

Anti-gypsyism and migration

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Reflecting on identity is a key point in comprehending the whole Roma issue. The attribution of an identity from the outside on the basis of allegedly ethnical characteristics, e.g. the nomadic life, should be replaced with a self-determined identity, in which the ethnicity only represents one aspect among other characteristics. Heteronomous identification is a typical feature of a racist Anti-gypsyism afflicted by prejudices, expressed by extermination, expulsion and repression. Migration of Roma has always been the result of their expulsion by the dominant society. The exaggeration in the mass-media of a "migration issue" caused by the Roma in Western Europe serves the political interests of nationalistic trends and parties. The Biblical associations with wanderers and homeless should be replaced with the image of the healed lepers, which is a model for the inclusion of the marginalized.

Keywords: Roma, Anti-gypsyism, migration, identity, exclusion, exegesis, racism, expulsion

The topic of this paper is Anti-gypsyism and Migration.¹ First I would like to make clear, who we talk about, when we talk about Roma, because the question of identity or identification will be present in my whole lecture. Then I would like to integrate the topic of migration of Roma in a wider context of historical and present anti-Gypsy discrimination and explain the term "Anti-gypsyism" in order to be able to apply this concept to current problems of migration of Roma in Europe.

In France, in the cities of Lille and Lyon, Roma-camps have been erased by force during the last weeks although during his presidential campaign the new French president Hollande had promised to act differently than his predecessor Sarkozy.²

In Austria the Supreme Court has decided recently that bans on begging conform with the existing constitution. These prohibitions were put up by some provincial governments after foreign beggars "with dark skin" had appeared.³

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¹ Gernot Haupt, *Antiziganismus und Sozialarbeit. Elemente einer wissenschaftlichen Grundlegung, gezeigt an Beispielen aus Europa mit dem Schwerpunkt Rumänien*, Berlin 2006; G. Haupt, *Antiziganismus und Religion. Elemente für eine Theologie der Roma-Befreiung, dargestellt anhand einer empirischen Untersuchung eines Roma-Viertels in Rumänien*, Münster 2009.

² Richard Schittly, "A Lyon: Pas d'expulsion sans solution? Il faut nous dire lesquelles!", in *Le Monde*, 15.08. 2012; Elise Vincent, "Après la polémique, les minces propositions de Hollande sur les Roms", in *Le Monde*, 17.02.2012.

³ <http://www.verfassungsgerichtshof.at/> viewed on 20.08.2012.