

Unlike the USA and Japan, western Europe did not have such a backyard. Now, its corporations got the possibility to build up a huge network of branches, subsidiaries, and value chains in the east, which made them competitive again on the world market against the USA and Japan.

The other central question is whether it was right to include eleven eastern countries as full members of the European Union with their rather different economic levels, business cultures, and political backgrounds. Or was Giscard d'Estaing right when he prophesized that this enlargement will be the end of the EU? Would it have been better to keep this region in an outside, connected status, but not give it full membership, as was suggested but immediately rejected? These questions are totally missing. Instead, the author broadly covers the non-acceptance of Ukraine. After the introduced new Neighborhood Policy (2003), Ukraine, stated the author, "found itself in the same boat as Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, and a dozen other North African and post-Soviet countries" (317). One should hear that further eastern enlargement would be suicidal for the EU. Even the previous ones turned to be questionable.

The Great Recession after 2008 that hit the east very hard is well discussed. But the authoritarian turn, first in Putin's Russia and then the "Orbanization" of a large part of the former Soviet Bloc, the so-called Visegrad countries, especially Hungary and Poland and its impact on Europe and the EU, would have required a deep analysis. This became a central question about the impact of the post-1989 east on the west.

The author is right that the age of neoliberalism is strongly questioned after 2008, and its challenge, state capitalism (best represented by China and Russia), is "not only looming on the horizon but has already arrived in the EU" (335). Has it arrived to the core of Europe as well? Is it a real alternative? Under neoliberalism the book presents the EU as forcing austerity measures on several member countries after 2008: "Angela Merkel will be perceived as an advocate of a social rather than a social market economy" (337). The negative effects of the austerity policy are evident. This question, however, is more complex than how it was presented. Irresponsible fiscal policy, spending beyond their means by governments and citizens' alike, and silently accepting tax evasion and widespread corruption in most of the Mediterranean and some of the eastern countries, are not acceptable within the EU. The "educative" role of austerity is thus not negligible for the peripheral countries and especially for the creation of a more homogenous and working EU.

The book can claim positive achievements by presenting a quarter of a century of central and east European history, but it did not realize what its author promised and does not cover the history of Europe after 1989.

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***A Contemporary History of Exclusion: The Roma Issue in Hungary from 1945 to 2015.*** By Balász Majtényi and György Majtényi. Budapest: Central University Press, 2016. viii, 242 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. \$60.00, hard bound.

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The Roma entered Hungary in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries and quickly became respected as soldiers, metalsmiths, musicians, and equine specialists. But after Ottoman forces moved into the region, the Hungarian Roma were seen as "incendiaries, soldiers or spies" of the Turks, as I have described in my book *A History of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (71). Such prejudicial views

haunted the Roma for centuries and changed little after Maria Theresa and Joseph II adopted policies that tried to force the Roma to adopt a sedentary lifestyle and assimilate completely into Habsburg society. For the most part, these policies failed, though by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the vast majority of Hungary's vast Roma population had become sedentary.

It is unfortunate that the authors of this otherwise fascinating history of the Roma do not discuss the uniqueness of the historical presence of the Roma in Hungary. They call their work a "counter-history" (205) written by "non-Roma who seek to depict and equalize national history through the universal values of human rights" (5).

In the first chapter, "Comrades, If You Have a Heart . . .," they tell the history of the Roma in postwar Hungary from 1945–1961, a period when Hungarian leaders were forced to come to grips with the fact that they had in their midst a minority that had been living on the impoverished fringes of Hungarian society for centuries.

The second chapter deals in some depth with government efforts to force Roma assimilation by developing programs that addressed Roma poverty, educational backwardness, unemployment, housing, and the deep social prejudices that haunted them. While the story they tell is a bit sterile and deals principally with the mechanics of such policies, it is brought to life with a rich collection of photographs and other visual material that adds greatly to this portion of their study.

The last two chapters deal with the ebb and flow of Roma policies in Hungary from 1990 to 2010. The principal barrier to any dramatic changes in the fortunes of the Roma in the immediate years after the collapse of communism was the deep-seeded prejudice that viewed them as a dangerous group of criminals. Consequently, though a succession of governments passed laws that granted the Roma official ethnic status, what was not adequately addressed was the widespread prejudice and violent mistreatment of the Roma throughout the country. This, coupled with Roma inexperience in dealing with new opportunities of self-government vis à vis the vast authority of local governments, tended to hinder their realization of these newfound but limited freedoms. Though this was addressed in changes in the 2005 national minority law, questions remained about how the Roma could "be protected from the "majority" at the local level, or from politics-at-large at the national level" (134).

Fortunately, with the help of NGOs and pressure from the European Union, which insisted that Hungary adopt and implement anti-discriminatory and other standards to deal with such issues prior to joining the EU, as well as the growing autonomy and voice of Roma organizations, some positive changes were brought about. But the failure of authorities firmly to address the deep societal prejudice towards the Roma would ultimately play into the hands of the rightist Fidesz coalition which adopted a new constitution in 2011 that marked a dramatic shift away from the earlier, more liberal pro-Roma policies since 1990. According to Human Rights Watch, the drift rightward in Hungary has led to a dramatic increase in anti-Roma discrimination and violence, which the authors point out moves the Hungarian state into "the central tower of the Panopticon"—"the modern institution of control" (187, 200).

While the authors are to be complimented on their work, it is really a traditional study of the Roma using a mix of sources that are typical of similar works. Unfortunately, this approach is flawed, particularly now given the broad access of scholars and others to Hungary's diverse Roma communities. What any study of the Roma now demands is that any such discussion of their history and place within Hungarian society must first and foremost be seen from their perspective, with serious attention given to their voice and interpretation of such history.

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