

THE SPREAD OF IDEAS ABOUT INDUSTRY AND EDUCATION IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY IN ROMANIA

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Abstract:

The nineteenth century in our country may be considered as being very important from the intellectual perspective and not only. Although, Romanians proved to be less inventively or too moderate on economic issues, in this century, some personalities, born in Romania and educated in the west part of Europe, tried to emancipate the country by spreading industrial and implicitly, economic ideas among Romanians, who did not wish for wealth, did not start wars to seek for wealth because they were already proud of their riches which have to be defended in their own country. The opening to Occident was a gradual but painful process, many of the original values disappeared being replaced by others more or less good, but bad behaviours and attitudes were naturally kept. We are convinced that the process through which new ideas are generated and ultimately translated into policies and programs that shape the flow of history may be too complex to be reduced to a simple and unidirectional schema; thus is why, we are going to present shortly the main ideas that changed the future of Romania in the nineteenth century.

Keywords: economic education, industry, economic emancipation

1. Introduction

The nineteenth century in Europe can be considered a century of revolutions. Whether they were national or social, industrial and cultural revolutions, their result was the modernization of European countries. Moreover, the nineteenth century was the century in which new ideologies took shape and determined major changes in Europe. European society underwent in the nineteenth century, fundamental changes in the cultural, economic, political and social environment. Population explosion and urbanization were expressed in the social, economic and political modernization of Europe in the nineteenth century, as manifested by the industrial revolution, by asserting a liberal ideology.

In the history of peoples, in different historical periods, there existed a kind of attraction for speaking about the "civilized countries" as about a complex fundamental "landmark". The less developed countries, as was the case of Romania in the nineteenth century, have emitted through the brightest minds, some ideas, theories and economic practices which were similar to the ones of the civilized West.

In Romania, some young writers who have made their studies in the West have identified the economic markers of what meant the civilization. The emphasis, sometimes with a note more or less nationalistic, was delivered to the public as evidence of the patriotism. Without going into the polemics of that period, we should still note the attachment of the economic writers and of the economists regarding the idea of political freedom. In the political context of events that would change the world, the idea of political freedom could not be achieved without the economic independence. The awareness of the national and international challenges has guided the economic way of thinking of the economists of the second half of the nineteenth century, who have been taking the ideas and ideals of their predecessors and emphasized it with a specific economic calculation of the time in which they lived. Martian, Hasdeu, Aurelian, Xenopol, Ghica and others agreed on the way to follow, and this could not be other than that leading to civilization, to capitalism, then imagined as a culmination of industry and education.

2. The education in the nineteenth century

Many ideas have endured over time proving their perennality and ensuring the continuity and trust in education as a means of achieving not only personal fulfillment, but also on understanding and influencing the components of the economic reality. Since ancient times, people have increasingly understood more clearly the meaning of education in enhancing the welfare and personal satisfaction, but also in improving the quality of life. Education acted in society as a function depending on the characteristics of the environment in which man lived and adapted to the social requirements. Education and instruction have been generated among others by the need to

administer the individual and public property. The fact is that education itself is a major factor when talking about the past of the society, but especially when we think about its future.

Thus, authors like John Kenneth Galbraith tried to show that our evolution as individuals and as a society is inextricably linked to education: „*The main factor of evolution, as individual, or as its children on the social scale is represented by education. Ignorance leads only to hard work, uncomfortable, boring and often, to not work at all. The improvement comes once with education and only with it; there is nothing without education and the only plausible last appeal is to crime and violence. It may be possible that people on the lower social level get the best education, as they are in great need of means to allow them to climb, to get rid of ignorance*” (Galbraith, 1997, p. 67).

Starting from such a point of view, one may notice that the nineteenth century is characterized by a relatively low access to higher education institutions. There were at that time vocational schools, but they too had a very small number of graduates.

Unfortunately, we are talking about a time when, according to reliable estimates, in 1899, in Romania, 84% of the rural population was illiterate (about 80% of the total population). This means that between 1848 and 1900, despite the legislative and functional efforts, the Romanian education has not fully achieved one of its main tasks, meaning the elimination of illiteracy, in order to contribute to bringing the Romanian society in the modernity area. However, one should not miss the fact that in some neighboring countries of Romania, which were great powers (Russia, Austrian-Hungary), illiteracy rates are still high and similar to those in Romania, on the eve of the year 1900 (Rădulescu, 2003). Regarding the economic education, in this period there are spreading the first signs which shows the awareness of its importance.

In that period of time, according to different historians, some vocational schools operated in major cities, usually in Bucharest and Iasi. In Bucharest, for this segment of education, statistics show that between 1852 and 1905 graduated 650 students, of which 207 between 1901 and 1905. At Iasi, from 1841 till 1905, graduated 500 students, of which 104 between 1901 and 1905 (Axenciuc, 2000, pp.460-464).

In the nineteenth century, observing the importance of the economical education in the development of the country, some of the rulers attempted to introduce the study of trade in schools, see Barbu Știrbei in Wallachia (1850). The Public Instruction Act of 5 December 1864, promulgated by Alexandru Ioan Cuza, had more implications on primary education and less on general commercial education, although provided for the establishment of trade schools in major cities: Bucharest, Iasi, Galati, Braila, Ploiesti, Craiova and Turnu Severin. The objective was difficult to achieve as a result of unfavorable conditions such as lack of teachers, schools and general disinterest shown by the population to this form of education (Vorovenci, 2010, p.24). Thus, the first business schools were founded in Galati (23 October 1864) and Bucharest (28 November 1864). By the law regulating public instruction in 1864, trade schools taught the following subjects: commercial and maritime law, accounting, commercial geography, economics and administrative law.

During the analyzed period, there were functional especially faculties of law, medicine, literature and science, but the number of teachers and students was also reduced in their case. Thus, the University from Iasi was working in the school year 1864/1865 with fourteen professors and 50 law students, 23 literature students and only 10 students in Science; in the school year 1898/1899 Iasi University was able to offer courses in four faculties (Law, Letters, Science, Medicine), working with 58 professors and respectively 129 students in Law, 117 students in Letters, 82 students in Science and 95 students in Medicine (Exposition Universelle de Paris de 1900, p.228). A similar situation is met at Bucharest University, founded in 1864 with three faculties (Law, Letters, Science) where, in the 1864/1865 school year, were employed 21 professors and 123 students (90 in Law, 21 in Letters, 12 in Science); in the school year 1898/1899 there were five faculties (Law, Science, Letters, Medicine, Theology), with 76 professors and 2141 students (815 in Law, 394 in Letters, 380 in Science, 148 in Theology, 404 in Medical Science (Exposition Universelle de Paris of 1900, p. 226).

Later, there are trade schools in other cities too, such as: Ploiesti (1874), Craiova (1878) and Iasi (1891) (Vorovenci, 2010, p.25). By 1883, business schools were under the Ministry of Public Education and Religious Affairs, after passed under the Ministry of Agriculture, Industry, Trade and Areas, out of the desire to bring closer the education to trade practice. In 1893 as Minister Petre P. Carp has started commercial education reform, trade schools are divided into two cycles. The reduction of the years of study from five to three explains the apparent disinterest in school. The statistics confirm this: in the first grade in school year 1887-1888 to trade school in Bucharest were enrolled 113 pupils, and the fifth grade was reached by only 16, in Ploiesti, at the elaboration of the Carp Law there were in the fifth grade only 9 students and during the school year 1893-1894 in Iasi there were only 12 students out of the 56 students initially enrolled (Vorovenci, 2010, p.27).

Commercial education began to gain consistency, according to historians at the beginning of the twentieth century, after the entry into force of Haret Act of 1899, which among others, had business schools pass under the Ministry of Public Instruction. Under the new law, commercial education was divided into elementary and higher schools of commerce, with evening and Sunday classes for boys, while girls followed the elementary schools of commerce. Unfortunately, during that period, education was not considered commercially attractive. Young people were less concerned with trade practice, their desires being similar to those today - fill a job without too much effort, and possibly rapid enrichment.

In such a context, the accelerating globalization started to show demands that the majority of the Romanians could not understand. The delay in the economic development, the political-state establishment, the

scarcity of instruction and education, the historical and geographical context marked by hostility, all these formed the gap between the "West" and "East". The renewing economic ideas penetrated hard, often deformed ... The relentless intelligence of some young people educated outside the Romanian land has started the struggle for "the economic emancipation of the nation" by promoting the ideas, the principles and the institutions on which was build the prosperity of the West.

2.1. Ion Ghica – a promoter of the emancipation process

Engineer by professional training, academician, politician, diplomat, writer, but economist by vocation, Ion Ghica, certainly, can be considered "*the father of political economy of the Romanians*" thanks to his restless efforts to fight with ignorance and economic backwardness in the territories which will define later the Romanians state. Fully engaged in the process of economic, social and political emancipation of the Romanians, Ion Ghica's name and work are related to the actions of harmonization of higher education institutions, which hesitatingly emerged registering a great delay to the West (Rogojanu et al, 2009).

He was fully convinced of the power of ideas to change the way people thought and he draw attention to this: "The world is ruled with ideas. Those ideas, some are good, useful, open, generous, others are wrong, false or liar. Blessed those people who is free of preconceived ideas and ruled by the truth!"(Ghica, 1937).

Initiator of some economic publications, author of the famous "Economic conversations", Ion Ghica intuited the active role of the media and the scarcity of publications because they were not approved by the running power. Fully aware that the national dream of emancipation can become reality only if the orientation of economic development in the Romanian territories abandon amateurism and follow clear rules of economic science, Ion Ghica was searching the unity where politics divides. Indeed, it was needed more, much more! It was needed an university of economic studies to open the minds of Romanians to civilized world. So is it that on November, 23 1843, Ion Ghica inaugurates the course of political economy at Academia Mihăileană in Iasi, marking the first breach in the inertia of the idyllic "life in the country" economy in favour of the industrial one (Rogojanu et al, 2009). In the opening lesson of the course of political economy at the Academy of Iasi – '*About the importance of political economy*' - Ion Ghica with excitement and enthusiasm reveals his scientific beliefs: "When someone looks at the big requirements the civilized world today expects from the political economy and when the other hand, then looks at the sight that paints our country in their passage from numb to the renewing flight to civilisation, he does not like other helm than economic policy, which is the only one able to enlighten us to search our material and moral interests" (Rogojanu et al, 2009).

The historical significance of the initiation of a university political-economics course has been emphasized by the great scholar Costin Murgescu, who, citing G. Zane, affirms: "It is not known exactly the number of people who attend the political economy course initiated by Ion Ghica at Academia Mihaileana in November 23 1843 - the date marking the inauguration of economic higher education in Romania", adding "the beginning was made up of Ion Ghica, and thus the path of a new economic thinking required to replace the feudal one, was opened" (Murgescu, 1987).

Ion Ghica endeavoured in a tireless and inventive effort to initiate the students in the mysteries of the classical economics, to create an economic terminology within the limits of the vocabulary in the language spoken in his time, but continually invoking the need for compliance with economic developments in science in Western world. In the same manner as Dionisie Pop Marțian, when he didn't find an equivalent term he invented one: for '*raw materials*' – '*materii întâietoare*'; for '*laisser faire, laisser passer*' – '*lasă să treacă slobod*'; for '*custom union*' – '*unitate de vămi*'; for '*navigation company*' – '*campanie de plutire*'; for '*prejudices and customs*' – '*prejudețe și vămi*'; for '*steam boat*' – '*vasul fumegător*'; for '*to contract*' – '*a contactirisi*'; for '*railroad*' – '*drum de fer*'; etc (Rogojanu et al, 2009).

With a power of abstraction peculiar to a mathematician, Ion Ghica captured the essence of science that he was trying to get acquainted to the Romanian people: "To conclude today's human metaphysical knowledge, we should talk about 'Political Economics'. This science it seems to stand on two principles: 1. that each nation to produce goods which are easy to produce locally, and to change these with those of other countries and 2. to let out an autonomous subject from one place to another. These two principles promise to increase the good of man and lead him to the most perfect happiness" (Ghica, 1937).

Initiator of an economic thinking school with a heteroclit doctrine, but visibly tilting toward liberalism, Ion Ghica, although a long "forgotten" (Slăvescu, 1937) economist, is the author from the second half of-nineteenth century that took courage and inspiration to use science in explaining of burning economic issues, from industry, commerce and agriculture, credit and money, taxes and duties until the general economic policy.

2.2. Dionisie Pop Marțian – ideas about industry and education

Dionisie Pop Marțian, one of the first Romanian economists, was educated at the University of Vienna, where he had been sent by the Greek-Catholic Archdiocese of Blaj, providing him a scholarship. The historiography lacks clarity in explaining the nature and duration of studies of Marțian (Marțian, 1961). Clearly, Dionisie Pop Marțian "breathed the air of the economic ideas of the List's protectionism", which were the dominant ideas in the

first half of the nineteenth century. Even today, in many places around the world, no one could say that protectionist ideas are not as strong as they were in the past. The analysts of Marțian's writings assume that the economic militancy of his work releases the influence of the works of Friedrich List. After his studies in Vienna (1854-1857), from personal reasons, Dionisie Pop Marțian decided to live in Bucharest, where were living the other members of his family, refugees from Ardeal. Devoted to his scientific belief in the same way other young people concerned to spread the economic ideas in Romania were (Rogojanu and Badea, 2010): “Dionisie Pop Marțian was a leading economist, actually the editor of the first university course on political economy, publishing also the Economic Annals, a source of invaluable information at that time” (Stahl, 2002).

The economic interest in the theories regarding to define Romania for the developed countries of that time gives Marțian the opportunity to express his scientific belief. The pathetic tone used by Marțian, however, reveals an attitude full of fear and reserve towards the expansion of the Western capitalism; he puts himself in the same line with the advocates of nationalism, which was typical for the period in which he lived and wrote (Rogojanu and Badea, 2010).

From a doctrinal perspective, indeed, “Marțian meant a special moment in the Romanian history of economic thought. Creator of a school and of an economic way of thinking in our country, Marțian has made public his beliefs and fought for their achievement in a period dominated by the liberal ideology and practice. His protectionist point of view came to confront and combat the liberal ideas, which due to some circumstances were raised to the rank of state policy” (Marțian, 1961).

In terms of the eclectic German historical school, Marțian asked his contemporaries to study the economic science in order to find the key of the emancipation: “sacrificing the present for the future”. The alternation of parables with economic principles, in a nationalist way, quite widespread in many European countries, Marțian emphasised the role of knowledge in economics in order to “train efficient people, able to meditate on natural laws, that man cannot rule, but can use” (Marțian, 1961).

Dionisie Pop Marțian strived for an intellectual emancipation of the Romanians and for the spread of economic ideas; he wrote a course on “Social Economy” (1858), articles and studies on economic issues, and offered support to the publication of “Economic Annals” and to the establishment of some institutions as Statistical Office of Romania.

On the occasion of the establishment of “Annals of Statistics and Economic Research”, Dionisie Pop Marțian drew attention to the need of spreading the ideas coming from a history of national economy in order to decide politically correct (Marțian, 1961). The vocation of institutional promoter places Marțian alongside other iconic figures of the nineteenth century: “In 1859, Dionisie Pop Marțian, a young Transylvanian educated at Vienna, is assigned as chief of the Central Office of Statistics of the Romanian country”; that year, Ion Ionescu de la Brad is assigned as chief of the “Department of Statistics of Moldova”; these two conducted, each in its area, a census in 1859-1860 with the results published in “Annals of statistics in the Wallachian land of Romania”(1860-1864) and in “Moldova's statistical work”. In 1852 as the principalities were now united, the two statistical offices merged under the direction of Pop Marțian in a “Central Office of Administrative Statistics”.

Although he has encountered numerous obstacles in the organization of the Statistical Office, Dionisie Pop Marțian continued his courageous work of recruiting and training the rapporteurs in statistics of each county, preparing and carrying out the first census in 1860 and in 1863 the first statistical survey of the industrial establishments in Romania (Marcu and Ornea, in Marțian, 1961).

Quoting the French minister of Public Instruction, “let's educate people and not absolutent” (Marțian, 1961), Marțian advocate for an appropriate and modern educational system. For this purpose it was necessary to qualify the labour force in order to respect the requirements of the industry; in those times in Romania was a shortage of workers, technicians and engineers. Marțian proposes to increase the share of technical and vocational education and to diminish considerably the humanistic education share: “to transform the raw material of this country and to give an industrial aspect, we need economists and industry workers; we must create mechanical workers and trained economists” (Marcu and Ornea in Marțian, 1961).

According to Dionisie Pop Marțian, the school must not prepare public servants, but economists and workers: “We have to encourage the creation of professional schools organized and distributed according to the necessity of local industries and in the Romanian capital, beside universities we need a polytechnic institute”(Marțian, 1961).

Marțian is launching a campaign to support applicative education: “There will come a day when a one-hour speech will seem too long, when a journal article, longer than one hundred lines will not be red, when every sentence that will not be the expression of the human intelligence is going to be thought as ridiculous. The best way to hasten the arrival of such days is to multiply technical schools where they learn first of all what is useful for practical life, where they teach geography before mythology, arithmetic before poetry, natural sciences before Latin verses and Modern languages before the Greek language. We would be sorry if you understood that we disregard the letters. On the contrary, we owe them everything and we love them. But as I said before: Bread above all!”(Marțian, 1961)

On the other hand, the strong development of education would have an important socio-cultural significance, facilitating the consolidation of an educated middle class, ensuring social stability that is necessary in any society (Rogojanu and Badea, 2010). We only have to agree with the conclusion of Costin Murgescu: “Indeed, as the young Romanian state was consolidated, the reasons for free trade, undeniably respected in the era of Cuza

Voda, began to weaken; at the forefront of national interests began to count the defence sector and the industry threatened by foreign competition, coming primarily from Austria-Hungary. Thus, as the years gathered on Dionisie Pop Marțian's unknown tomb - pure figure in our history and unrepeatable cultural destiny - his way of thinking, unique in his lifetime, became the source of a refreshing current of economic thought” (Murgescu, 1987).

3. CONCLUSIONS

Thus, by comparing with the previous period of 1800, when in Romania, practically, there were not specialists recruited among qualified Romanians, it can be concluded that during the nineteenth century it was for the Romanian education, an important step, the basis for authentic and modern training and civic education, being consolidated in comparison with European standards.

It is well known the fact that during time scholars, politicians, economists and others have recognized that no country could achieve economic growth and development without an efficient educational system. Functional education plays a central role in preparing individuals to enter the labour force and in the same time to respect the environment in order to use efficiently the resources. Generally, education institutions produce not only intellectual, moral and scientific values, but also wider social and cultural values through their mission of teaching and research. Thus, around the year 1900, in what concerns the education area, Romania was already oriented in a positive direction in terms of its general development of public education. Indeed, in Romania the decider factor has understood since the early nineteenth century, the meaning and importance of the public education in the successful development of the great reformist project of modernizing and emancipating our country; consequently, in the same century we have done enough articulated and coherent work in that direction, so that in spite of some failures and weaknesses, the appropriate policies of growing the accessibility of education for the entire school population began to record some encouraging results.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

This work was cofinanced from the European Social Fund through Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development 2007-2013, project number POSDRU/89/1.5/S/59184 „Performance and excellence in postdoctoral research in Romanian economics science domain”.

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