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Eszter Varsa's *Protected Children, Regulated Mothers* is an insightful study on the social and political implications of child protection in Stalinist/communist Hungary. By focusing on the practices and policies of child protection concerning the Roma, the book provides a thorough account on anti-gypsy stereotypes, on the overrepresentation/high rate of Roma children in institutions, and on the attempted regulation of the sexuality and employment of Romani mothers. Rather than observing childcare institutions as tools for maintaining totalitarian terror, in her new study Varsa examines how these institutions mirrored and reshaped cultural attitudes toward the Roma.

The first chapter in Varsa's study explains how child protection in the early state-socialist period in Hungary was enacted. Here, Varsa gives a much-detailed overview of the historical and legal context of postwar restructuration of foster and institutional care, as well as of the network and function of children's homes. And she also describes the lives of children in these homes, based on interviews with people who lived there. This chapter lays emphasis on the "Gypsy question." As Varsa argues, since the authorities identified the Roma as a social rather than an ethnic minority, they organized their assimilation policy according to their labor-force value and attitude to work. Thus, three categories were established: the assimilated Roma, who have given up their wandering/nomadic lifestyle and could be seen as a perfect role model for the Hungarian socialist citizen; the semi-assimilated, who had temporary work and often lived in segregated shelters; and the "social parasites," meaning the Gypsy travelers who could not be assimilated. This perception and treatment of the Roma followed, rather than opposed to, the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century racial hygienic discourse, by which wandering Gypsies, and Gypsies in general, were viewed as dangerous to the racially pure and settled societies. The author claims that the "solution to the Gypsy question" placed emphasis on the reeducation of children and the exercise of control over the behavior of their parents.

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The second chapter offers an intersectional survey of children's placement in state care. First, this chapter focuses on the forced child-protection of institutions used over Roma mothers to make them find paid employment. Then, the author turns her attention to the antigypsy prejudices of caseworkers who evaluated these mothers as work-shy and as women whose children are hindering their regular participation in the work market. As Varsa argues, the authorities sought to portray Romani mothers as lazy and negligent persons, who would institutionalize their children to break away from all financial responsibilities of their upbringing. Due to the anti-gypsy prejudice of society, most Roma women were on the brink of poverty because they had only attained poorly paid jobs or were unemployed. Thus, these women had no other way but to request or accept the institutionalization of their children for the sake of their overall well-being.

The third chapter describes the regulation of Romani women's sexuality through child protection as a means of reinforcing the ideal of the socialist female citizen. As Varsa explains, lone mothers were regularly represented in case-files of children in state-care as living a morally questionable lifestyle, with many of them being accused of extramarital sexual relations and prostitution, and thus posing a threat for the moral development of their children. Romani women were particularly vulnerable to these regulations for their negative characterization as work-shy and sexually deviant. The state-care authorities wanted to make sure that these women brought up their children to become productive citizens and therefore acted to transform the Roma into working-class Hungarian citizens. Varsa pays special attention to the case-files of young women. These files reveal that control of sexual behavior reflected the view that girls in their teens were in "a dangerous phase" of their lives, since they were particularly exposed to immoral sexual behavior and could exercise a negative influence on their peers and society, and first and foremost their children. While communist morality highlighted the importance of equal partnership between men and women in marriage life, it also saw sexuality outside the nuclear family as a danger to productive work and women's participation in the construction of socialism.

The fourth chapter concentrates on the education of children in residential homes during the early 1950s. Here, Varsa first gives a thorough historical overview on the origin of physical work as a part of education in European residential institutions since the late eighteenth century. Then, she focusses on the concept of education for work under state socialism, which saw work in combination with studying as pivotal to the improvement of children's learning skills. Moreover, physical education was seen as engaging children in the pleasure of work and as indispensable for the assimilation of Roma children, since it directed their attention to the value of labor. Yet, clearly, the daily routines of these home residences also reflect Michel Foucault's view of institutions as places of servility and control, where inhabitants lead a disciplined and easily administrable life.

The fifth chapter describes the controversial history of the infant home at Lajos Lóczy Street in Budapest. This home was founded in 1946 by the pediatrician Emmi Pikler, whose pedagogical principles stressed the positive effects of infants' ability to exercise, play and reach their own rhythm or pace of their development without the intervention of adults. As Varsa points out, while the home received appraisal in some Western European countries for its rigorous pedagogic methodology, it was not only an outdated form of child protection but also part of those state institutions where, during the Rákosi regime, children of **Roma and non-Roma** people who had been arrested, or sentenced to death and executed, were placed. The

author illustrates the contemporary reputation of the Lóczy infant home through a reconstruction of the case of two children placed under institutional care, László Rajk Jr. and Mátyás Donáth. As children of political prisoners, both Rajk and Donáth were separated from their families, taken to the home, given new names and denied any contact with their relatives until the release of their parents. Recollections by those involved in these two cases reveal some contrasts between the generally negative view of the institution and the role of highly skilled professionalists working in it, such as Dr. Pikler, who are all depicted within the same interviews. The paradoxes in these recollections give an impression of how the memory of the communist past has been shaped and reshaped over the decades since it ended and of the extent to which presently renewing political waves can affect the once-was spaces of memory culture.

All in all, Varsa's *Protected Children, Regulated Mothers* is a brilliant and highly important study that reveals the practices and policies of Hungarian childcare institutions in the early communist era. The book offers a complex analysis of social-policy considerations of child protection, including gender specific and ethnic discrimination, the regulatory functions of the institutions, and the Marxist educational principles that emphasized work and re/production. It gives insight to how children's homes attempted to raise Roma children in accordance with the ideal of the socialist citizen, while also exposing the antigypsy prejudices that dominated the assimilationist policy of these homes. By giving voice to those placed under institutional care in such homes, the book also offers new thoughts about how the memory of the past can be shaped and reshaped in various modes of remembrance.