



A Contemporary History of Exclusion: The Roma Issue in Hungary from 1945 to 2015

By Balazs Majtenyi

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This study presents the changing situation of the Roma in the 2nd half of the 20th century. It examines the effects of the policies of the Hungarian state towards minorities by analyzing legal regulations, policy documents, archival sources and sociological surveys. The authors repudiate common stereotypes such as criminality, parasitism, unrootedness and alike. Richly illustrated with photos and other personal sources, A Contemporary History of Exclusion offers theoretical background to one of the most burning issues in east Europe. In the first phase (1945-61), the authors show the efforts of forced assimilation by the communist state. The second phase (1961-89) began with the party resolution denying nationality status to the Roma. The prevailing thought was that Gypsy culture was a culture of poverty that must be eliminated. Forced assimilation through labor activities continued. The Roma adapted to new conditions while keeping their distinct identity. In the 1970s Roma intellectuals began an emancipatory movement, and its legacy can still be felt. Although the third phase (1989-2010) brought about some freedoms and rights for the Roma - with large sums spent on various Roma-related programs. Despite these efforts, the situation on the ground did not improve. Segregation and marginalization continues, and is rampant. The authors powerfully conclude: while the Roma have become part of the political community, they are still quite separate from national society.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS Balazs Majtenyi is associate professor at Eotvos Lorand University (Budapest), Faculty of Social Studies, head of the Department for European Studies; senior research fellow at the Institute for Legal Studies at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Centre for Social Sciences. Gyorgy Majtenyi is professor of social and cultural history at Eszterhazy Karoly College, Eger, Hungary

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