

Children, labour and education in 19th century Romania: the construction of a working class

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19th century is often seen as a century of nationalities and political transformations in the Balkans. A true affirmation, but also a limitative and cliché one, from which we can start but we do not intend to entirely follow as our main objective is to observe socio-economic shifts in Romanian society with respect to working class. For this purpose, a long-durée approach was adopted and the political events were considered as a context.

In a constant numeric growth, the working class represented by the outbreak of the World War I 10% from the entire Romanian working population. To better explore its impact in society we used quantitative sources (censuses, economic surveys, statistical bulletins) which we added to legislation, memoirs, and archive documents. They gave us the possibility to see the shift from apprenticeship to vocational training in the formation of a qualified working personnel. The large information was structured in three related papers:

Paper 1. *Child labour and apprenticeship in Romanian society by mid-nineteenth century*

Children are an almost "invisible" working force as they become apprentices through verbal agreements between their parents/tutors and future masters. In contrast with the West, contracts were not commonly used. Still, legal disputes in front of the Court reveals the conditions, the relation apprentice-master and the economic importance of the child for his family. By the age of 12-14 years there is a preponderance of family/kin networks, while after this moment we witness individual formation. The 1838 Wallachian census brings forth three functions for children's co-residence outside parental household: economic, domestic and of social assistance. Later inquires over the population's occupations (1859, 1860) shows that: 1. urban environment is characteristic for journeymen and apprentices; 2. the girls prefer to enter the domestic service and 3. there is a discrepancy between the number of journeymen employed by a craftsman/merchant in both villages and towns.

Paper 2. *One law after another. Education, labour and law making in 19th century Romania*

In mid-nineteenth century Romanian space of Danubian Principalities (Wallachia and Moldavia) education becomes the heart of elite's debates, but vocational training emerges only at superior levels and as private initiative. The government's inquires in the Romanian counties showed the

financial difficulties and the lack of qualified personnel. For the last issue we observe a shift between importing Western specialists in the first half of the century to sending Romanian graduates for further specialization abroad. Labour legislation (1902-1912) follows the one for vocational training (1899/1901) and is in close relation with the role of workshop and school in the formation and financial retribution of Romanian workers.

Paper 3. *Labour after education. Vocational schools, graduates and economic growth in modern Romania (1878-1914)*

The paper explores the formation of a Romanian qualified working class through vocational trade schools, established at the end of 19th century in order to create a connexion between the village as a human resource and the cities. Legislation and official interventions introduce the levers through which is encouraged this process: employment in state-run establishments, subventions for opening new industrial workshops etc. For girls, most of the parents are functionaries and the school has a complementary social function, while for the boys the parents' occupations are mainly agricultural. A dataset of 1957 individuals for the period 1900-1908 reconstructs in detail both the socio-economic profile of the graduates and their employment history. The approach proves the preponderance of domestic industry over the metallurgical one but also a slight growth of population's interest in vocational training.

Keywords: childhood history, 19th century, Romania, South-Eastern Europe, labour market, working class