

State Policies under Communism

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General Framework and Specific Features | Sedentarization of Itinerant Roma | Speed up Integration Cultural and Historical Heritage | Organizations. The “Roma Movement” in Yugoslavia | Public Integration and/or Assimilation

➤ *The end of the Second World War saw the emergence over a large part of Europe of what was officially called the “socialist” bloc, where a considerable number of Roma in Europe lived. In line with the new Communist Ideology overall social and economical changes took place in these countries, affecting the entire population, Roma included. In spite of the common ideological parameters the policies towards “Gypsies” were not identical, there were differences, based on models from the past and own national strategies. The main aim of the policies of the states was integration in society, which in some countries reached a stage of a striving towards assimilation.* ◀

SUMMARY/INTRODUCTION

The end of the Second World War and the subsequent years brought radical change to the countries of Eastern Europe. Local Communist parties came to power in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria Yugoslavia and Albania within the active support of the Soviet Union and established full control in all spheres of public life. A new type of state-political system was established, which according to its own phraseology was defined as “socialist”. Overall social and economic changes were carried out, part of them directly concerned with “Gypsies”, who in various degrees and in different periods were also a target of active Government policy.

GENERAL FRAMEWORK AND SPECIFIC FEATURES

When the so-called “socialist bloc” in Eastern Europe is mentioned, frequently the impression is that it refers to a monolithic totalitarian system, directly under Moscow rule, where a common policy dominated in all spheres. To a certain extent this was the case, yet quite a lot of differences and specific features in the

separate countries remained. The monolithic unity of the countries in Eastern Europe, ruled by Communist parties broke up as early as the late 1940s in Yugoslavia. In the 1950s Albania also set out on its own course. In spite of remaining a member of the Warsaw Treaty and Comecon in many aspects Romania demonstrated to a lesser or smaller extent a certain “independence”. Within certain nuances, this also emerged in the remaining countries of Eastern Europe. [III. 1]

COMMUNIST EUROPE

III. 1

■ Countries that have been totally governed on communist principles:

E. GERMANY, POLAND, CZECHOSLOVAKIA, HUNGARY, YUGOSLAVIA, ALBANIA, BULGARIA, ROMANIA, MONGOLIA, U.S.S.R

■ Countries that are still communist today:

N. KOREA, VIETNAM, LAOS, CAMBODIA, CHINA, CUBA

In fact it is not possible to speak of the existence of some kind of general model for the countries of Eastern Europe especially in the sphere of internal national policy. On the surface, on the ideological level there was total unity, and each country declared that its national policy was based on the “principles of Marxism-Leninism”; nevertheless in practice matters were quite different.

Most generally speaking there were two models of national policy in



III. 2 *Coppersmith, Bulgaria, in 1956.*
(by G. Lükö, from Fraser 1995, p. 280)



III. 3 *Ursari (bear leader), Bulgaria.*
(by Rolf Bauerdick, from Guy 2001, p. 328)



III. 4 *Charcoal makers, Bulgaria.*
(by Rolf Bauerdick, from Guy 2001, p. 328)



III. 5 *Metal traders from Meteol, Romania.*
(from Djurić 1992, *Ohne Heimat ohne Grab*, table 8)



III. 6 *Horse trader, Romania.*
(from Djurić 1992, *Ohne Heimat ohne Grab*, table 4)



III. 7 *Brickmakers from Craiova, Romania.*
(from Djurić 1992, *Ohne Heimat ohne Grab*, table 11)

In some eastern European regions Roma still work in professions which do not require a permanently fixed abode. Itinerant crafts have to a certain extent outlived the measures of the Communist regimes to sedentarize the Roma and the general trend towards sedentarization. Up to the day, for example, there are bearleaders, presenting their animals to the tourists on Black Sea coast, and horsedealers.

III. 8 (provided by the authors)

Eastern Europe, which could be defined as “ethno-national” and as “post-imperial”. The former dominated in Poland, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, and Albania (Czechoslovakia could also be included in this group albeit with some reservations – it was a federal state, made up of two countries). These countries constituted one nation (in Czechoslovakia two) which was the basis of the formation of a nation state, and “minorities” (the remaining smaller communities, whatever terms

are used to define them in the various countries). The second model (“post-imperial”) is typical for the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. Here, at least officially, there was no “main” nation and minorities, but a complex hierarchical structure of national/ethnic communities with or without their own state/administrative formations, unified in a new, “higher” type of formation – “the Soviet people” and “Yugoslavs”.

The different approaches of state

policy towards Roma in the countries of Eastern Europe however do not mean that we cannot draw any common principles, regularities and models in their realization. These common characteristics of a state policy towards Roma, whatever the differences and specifics in their realization, are indicative in general for Roma in Eastern Europe over the fixed period (between the end of the Second World War and the “wind of change” from the end of the 1980s).

SEDENTARIZATION OF ITINERANT ROMA

Sedentarization of Roma is a typical example of the combination of common and specific policies within state poli-

cies in East European countries. What is common in this case, is that processes of sedentarization (or at least significant limiting of nomadism) of itinerant Roma were unfolding throughout the examined period in whole Eastern Europe. These processes in the separate countries

however are with own peculiarities in the forms of state policies that directed them and differences in the time of their realization.

The initial positions of the processes of sedentarization in the countries of Eastern Europe also differ. Of course

ROMANI EMPLOYMENT

III. 9 (world bank study xxxx)

COUNTRY	ALL ROMA	MEN	WOMEN	AGRI-CULT	INDUS-TRIAL	OTHER
Bulgaria (1983)	85	85				
Czechoslovakia (1970)		66.3	41.2			
(1980)	75	87.5	34.9	10.2	83.9	5.9
Slovakia			76.6	4.2	19.2	
Hungary (1958)		65	30			
(1985)		78.5				
Poland (1968)	34					
Yugoslavia (1985)				20	50	30

The high employment level of Roma in many Communist countries did not mean social integration. Most often the Roma were employed as workers in factories, being restricted to the lowest positions. Serving as a “flexible and compliant reserve pool of unskilled workers”, their position was “akin to that of migrant workers in the West, needed for their labour but undesired as citizens - whith the major difference that this was their own country.”

(quotations from Will Guy, *The Czech lands and Slovakia: Another false dawn?*, in: Guy 2001, p. 293)

SEDENTARIZATION OF NOMADS: REPRESSION OR ASSISTANCE?

III. 10 (provided by the author)

No doubt the question of the way the issue of sedentarization of nomads in Eastern Europe is seen today is interesting. In many scientific and human rights publications this policy is seen as the peak of the repressive policies of the Communist parties towards Roma. This view is also shared by some present day Roma activists, who however come from Roma groups settled for centuries. Generally speaking in Eastern Europe Roma themselves and especially former traveling Roma have a positive attitude towards measures for settlement. These are best expressed by those who lived through the events. The positive attitude is stronger for instance in Bulgaria or in the countries of the former Soviet Union than in Czechoslovakia and Poland, where sedentarization was accompanied by repressive measures (confiscation of horses and property).

Another factor is much more important when we assess the policy of sedentarization of nomadic Roma. At the time from the 1950s to the 1970s in countries of Eastern Europe a serious crisis had begun to affect the nomadic way of life. Due to changing social and economic conditions the nomads themselves had to seek possibilities to settle (or to lead a semi-nomadic way of life) and new strategies for economic realization. The active interference of the state came at an appropriate historical moment (which is a rare event in the history of state policies towards Roma) and substantially assisted the natural development of the community and its integration (for example through the provision of loans and subsidies for the building of dwellings).

it is impossible to cite precise data, however we can assume that over 3/4 of the Roma in Poland and at least 2/3 of the total Roma population in the Soviet Union were (semi-)nomads. At the other end were Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia, where itinerant Roma, subject to government policy were fewer than 5% of the total Roma population. In the remaining countries the relative share of nomadic Roma varied in between, i.e. in Romania and Yugoslavia the itinerant Roma were not more than 1/3, and in Hungary and Albania not more than 1/4 of the total.

In most East European countries sedentarization of nomadic Roma was done by virtue of a Government act or party decision (which was one and the same). The Soviet Union, where a special law banned an itinerant way of life, was the first country to undertake

an active policy for resolving the “problem” of nomadic Roma. On October 5, 1956, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR issued a decree on “The Inclusion of Itinerant Gypsies in Labor Activities”. The same model was applied in Bulgaria, where a decree on “The Resolution of the Issues of the Gypsy Minority in Bulgaria” was adopted by the Council of Ministers 1958. In Czechoslovakia a law on “Settlement of Itinerant Persons” was passed in the same year; the nuances are insignificant essentially. In Poland, after the unsuccessful attempt in 1952 on the part of the Government to persuade itinerant Roma to settle voluntarily in the free western territories (after the deportation of the German population), the Ministry of the Interior issued a resolution on the obligatory sedentarization of itinerant

“Gypsies” in 1964. In Romania special measures towards the sedentarization of itinerant “Gypsies” began after 1977 when the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party adopted a program for their social integration, where sedentarization is one of the aspects, however not the most important one.

In the remaining countries in Eastern Europe sedentarization of nomadic Roma was not an act of any special policy towards them, rather it ran within the framework of the general legislation (the requirement for a fixed place of residence, a fixed work place etc). In Hungary this process took place during the second half of the 50ties, and in Albania and Yugoslavia in the 1960s and 1970s.

It should be noted that the state policies towards sedentarization of no-

POLAND: EFFECTS OF COMPULSORY SETTLEMENT

“When enforcing settlement [1964] the authorities simply neglected to prepare any plans to enable Roma to start a new life. There were no decent flats for them, no employment and nothing that would enable them to adjust gradually to wider society and to change their previous living patterns. Where they were allocated council flats among ‘ordinary people’, conflicts soon appeared. [...] In the years that followed, after the Roma had been sufficiently discouraged from resuming their travels, the authorities virtually lost interest in them. This was when Romani patterns of adjusting to their new lives were established. The Roma took to dealing in foreign currency and valuables - mainly gold, cars, antiques and carpets. Those who had relatives abroad had more opportunities for making a living by smuggling goods or selling cars stolen in Western countries.”

Ill. 11 (from Lech Mróz, Poland: the clash of tradition and modernity, in: Guy 2001, pp. 257-258)



Ill. 12
„Gypsy best-workers of socialist labour“. Sofia, end of the 1940s, in the middle Schakir Paschov, then MP in Bulgaria.

(from the Archives of Studii Romani, Sofia, Bulgaria)

madic Roma did not always lead to the desired results. In the Soviet Union part of the Roma, officially settled, continued with their old way of life up to the 1960s when they gradually began to turn to new economic activities. The itinerant way of life generally is dying out (ho-

wever not entirely disappearing) with most of the Roma in Yugoslavia. In Bulgaria separate Roma groups, in spite of owning a dwelling and nominally with regular employment, continue to travel during the warm seasons (which was the traditional model of nomadic way of life

in the Balkans). The policy of sedentarization had the least results in Romania, where in 1977 the census officially declared 66.500 nomadic Roma and where the model of a seasonal nomadism has survived to this day in various Roma groups. [Ills. 2-10]

SPEED UP INTEGRATION

The policy directed towards the public integration of Roma dominated in East European countries, however its realization had a variety of forms. Two approaches exist, both of them topical to this day: the “mainstream one” and the “special one”. With the former what is absent are special state measures for social integration of Roma, and they are treated within the framework of the existing mainstream policies towards the whole population. The latter approach towards the Roma is that towards a separate community with specific problems, which presuppose specific measures for their resolution.

The first approach is typical above all for the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Poland and Albania where there are no special government programs for Roma

(in the USSR and Poland there is one exception – the program for sedentarization of itinerants). The only sphere of public life, where the principle of the mainstream policy for Roma was not applied, was the preservation and development of their ethno-cultural identity. The Roman Theatre in the USSR is one of the most famous sights of Moscow; there are over 100 Roma musical and dance ensembles, under various institutions, Roma music was recorded and had a very large circulation, together with “Gypsy” folklore. The situation in Yugoslavia with the active support of the state is similar. The situation is somewhat similar in Poland, although on a more limited scale. [Ill. 11]

In the remaining four countries (Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria) there was a “special” approach in the state policy for public integration of Roma. The presence of such an approach does not exclude the

“mainstream approach”, and in many cases public integration of Roma took place within its framework, but in others the state took the decision on the need of special measures as well. The sedentarization policies for Roma were only one of the examples in this plan. [Ill. 14]

In Bulgaria the “Resolution of the Issues of the Gypsy Minority in Bulgaria” (which we already cited) was adopted in 1958, and followed in 1978 by the decree “On the Further Improvement of Work among Bulgarian Gypsies, for Their More Active Inclusion in the Building of the Developed Socialist Society”; the Romanian Communist Party prepared a “Program for the Social Integration of Gypsies”; and in Czechoslovakia – following the events of 1968 and the adoption of a new Constitution – in 1972 the “Conception on the Overall Public and Cultural Integration of Gypsies” was

“HORSES, COWS AND GYPSIES”

“[The] Government Decree 502/1965 introduced a planned programme for transferring Roma from overcrowded settlements in Slovakia and dispersing them to suitable locations in the Czech lands. A maximum permissible portion of Roma per community was set at 5 per cent [...].

As a Romani spokesman sardonically commented: ‘They planned the numbers for each village - horses, cows and Gypsies’ [...].”

Ill. 13 (from Will Guy, *The Czech lands and Slovakia: Another false dawn?*, in: Guy 2001, p. 291)

“MAINSTREAM” POLICIES WITH “SPECIAL” EFFECTS: STERILIZATION IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Sterilization in Czechoslovakia is usually seen as a drastic example of a “special” policy towards Roma in Eastern Europe – in this case what is cited is the decree issued by the Ministry of Health on February 29, 1972, allowing voluntary sterilization of women, who had given birth to more than four mentally retarded children, accompanied by financial encouragement. This decree, in theory in line with the “mainstream” principles of the policies (i.e. not directly addressed towards Roma), repeated (in a milder way) similar state norms and practices of Switzerland and the Scandinavian countries. The example, however, illustrates that theoretically “mainstream” policies may lead to “special”, in many cases discriminating results in practice – rather than on the privileged members of a given society, restrictions tend to be imposed on the already restricted. In the case of “voluntary” sterilization in Czechoslovakia, more than half of the women subjected to sterilization in the 1970s were Roma women.

Ill. 14 (provided by the authors)

issued, further developed and amended in 1976. As a whole all these party and government documents contain several main directions, which the special state policy towards “Gypsies” should follow. They stand for the provision of full and lasting employment, the solution of the problems of housing and health, encompassing in the educational system of Roma children and the improvement of their educational level, the promotion of Roma culture etc. [Ill. 12]

Nevertheless there is also a number of specific points of emphasis in

state policies of the separate countries, especially in the specific realization of the main spheres mentioned. In Bulgaria new boarding schools began to be established since 1961, and from 1966 on part of the schools where Roma children prevail were transformed into “General Secondary Schools with Strengthened Labor Training”. In Romania special measures were directed towards reducing the number of children in Roma families (allowances were only given to families with up to 5 children), owing to the great number of Roma children

abandoned in nursing homes and orphanages. In Hungary in 1961 special measures were envisaged against the discrimination of Roma in Hungarian society, and the housing program of 1964 envisaged liquidation of 2.500 Roma separate settlements. In Czechoslovakia a government decree of 1965 also envisaged the destroying of Roma quarters, chiefly in Eastern Slovakia, and dispersing of Roma living there to Slovak villages and towns and to the industrial regions of the Czech Socialist Republic. [Ill. 13]

CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL HERITAGE

Differences in state policy of the separate countries are frequently determined or at least influenced by earlier cultural and historical models. In fact the examined East European countries took shape in the 19th and 20th century, based on three empires – the Ottoman Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Russian Empire, each of which offered three different models of state policy towards Roma. The specifics of these main models and their influence on later historical stages could be traced with the

example of housing policy in the different countries of Eastern Europe.

The old imperial cultural and historical specifics of the three empires are directly reflected in the various models of resettlement of settled Roma (which in the Ottoman Empire and Austro-Hungarian Empire prevail considerably over nomadic Roma). In the Ottoman Empire (respectively Bulgaria, Albania, and most of Yugoslavia and Romania) Roma live within the area of the settlement, in their own ethnically determined quarters, called “mahala”, like the remaining ethnic communities. In the Austro-Hungarian Empire (respectively Hungary, Czechoslovakia, large parts of

Romania and smaller parts of Yugoslavia and Poland) Roma live in settlements of their own, beyond the confines of the settlement, sometimes kilometers away, in the so called “ciganytelep” in Hungary, “osada”, “kolonia” in Slovakia, “kolonia”, “tigania” in Romania, “osada” in Southern Poland etc. In the Russian Empire (respectively the USSR and part of Poland) Roma most often live mixed with the remaining population, usually in one or several tens of houses one next to the other (with the exception of Transcarpathia where the Austro-Hungarian model prevails).

The respective state policy towards Roma in the countries of Eastern

EMANZIPATION IN YUGOSLAVIA

"In spite of inter-ethnic and political tensions following the death of Tito in 1980, the first Roma had been elected to town councils and Sait Balić from Niš became a member of the Serbish National Prliament. Four years later there were already fifty-three elected Romani members of town or provincial councils in addition to the one seat in the Serbian Parliament [...].

In 1981 the first bilingual radio programme in Romani and Serbian had been broadcast from Belgrade, entitled 'A šunen romalen' (Listen, Roma) and the series continued until 1987."

Ill. 15 (from Donald Kenrick, *Former Yugoslavia: a patchwork of destinies*, in: Guy 2001, p. 406)

BULGARIA: HIDING THE ROMA AWAY

Bulgaria was declared a unitary (one-nation) state with no other nationality in it; "the Bulgarian Turks" were ascribed Bulgarian origin, forced to assume Turkish identity in the Ottoman Empire. As no "scientific" justification like that could be found in connection with Roma, in order to prove their Bulgarian origins, officially they ceased to exist. There was no mention of Roma in public places, in the media and academic publications, and in a number of places along railway lines and motorways Roma quarters were hidden behind concrete walls. This absurd policy failed to achieve any result and did not help in the successful integration of Roma in the Bulgarian nation; on the contrary, the opposite effect was achieved.

Ill. 16 (provided by the authors)

Europe is in line with these historically determined circumstances. In Hungary and Slovakia the tendency is towards a total liquidation of separate established Roma settlements, the steps in Hungary being more effective (about 2.500 "ci-

ganytelep" existed in Hungary, most of which were destroyed). In Romania the state policy in the housing sphere is varied and not consistent, as is the variety and historical heritage in various regions of the country. In Bulgaria the existing

decrees for the removal of the Roma quarters were not followed by any serious activities, while in Yugoslavia and Albania there is no special state policy towards Roma, as well as in the Soviet Union and Poland.

ORGANIZATIONS. "ROMA MOVEMENT" IN YUGOSLAVIA

An important feature of the state policy towards Roma in the countries of Eastern Europe is the attitude to Roma organizations. In fact, the very establishment and development of such organizations was not possible without the approval and active support of the state and party structures. [Ill. 15]

Against this background, the push for self organization and emancipation, which gradually had evolved among Roma in Western Europe, leading to the founding of various organizations and finally to the begin of the later so-called "Romani Movement" from the 70s onwards, did not lead to

comparable results in the East. Still, there have been more or less singular and short-term initiatives in Bulgaria and in Czechoslovakia. In Hungary, considerable cultural activities were carried out.

The situation in Yugoslavia is a specific case. In an 1969 article in the "Vecherni Novosti" newsletter in Belgrade, Slobodan Berberski, Rom and Communist functionary of long standing, political prisoner, resistance fighter from the WW2, member of the Central Committee of the Union of Yugoslav Communists (UYC), announced that Yugoslav Roma would create their own organization, which had the main aim to assist Roma to achieve the status of a "nationality" (at that time Yugoslavia had a complex state legislation and

hierarchic system, dividing the communities into different categories – ethnic groups, nationality, nation).

After the creation of the "Rom Association" in 1969 the process of building up branches in the various republics began, and after that in the separate towns, together with creation of other Roma associations (cultural, sports, etc.). In the 1970s over 60 Roma organizations existed and their number was constantly on the increase. Various initiatives, largely cultural events (involving Roma ensembles, festivals), were supported by the Yugoslav state; books were published in Romani, Roma TV and radio broadcasts began (in Kosovo). In 1986 existing Roma associations united in a Union of Roma Associations in Yugoslavia.

PUBLIC INTEGRATION AND/OR ASSIMILATION

When state policies towards Roma in Eastern Europe during the so-called "socialist period" are mentioned, as-

sessments remain to this day in the spirit of the "cold war". These policies as a whole and in their concrete manifestations are seen as synonymous to one of the numerous crimes of totalitarian regimes. It is difficult today, seen from the point of view of ideological

clichés, to find an objective and all sided analysis of these state policies in their breadth.

The main problem here is to come to a precise distinction and to establish the relations between two interrelated and frequently overlapping

BULGARIA: "COMPLETE NATIONAL HOMOGENEITY"

Ill. 17 (from Crowe 1995, p. 25)

"Officials also began to eliminate Gypsy cultural organisations, though Roma students in Lom created an illegal Gypsy discussion group and a soccer club. Authorities warned the soccer club members about having separate Gypsy teams and added that the teams shouldn't have Gypsy names. Later, team members were forced to change the names of the squads to Botev, Levski, etc. (all Bulgarian national heroes). However, the Bulgarian secret police said that Gypsy teams should not bear the names of Bulgarian heroes and ordered each team to have five Bulgarian members. Consequently, the Gypsy members disbanded the soccer clubs.

The practical implication of these policies was the destruction of Roma self-identity through continued forced integration and

Bulgarization. [...] In fact, within several years after the promulgation of the new constitution, Bulgarian officials began to talk of a 'unified Bulgarian socialist nation,' which one newspaper claimed was "almost completely one ethnic type, and is moving toward complete national homogeneity." [...] Bulgarian Gypsies, however, found ways around some of the new restrictions. They officially adopted Bulgarian names, which they used for documents and school, but continued to use their Gypsy names at home and in the Gypsy community. In addition, when they chose Bulgarian names, they often picked those of famous politicians, composers, or music stars."

processes – the processes of social integration and assimilation. In the course of history many peoples, who lived surrounded by alien nations, passed their way from social integration to assimilation (as a natural process or as the outcome of a certain state policy). Following the logic of this model (which by no means is universal), and applying it towards Roma, each state measure in Eastern Europe directed towards Roma could be regarded a step aiming at assimilation.

Bulgaria is the only country in Eastern Europe where the policy of integration of Roma ends in a direct policy of full and unconditional assimilation. Attitudes to Roma here are subordinated to the policy towards the Turkish minority. A decision of the Politburo in 1962 notes "the negative tendencies of Turkification" among Bulgarian Muslims, "Gypsies" and Tatars; what followed gradually was a policy of "encouragement" of changing Turkish-Arabic names with Bulgarian names. The last stage of this policy was connected with the so-called "revival process" in the winter of 1984-1985 when mass action, involving the Security services forced all Turks, Bulgarian Muslims (Pomaks) and muslim Roma to change their names. In fact this "revival process" was in effect a forced assimilation, carried out by force to its last phase. [Ills. 16-17]

Assimilatory tendencies towards

Roma could be found in state policy in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and to a certain extent in Romania. In the 1950s and 1960s more or less openly there was talk of "natural assimilation of Gypsies" in Hungarian society. In the 1970s the logic of state policy was already different, assuming a constructive spirit, to put it in modern terms. The Hungarian state began to support the integration of Roma in society, as well as the preservation and development of their ethnic culture, however it did not grant them the status of a national minority, as it did for other minority communities. The logical conclusion of this approach was also assimilation, however drawn far with time.

The policy towards Roma in Czechoslovakia followed quite similar principles. Here Roma were defined according to official norms as a community of a different nature, which could not be compared with other minorities, with a different status ("citizens of Gypsy origin"). The policy towards Roma was defined as "social integration" and "acculturation", however in practice this meant (without directly being formulated so in official party and state documents) directing the development towards future assimilation.

Somewhat similar was the situation in Romania, where assimilation of Roma in Romanian society has led

to the emergence of large groups of the population of Roma origin, who have lost (entirely or partially) their Roma identity and ethnic and cultural characteristics. The Romanian State accepted this process for granted and for that reason did not pay much attention to Roma, regarding their problems as social and not ethnic. [Ill. 18]

It would not be justified to speak of assimilation attitudes and tendencies in state policy towards Roma, even as a long term perspective in other Eastern European countries. Actually in Poland and Albania which are countries based on an one-national model, the state policy towards Roma was so insignificant, that it cannot be seen in this context. Indeed Roma in Yugoslavia raised the question of receiving an official status, equal to other peoples (eventually they were granted this status shortly before the break up of Yugoslavia), however the absence of such a status cannot be interpreted in support of an assimilation policy. The concept of "Yugoslavism" presupposed the transformation of all peoples into a new type of community (Yugoslavs), yet this did not mean preliminary assimilation of Roma into other nations.

The situation was analogous in the USSR, where anyway Roma are quite an insignificant community (in comparison with the scale in the Soviet Union) and it would be naïve to speak

ROMANIA: ROMA AS SECONDARY TARGETS OF “SYSTEMATIZATION”

The known policy of “systematization” carried out by Nicolae Ceausescu in the 1970s and 1980s included mass destruction of separate urban and rural quarters and of entire villages and settlement of the inhabitants in new dwellings. This was chiefly realized in Transylvania, which also led to inner migrations of Roma within Romania proper. However this policy was not chiefly orientated towards Roma, as was considered sometimes, but in

a national aspect was more directed towards a diminution of the size of the Hungarian minority, and the Roma in this case had been perceived as representatives of the majority, i.e. of the Romanian nation, hence assimilation aims towards them were left to take their natural course in the distant future.

Ill. 18 (provided by the authors)

of a special policy for their assimilation. What prevailed in the Soviet Union was a state concept of the futu-

re “Soviet people” (a metaphor, analogue of the present day formulation of the “common European family”),

which presupposed the unification of all peoples in a qualitatively new formation.

CONCLUSION

If we consider that we are analyzing a final outcome from a present day point of view and that the most important criteria is reaching a higher level of integration simultaneously with the preservation of ethnic and cultural characteristics, we can summarize on the whole that state policies (not a single policy!), regardless of the aims set, eventually achieve quite varied results for the Roma in Eastern Europe. On the one hand, living conditions of Roma and their educational level

has seen a rapid improvement in comparison with past historic periods, the degree of their integration has grown, and considerable strata of relatively well educated Roma have emerged etc. On the other hand, however, the price paid for this integration is quite high. Many Roma in Eastern Europe take on the road of social degradation and marginalization, a process which considerably expanded and went in depth after the “wind of change”. What is indicative is that these processes are best expressed and felt strongest in countries with

clearly formulated specific policies towards Roma (the Czech Republic and Slovakia, Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria) and to a lesser extent where such policies were limited or simply absent. The final outcome of the policies towards Roma in the countries of Eastern Europe are achieved above all due to the overall social development and the “mainstream” policy towards Roma (the same policy as towards the remaining citizens), and to a much lesser extent due to the “specific” policies towards them as a separate community.

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