could move immediately. In doing so, they could also avoid

⁶⁷ See further: 10/1969. (VI. 8.) ÉVM rendelet az építési engedélyezési eljárásról. [Construction and Urban Development Ministry directive on the procedure for building permits]. In: *Törvények és rendeletek hivatalos gyűjteménye 1969* [Official collection of laws and directives 1969]. Közgazdasági és Jogi Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 1970. 385–394.

⁶⁸ Tibolddaróc VB. ülés jegyzőkönyv [Implementation Committee meeting minutes] 1970. February 9. A 1972 council report that details the village's public health conditions writes the following about the ill effects of cave dwellings: “There are many in the village with tuberculosis, which is an inheritance. In earlier years, many lived in unacceptable cave dwellings, which were a nest for the illness. Another factor that accounts for the high number is that even the smallest infection is kept on record until full recovery” Tibolddaróc VB. ülés jegyzőkönyv [Implementation Committee meeting minutes] 1972, May 8.

⁶⁹ MNL BAZML XXIII-2a 79/1966

difficulties stemming from debt and the greater expenses and complications associated with construction. During the 1970s, most of the cave dwellings were eliminated using the CS housing purchase allowance. Within ten years, 13 CS home purchases and 5 CS home construction allowances were used by the local council and passed to the applicants.

Table 3. The distribution of CS-Home purchase and construction allowances in the 1970's⁷⁰

	CS-home purchase allowance	CS-home construction allowance
1971	2	-
1972	-	3
1973	2	2
1974	-	-
1975	3	-
1976	1	-
1977	2	-
1978	2	-
1979	1	-
Total	13	5

The CS housing and building applications⁷¹ give us a perspective on the social and health situation of the families living in cave dwellings. From the studied applications, it was observed that the parents living in the cave dwellings were raising 3-4 children.

⁷⁰ Tibolddaróc VB. ülés jegyzőkönyv [Implementation Committee meeting minutes] 1971, June 26; 1972, September 13; 1973, May 14; 1975, April 28; 1975, August 11; 1975, November 24; 1976, July 19; 1977, June 20. 1977, December 12; 1978, February 20; 1978, June 12; 1979, January 29.

⁷¹ Passages from the CS home construction and purchase applications:

“The named presented in their application, that they live in a cave home, which is unhealthy. That is where they are raising their 2 young children, 3 other children are in state care. If their housing situation were to change, those in state care could be raised at home” Tibolddaróc VB. ülés jegyzőkönyv [Implementation Committee meeting minutes] 1971, May 25.

“He supported his request, stating that he lives with his wife and two small children in a cave dwelling, his wife is presently pregnant, their living conditions are unhealthy and their financial situation is also bad.”

Tibolddaróc VB. ülés jegyzőkönyv [Implementation Committee meeting minutes] 1977, June 20.

“He states that he lives with his 5 member family in a cave dwelling, which is one room and a kitchen. The home is damp, unhealthy, the children live in an unhealthy environment since their home does not meet even the most basic health requirements.” Tibolddaróc VB. ülés jegyzőkönyv [Implementation Committee meeting minutes] 1975, April 28.

“The named and his wife and their two small children, one 4 years old, the other 2 months, live in the *Víg* street caves. Their home is in a condition in which one cannot stay without a risk to one's health.” In: Tibolddaróc VB. ülés jegyzőkönyv [Implementation Committee meeting minutes] 1975, November 24.

It is worth noting as an extreme case that there were two families on the shore where the parents were caring for seven children. In addition to the crowding, the other serious difficulties were the highly unhealthy conditions, which resulted in children temporarily being taken into state care.

In the first half of the 1980s, four cave dwellings were still inhabited, a situation which the village council did not have an expedient solution since the financial circumstances of those living in the caves made them ineligible to take part in the CS housing program.⁷² We can gain a greater insight into this period from the sociographic writings of Gyula Kiss, which appeared in the *Borsod Szemle* (Kiss 1982:35–43). The author wrote thus about untenable conditions in the remaining cave dwellings:

“A woman was walking towards me. Across her shoulders was a rod, from the ends of which hung two empty buckets on clinking and clanking chains. She was going down for water, for those on the hillside do not even have a well. (...) What are these homes like? Most are composed of a room and kitchen, though there are ones that are ‘homier’, with a front hall from which the kitchen and the room can be accessed. The walls, the ceiling and the floor are bare. The air is foul, stuffy and steamy, and constantly breathing in the humid ‘fumes’ drifting here and there makes one want to cough. (...) We look into a few houses. In some, the misery cannot be described, though even between the moulding walls there is relative cleanliness: all the family members have a separate toothbrush in a separate plastic cup sitting in row on the washstand.” (Kiss 1982:38–39)

In 1982, the County Council Implementation Committee ordered the distribution of the specific housing allowance ensured for the elimination of unacceptable settlements. The specific housing allowance was only put at the village council’s disposal if handicapped families, or families unable to work lived there and the given council was able to ensure the complete elimination of the settlement. The advantage in this opportunity was that those affected were able to receive better accommodation with minimal financial investment. Of the 32 housing allotments available for this purpose, the County Council Implementation Committee gave 3 to the Tibolddaróc council for the final cessation of the cave dwellings.⁷³

With the amount received from the county leadership, the village council began building the 3 CS homes in 1983, next to the CS housing development built in the first half of 1960s.⁷⁴ The Tibolddaróc council evaluated the moment thus: “The handing over of the 3 CS homes and the move of those living in the caves has ended the embarrassment of our community.”⁷⁵ The 3 homes constructed were the so-called “Pityu” (Stevie) development, alluding to the helplessness of those assisted, since they were unable to move away from the hillside on their own. Furthermore, the council documents and the interviews did have some criticism for the mentality of the last cave inhabitants. It mentioned their alcoholic lifestyle and their tendency to avoid work in addition to two families not being able to move into the houses built from this allowance.⁷⁶ Moreover, a single woman over eighty

⁷² Tibolddaróc VB. ülés jegyzőkönyv [Implementation Committee meeting minutes] 1981, February 16.

⁷³ MNL BAZML XXIII-2/a 158/1982

⁷⁴ Tibolddaróc VB. ülés jegyzőkönyv [Implementation Committee meeting minutes] 1983, October 24.

⁷⁵ Tibolddaróc VB. ülés jegyzőkönyv [Implementation Committee meeting minutes] 1983, February 13.

⁷⁶ Tibolddaróc VB. ülés jegyzőkönyv [Implementation Committee meeting minutes] 1983, January 23

years of age living in a cave was placed in a home for the elderly according⁷⁷ to the central principles (Huszóczy 1983:277),⁷⁸ in addition to the frequently amended co-directive of the Construction and Finance Ministries, 2/1965. (II. 18.).⁷⁹

SUMMARY

Despite what has been written in academic literature, the CS housing program in Tibolddaróc did not reach out to Gypsies. In fact, numerous differences were experienced during the elimination of the cave dwellings in comparison to the initiatives that affected the Gypsy populace. The background to this was partly that in the studied settlement non-Gypsies were included in the social housing program, and so prejudices did not warp the progress of the program. In addition, the cave inhabitants had significant representation of their interests since there were several council members among them.

A portion of the cave dwellers lived in expressly unhealthy and untenable conditions. Nonetheless, forced bathing was not conducted in the village, whereas so-called public health officers regularly did disinfection within Gypsy settlement communities. There was no scandal with the quality of the CS houses, unlike those built for the Gypsy populace, where corruption on the part of the small tradesmen was common. In relation to the cave inhabitants, the idea of dispersing them did not even arise, which is to say it was not thought that they needed any “re-education”. In connection with the Gypsy populace, the concept of settling them in a dispersed fashion came up innumerable times, cited for purposes of assimilation and with a view toward increasing the educational impact of the non-Gypsy environment on Gypsy inhabitants. Cave dwellers were not affected by violence from the authorities and were forced by legal means to have their caves demolished, the populace of Gypsy settlements was subjected to the use of force in order to accomplish the same goal. The homes in Tibolddaróc were not built on the village periphery or areas with high ground water, as was commonplace with the Gypsy populace. The discourse that accompanied the elimination of the cave dwellings was measurably different from that which characterised the initiatives affecting the Gypsy populace, and the accusation of “destroying the new homes” did not arise in the studied village. The Tibolddaróc CS homes became an integral part of the village, many homes were renovated, enlarged or new ones have been built in their places since. This cannot be stated in connection with the settlements of the CS housing, which simply meant that more modern Gypsy settlements came into being.

All in all, it can be stated that the elimination of the cave dwellings in Tibolddaróc within the framework of the CS housing program was successful. The housing program in the studied village served as a solution to a local social problem on the local level. Furthermore, the research shed light on the fact that a social housing program’s outcome can be strongly affected by the attitude of those included.

⁷⁷ Tibolddaróc VB. ülés jegyzőkönyv [Implementation Committee meeting minutes] 1983, January 23.

⁷⁸ MNL OL XIX-A-83-b-3558/1975 (743 d)

⁷⁹ The co-directive of the Construction and Finance Ministries concerning the elimination of settlements with socially unacceptable conditions no. 2/1965. (II. 18.) and its amendments. In *Építésügyi Értesítő* 1976(15):305.

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