

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The text now before you is the result of six months' work by a team of experts of the Centre for Anti-War Action and the Institute for Criminological and Sociological Research. Their study was carried out in 1997, and was preceded by years of individual research by the participants. When the study was begun, there had not been much public discussion of the position of the Roma in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Attention had for several years been monopolised by the position of national minorities, then by the position of refugees, by attitudes towards the war, etc. It seemed that the Roma were not mentioned at all in connection with the war in the former Yugoslavia, as if they had never lived in the spaces where war operations raged. Data on this period is few, gathered and published by individual Roma associations, and had little public effect.

However, after the present study was completed, and while it was being printed, several tragic events, in one of which a young boy lost his life, brought the Yugoslav public face-to-face with the following questions: what is happening with the Roma, how do they live, are they disenfranchised, are they threatened, and if yes, who by? This book will answer only some of these questions, primarily those relating to the conditions of life of the Roma in Yugoslavia, to their social status, the degree of their integration and to the legal aspects of their position. It is our intention to spur with this study a discussion about how to improve the life of the Roma in Yugoslavia, while giving all due respect to their identity and culture. Also, this should be the introduction to another project by the Centre for Anti-War Action, which would in 1998 cover several Roma communities in Serbia. The aim of that project shall be the