

The Romanian Youth's Contact with the West in the 19th Century: Education, Connections and Political Formation

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Abstract

In the 19th century, Western Europe became a landmark for the future Romanian leaders, and the developed West European countries constituted a model to be followed in terms of state organization. From this point of view, the young Romanians who studied in various cultural and political milieus, such as the French or the German etc., were influenced by the societies of the respective countries, acquiring a scientific knowledge and forming an intellectual and political thinking which was distinct from that of their parents. When they returned home, with a new mentality and with desire for modernisation, many of these young people became involved in the political life, militating for the organization of the state on the basis of the European model, adopting reforms on all levels: social, political, economic and cultural.

Keywords: Young Romanian students; Western Europe, studies, 19th Century, cultural and political milieus

Introduction

Throughout the 19th century there were several periods when young Romanians went to study in Western European states, leading inevitably to the formation of the Romanian elites. In the first two decades of the century, few Romanians studied abroad, but their number increased gradually, so that we can identify a first phase, when several young people from boyar families were sent to study abroad – mostly in the 1830s and 1840s; another period was in the 1850s and 1860s; and towards the end of the century, in the 1870s and 1880s, we can distinguish a third period.

Our scientific research aims to examine *the extent to which the contact of the Romanian youth with the West, through the studies conducted by them in Western European countries in the 19th century, contributed to the formation of Romanian political leaders.* From this perspective, we will look at several **research directions:**

- *What determined many young Romanians from wealthy families to study abroad?*
- *How did the links between young Romanian students undergoing study in different university centres in European capitals or other cities developed?*
- *How did these young Romanians manage to make friends and to develop contacts with important personalities from those cultural and political milieus?*
- *How did these friendships and contacts influenced the Romanian students in their political formation?*

Under these circumstances, the case study reflects the life course of these young Romanian students abroad, following their education, formation, contacts and networks created between them, and between them and various Western cultural and political personalities. As a result of these contacts and intellectual and political influences, these young people gradually became important political leaders in Romania in the second half of the 19th century and the first part of the 20th century, contributing to the formation and modernisation of the Romanian state.

Thus, examining this subject, relevant in the field of social sciences, we will investigate the life course of some young Romanian students who became important political leaders and who undoubtedly constituted the Romanian elite during Alexandru Ioan Cuza's reign (1859-1866), and especially during the reign of Carol I (1866-1914). The present study is centered on a series of useful sources and analyzes historical facts/events in the register of political science, thus offering a more interdisciplinary approach, motivated by the desire to illustrate in a new manner the Western influence on the formation of the modern Romanian state's political leaders.

Regarding the historiography of this issue, over time several authors have approached this topic from different perspectives (Nastasă, 2006; Nastasă-Matei, 2016; Sigmirean, 2000; Siupiur, 2014; Vlad, 2014 etc.).

This article focuses on the young Romanians who studied in Western European countries and gradually became leaders in the Romanian political regime in the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. It is true that during the 19th century there were hundreds of young Romanians studying in the West, but our investigation focuses only on some cases which are illustrative for the political regime at that time.

I.

Studying in the West in the 19th century – determining factors for the Romanian youth

For the members of the Romanian boyar families, the West constituted, at the beginning, an attraction and a scientific and cultural curiosity. The new contacts with the cultural-political milieus in the West European countries

offered the possibility of achieving a higher educational level than in Eastern Europe. In addition, one of the purposes was the maturing of these young people in an unfamiliar environment and, consequently, the creation of professional and friendly ties. Also, another aim was to cultivate further the cultural and political relations with personalities from other European countries, thus gaining social recognition and prestige in their country and abroad. Accordingly, a number of boyars from Wallachia and Moldavia “start to suspect early on that in their Principalities things are not going smoothly, they start to dream of a better life” (Eliade, 2006, p. 288) and, as a result, “the admiration for the West determines some boyars to travel to Europe, namely to Austria, Italy or France” (Eliade, 2006, p. 288). Gradually, “the boyars are especially attracted to the French language. It represents for them the secret of the chosen manners, of French civilization in general: to be civilized, you must necessarily know French /.../ in their homes, the number of French preceptors and servants increases. French becomes the language of the salons” (Eliade, 2006, p. 279). Especially after the events of 1848, the young Romanian students struggled to promote the *Romanian issue* abroad (they wanted to transform the *Romanian issue* into an international issue – a subject of European concern), and consequently the accomplishment of the national desideratum, the formation of the Romanian state and the need to start the process of Romanian society’s modernisation. In that moment, the modernisation of the Romanian society on European model became a pressing matter, that had to be resolved quickly.

Therefore, in early 19th century, at educational level, in the Romanian society, one can observe Western influences through the presence of French preceptors or professors brought from different western states and through foreign governesses for the boyar families’ children, who had the role of educating them. A similar role was played by private boarding schools from various Romanian cities, where the boyar children were sent to study; some of them attended the courses of the Saint Sava College in Bucharest or the Mihăilean Academy in Iași (1835-1847). Later, the University of Iași was established in 1860 and the University of Bucharest in 1864. The first contacts made in the Romanian Principalities (Wallachia and Moldavia) were between Romanian young people and foreign professors. The contact with the West took place during the years of study in different European university centres, where various links developed between Romanian students, with students from other countries, with their professors, and with cultural and political personalities of the respective states. Some Romanians even studied at secondary and higher education institutions in Western European countries. Nevertheless, young Romanians studying in Paris in the 1840s attended the courses of the famous historians Edgar Quinet, Jules Michelet and Adam

Mickiewicz (at Collège du France), who published articles on Romanian history and supported the *Romanian issue*.

In the second part of the 19th century, for most young Romanians, the motives for studying abroad have undergone some transformation, their perspective changing slightly compared to their predecessors. They wanted to continue the political actions in order to achieve the national desideratum, by publishing articles and books on the Latinity of Romanians, on the unity of language, nation, traditions of the Romanians from the two Principalities (Wallachia and Moldavia), and through contacts with political leaders from the respective states which could become involved in transforming the *Romanian issue* into an European issue; therefore, political leaders such as: Count Alexandre Walewski and, in particular, the Emperor of France, Napoleon III. Towards the end of the 19th century, the Romanian students pursued both intellectual formation, and the formation of new connections, friendly and professional contacts, and the achievement of symbolic values: prestige, social recognition and, especially, political and social ascension upon their return to the country.

In these circumstances, we join the assertion that “almost the entire intellectual and political elite of the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the next century had conducted their studies abroad” (Nastasă-Matei, 2016, p. 21).

Young Romanians studying in the West – education, connections and formation

As mentioned above, the young Romanians studying abroad (coming from families of boyars, intellectuals or wealthy merchants) established from the beginning certain contacts with the societies they joined. In the first instance, an essential desideratum was the formation of the Romanian state, but it was difficult to achieve it in the first part of the 19th century. In this manner, these young students wrote articles in the foreign press about the Romanians and its social and political problems, and they also set up associations that had the role of creating contacts, social networks, various connections with personalities from abroad, and of strengthening the Romanian community outside the country.

In the first part of the 19th century, most Romanian boyars sent their children to study in France, especially in Paris (at high schools such as: Louis-le-Grand College etc., and at universities: Collège de France, University of Paris, Ecole d'Etat Major etc.). *Why Paris?* Because Paris was the *city of lights*, being an important cultural, social and political centre in that era, with innovative, revolutionary ideas; the young Romanians felt close to the French spirit. Most likely the Romanians' Latinity, as well as the Latinity of the French, was a determining factor in choosing the university centre in which to

study. Another reason had to do with the private teachers the boyar children had, and in addition all French influences were supported and appreciated by the Romanians in Wallachia and Moldavia. The French influence proved to be essential in the Romanians' mentality (Eliade, 2006).

Thus, their education and formation started in Romania during their first years of study, but their social-cultural and political development was perfected abroad. At home, many of them chose to attend the Saint Sava College, one of the oldest and most prestigious educational institutions. In the 1830s and 1840s, some future Romanian political leaders were studying in Paris (in various prestigious libraries or educational institutions), such as: Nicolae Bălcescu, Ion Bălăceanu, Ion C. Brătianu and Dumitru Brătianu, Eugeniu Carada, Barbu Catargiu, Alexandru Ioan Cuza, Ion Emanoil Florescu, Alexandru Golescu, Ion Ghica, Nicolae Kretzulescu, Petre Mavrogheni, Constantin A. Rosetti etc. In the same time, others preferred German milieu, attending courses at the universities in Berlin, Heidelberg, Bonn, or at prestigious military schools, such as the Munich School of Cadets. Here studied Dimitrie Ghica, Manolache Costache Epureanu etc. There were also young people who studied in more than one country, such as: Constantin Brăiloiu (Switzerland, France), Mihail Kogălniceanu (he studied in France, then in German milieu, away from the revolutionary ideas), Constantin Kretzulescu (France, England, Italian milieu). Most of them studied law and attended various high-class intellectual and political circles from the respective societies (Nicolescu, Hermely, 1895-1899; Rosetti, 1897; Rădulescu, 1998; Neagoe, 2007; Eremia, 1912). There were also some exceptions, such as Nicolae Kretzulescu, who studied medicine in Paris in the 1830s (Rosetti, 1897, p. 110); Ion Ghica, who earned a degree in mathematics in Paris, then graduated in 1840 from the School of Mines (Neagoe, 2007, p. 318) etc.

In this respect, Dumitru Onciul (member of the Romanian Academy) recalled, in those times, that: "in this milieu of the French and German society, the young Kogălniceanu, with the vivacity and vigor of his youth and talent, was educated up to the beginning of his university studies" (Onciul, 1918, p. 6). Like any young person studying abroad, Kogălniceanu was keen to know, to see how other states were ruled: "spending once the summer holidays at the Schweinsburg castle, on Count Schwerin's estate, he was able to acknowledge /.../ the progress made under the emancipation regime /.../ The impressions he made thus during his studies in Germany influenced his thinking and the ideals with which the young Kogălniceanu returned to his homeland" (Onciul, 1918, p. 16). Moreover, while studying in Berlin, he wrote a series of books on the history of the Romanian people. For example, in 1837, concerned with the problems of the Romanians, Kogălniceanu published *Histoire de la Valachie, de la Moldavie et des Valaques transdanubiens*, and many other works on this

subject (Kogălniceanu, 1946, p. 8). Also, abroad, in Paris, around 1845, he developed all kinds of friendships, “with C. A. Rosetti, Nicolae Bălcescu and Ion Ghica” (Onciul, 1918, p. 16), some of them from Wallachia, others from Moldavia. They all had a series of ideas on state formation, some supporting a radical liberalism (Ion C. Brătianu, Constantin A. Rosetti etc.), others promoting a moderate liberalism (Ion Ghica, Mihai Kogălniceanu etc.). Mihail Kogălniceanu and Constantin A. Rosetti (one of Romanian elite’s core members), both liberals, contributed to the creation of the Romanian political regime in the second half of the 19th century. Regarding Constantin A. Rosetti’s formation, Ștefănescu Galați wrote that: “by the end of 1845, Rosetti is in Paris /.../ gathering as much knowledge as possible on the world and life /.../ In Rosetti’s soul there is a strong struggle between his young nature, with the habits of partying and cheerfulness of the boyars in the country, and the desire born in him in the middle of the city of light, of cultivating himself, of learning as much as possible, of becoming a useful person to his country” (Galați, n.d., pp. 3-4). In this hypostasis, the young Romanian state (established in 1859, through the union of Wallachia and Moldavia, forming the United Principalities) needed precisely useful people. At that time, there were several young boyars who wanted to get in touch with these developed societies, building friendships among them (both Moldavians and Wallachians) and, at the same time, building friendships with various foreigners. Hence, “the making acquaintance between Moldavians and Wallachians in Paris in those years immediately following the 1830 revolution, and full of agitation that will lead to the revolution of 1848, was very useful through its cultural, but also political, consequences. It is beyond doubt that the idea of the union of the two Principalities grew then and there in the minds of these young people, who were impatient to become useful to the people in their country, whom they wished to help in the accomplishment of their aspirations” (Ghica, 1967, p. 15). On the other hand, “Paris mediates for [Ion] Ghica also other relationships which play an important role in his formation /.../ he has French friends who invite him to hunt with them and who introduce him into intellectual circles” (Ghica, 1967, p. 15); gradually, he consolidates his relationships with various influential European personalities, and hence his political education is shaping up.

At that time, the young Moldavians and Wallachians abroad managed to organize themselves, establishing various associations, writing articles in the foreign press, or simply publishing various works. In this context, “under Cîmpineanu’s leadership, the young Romanians in Paris created, in August 1839, the *Society for the Teaching of the Romanian People*, the first Romanian cultural association, with political aims, founded abroad. The society’s activity was to take place in the country” (Ghica, 1967, p. 18), but it did not have the expected outcome. After that episode, a secret society was established by the

three friends: Nicolae Bălcescu, Ion Ghica and Christian Tell, having the motto *Justice and Brotherhood*: “in the autumn of 1843, the secret society Frăția (Fraternity), organized by Ion Ghica and Nicolae Bălcescu, was founded after the model of the *Cărvunari*. Its motto, *Justice and Brotherhood*, remained the guiding slogan also for the 1848 Revolution, in the preparation of which it took part” (Lupaș, 1937, p. 243). At the same time, in Paris, the ties grew stronger among the young Romanians, and between them and various French personalities, with notable results. There was undoubtedly also “the privileged relationship with the noble, generous triad of illustrious masters of democracy and civism from Collège de France, Michelet, Mickiewicz, Quinet” (Delureanu, 2000, p. 173). They were important personalities, who influenced the education of several young Romanians, who returned home and fought for visible and major changes in the Romanian society. These leaders, former students of these eminent professors, were Ion and Dumitru Brătianu, Constantin A. Rosetti, Eugeniu Carada etc. (important liberal leaders of the era). These contacts continued over time, having an impact on the formation of the young Romanians, who in the meantime became important political leaders in Romania.

Returning to that historical context, “in this pre-1848 time arc took place the encounter between the Romanian national movement and the Mazzinian movement / ... / the encounter will become even deeper after the establishment, in Paris in 1845, of the Romanian Students’ Association from Place de la Sorbonne, the external branch of the Frăția (Fraternity) /.../ whose motto ‘Justice-Brotherhood’ summarized a Mazzinian slogan” (Delureanu, 2000, p. 172). Indeed, the Romanian Students’ Society operated in Paris since 1845, having as purpose the consolidation of the Romanian community and the strengthening of the networks between the Romanians and various personalities from abroad, and, of course, the promotion of the political unity of the Romanian Principalities (Wallachia and Moldavia). Several young Romanians were part of this Association, including Ion Ghica, Constantin A. Rosetti, Ion C. Brătianu, Dumitru Brătianu, Mihail Kogălniceanu, Nicolae Bălcescu, and later Nicolae Ionescu. They all studied in Paris in that period, and later became important leaders and contributed to the formation of the modern Romanian state. At the same time, efforts have been made also in the foreign press. A relevant example is that of the young Dumitru Brătianu, who, under the pseudonym Regnauld, “published an extensive article – a study on the Danubian Principalities, called, significantly, Romania or Moldo-Walachia, in *La revue indépendante* from June 25, 1843”, in order to “familiarize the French public opinion with the name of Romanian and Romania” (Iordache, 2003, p. 66).

As we can perceive, the young Romanians who studied abroad gained a substantial and important education for those times, they created all sorts of

societies, either in the Romanian Principalities or abroad, and thus “in the decade before the revolution of 1848 there were at least three secret societies in Wallachia: the secret society founded by Dr. Tavernier and led by I. Câmpineanu, the secret society established by J. A. Vaillant and led by Mitiță Filipescu, and the society known as “Frăția (Fraternity)”, founded on the initiative of Ion Ghica and N. Bălcescu. At the same time, on the model of the second one, there was a similar secret society in Iași in 1841” (Zane, 1975, p. 178). “When the French Revolution broke out in 1848, the society Justice - Brotherhood, which now included all young people embracing reform, decided to take action” (Bibicescu, 1898, p. 59), and thus, young people from reputed families mobilized, such as: Ion Ghica, brothers Golescu, brothers Brătianu etc. At that difficult time for the Romanians “Dumitru and Ion Brătianu returned from Paris and joined the Justice - Brotherhood Committee” (Bibicescu, 1898, p. 61). The Committee was now composed of 13 members, devout activists in the revolutionary movement of 1848 in the Principalities: “Ștefan Golescu, Nicolae Golescu, Radu Golescu, Alecu C. Golescu, Dumitru Brătianu, Ion Brătianu, N. Bălcescu, C. Bălcescu, Al. G. Golescu, C. A. Rosetti, C. Boliac, Ion Ghica”, and „some time later Ion Eliade” (Bibicescu, 1898, pp. 61-63).

The relations between the Moldavian and the Wallachian young people were highlighted in a letter from Ion Ghica to Vasile Alecsandri from 1881 (Ion Ghica, *Letters to V. Alecsandri*):

“Beloved friend,

Do you remember when we first met, about 45 years ago, in Paris, around 1835? /.../ I don't know how or in what way, but we suddenly found ourselves together, arm in arm, a Wallachian with a Moldavian, each speaking the language of our province and yet understanding each other as if we were speaking the same language /.../ Since that moment we stopped being Wallachians or Moldavians. We were all Romanians!” (Ghica, 2014, p. 119). Ion Ghica was writing to his friend, the great poet Vasile Alecsandri (active himself as political leader and diplomat throughout his life), reminding him of those times. Vasile Alecsandri, Nicolae Bălcescu, Ion Ghica, the brothers Brătianu (Ion and Dumitru), the brothers Golescu (Alexandru, Nicolae, Radu), Mihail Kogălniceanu etc. participated in the revolutionary events in the Romanian Principalities in 1848, and some of them were active in the Paris Revolution in February of the same year. After the defeat of the Romanian revolutions, these young people – and others – continued their work in exile, mostly in Paris. In the second half of the 19th century they became important political leaders, holding key positions in the Romanian state.

Back from the exile, mostly after 1857, these young people struggled for the fulfillment of the national desideratum, which led to the change of Romanians' situation with the union between Moldavia and Wallachia, in

January 1859, under the name of The United Principalities, ruled by Alexandru Ioan Cuza. Subsequently, after the abdication of Alexandru Ioan Cuza, in February 1866, representatives of the first generation of Romanian students who studied in the West, in 19th century, contributed to bringing the foreign prince, Carol de Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, as ruler of Romania in May 1866. The necessary steps were made by Ion Bălăceanu, Romania's agent in Paris, and by Ion C. Brătianu, both having connections in the French society. Then, Brătianu continued the negotiations with the Prince's father, Karl Anton, and with Carol, who finally accepted the throne. Carol's nomination was informally supported by the Emperor of France, Napoleon III. France's support in the formation and then consolidation of Romania was essential.

Meanwhile, other young Romanian students, from important boyar families, continued to study abroad in the 1850s and 1860s, thus ensuring the formation of the Romanian elites.

At that time, a number of Romanian young people studied in the West, their influence being visible and strong during Carol I's reign. We mention here only some of them, the most important ones, dividing them into three categories – first, the ones who studied in France, such as: Vasile and Constantin Boerescu, Nicolae Calimachi-Catargiu, Gheorghe Grigore Cantacuzino, Nicolae Dabija, Constantin Grădișteanu, Nicolae Ionescu, Alexandru Lahovari, Mihail Pherekyde, Eugeniu Stătescu, Anastase Stolojan, Gheorghe Vernescu etc.; second, the ones who were educated at German universities, for example: Petre P. Carp, Gheorghe Manu, Dimitrie Alexandru Sturdza etc., and third, the ones who studied in several countries, among which: Petre S. Aurelian (France, Italy), Gheorghe Costaforu (German milieu, France), Dimitrie Gianni (German milieu, France), Titu Maiorescu (Austrian and German milieu, France), Theodor Rosetti (Austrian milieu, France) etc. (Nicolescu, Hermely, 1895-1899; Rosetti, 1897; Rădulescu, 1998; Neagoe, 2007; Eremia, 1912).

As in the past, a series of contacts with personalities from various developed milieus were established, as well as friendships between young Romanians and those from other countries. A representative example continued to be France, most of the Romanian elite's children studying especially in Paris at that time. Thus, for example, Titu Maiorescu kept a strong friendship with Theodor Rosetti throughout his political career; proof of this friendship is the foundation of the *Junimea society* (a cultural and scientific society) in 1864; later, its five founders (Petre P. Carp, Titu Maiorescu, Iacob Negruzzi, Vasile Pogor and Theodor Rosetti) decided to go into politics, in 1870-1871, as members of the Junimea group – later, the Constitutional Party (formed in 1891), led by Petre P. Carp. The exception was Petre P. Carp, who studied in German milieu, while other founders of *Junimea* had studied in Paris. As in previous years, important families sent their

children to study in the West because it was an aspect of prestige, social recognition, and also the symbol of the Romanian elite's need to have access to high circles in various European societies. Petre P. Carp, an eloquent example of a young man who came from an old boyar family, attended Gymnasium in Berlin, then enrolled at the Faculty of Law and Political Science in Bonn; he “passed his baccalaureate /.../ with the highest overall average, the first of all, *primus omnium*” (Gane, 1936, p. 68). He “was accepted in the student society called Borussia or Preussen - a special honor for foreigners” (Gane, 1936, p. 69); he was thus received in closed and elevated circles, probably because of his studies and his family. Another exception was Titu Maiorescu, who came from a family of intellectuals from Transylvania, who completed his high school studies in Vienna (1851-1858), then university studies at Bonn and Giessen (where he obtained his doctorate in philosophy in 1859 with *magna cum laudae* distinction). He continued his studies at the University of Sorbonne, where he gained a BA in letters, philosophy and law, in 1861 (Neagoe, 2007, p. 424).

The third wave of Romanian young people who studied abroad in the 1870s and 1880s and who became famous in the political life at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century were: Nicolae Fleva (Italy), Take Ionescu, Vasile Lascăr, Ion (Ionel) I. C. Brătianu, Alexandru Marghiloman (all of them former students of Law in France, except for Ionel Brătianu, who graduated from the Polytechnic School, then from the National School of Bridges and Roads, being an engineer), Alexandru C. Cuza (Belgium); Spiru Haret (Paris, doctorate in mathematics in 1878), Nicolae Filipescu (France, Switzerland) etc. Spiru Haret, a liberal, was perhaps the most important reformer of the Romanian education; as a very young man, he gained a scholarship to go to study in Paris. He was not coming from a boyar family. Thus, also in those years, the Romanian young people preferred to go to study in Western European countries: “some who went again to the West, to a West of 1870, and especially to a West after the year of the great conflict between the Germans and the French” (Iorga, 1937, p. 11).

During this period, the young Romanians who went to study abroad had a different agenda than their predecessors. They already knew each other, and their formation abroad offered them prestige and, of course, social recognition in the Romanian society. An eloquent example is that of the political leader Take Ionescu who, although not from a boyar family but from a family of wealthy merchants, went to study also in France, being highly appreciated by his professors (Xeni, n.d., pp. 29-30). In addition, “his colleagues do not know any of his walks other than to museums or historical spots, they never surprised him going to parties other than conferences and, rarely, to classical operas at the French Comedy” (Xeni, n.d., p. 29). In Paris, he “made friendships that would last for life: C. Dissescu, C. Arion, Al.

Djuvara. Al. Marghiloman was also in Paris at that time” (Xeni, n.d., p. 28). Once they came back from abroad, they were drawn to politics and to the need to consolidate the Romanian state, as did their predecessors. Take Ionescu is an example of a politician who built himself gradually a beautiful and long career, reaching the highest level of Romanian politics. “During the seven years that he stayed in Paris – besides from the holidays he spent in the country – Take Ionescu suffered various influences, either because of the milieu or because of various readings and of the intense Parisian life’s great show” (Seișanu, 1930, p. 18). He also participated intensively in the circle of the Romanian students and in other circles, discussing the Romanian problems in public, at the events he attended, so that they could be heard, understood and solved.

At the same time, in those years, Romania underwent a process of modernisation on all levels and several national desideratums were fulfilled: obtaining and having its independence recognized (1877, 1878), the proclamation of Romania as Kingdom on 14 March 1881, joining the Triple Alliance in 1883 (Austro-Hungary, Germany, Italy, since 1882). At a symbolic and informal level, the Romanian students in different corners of Europe were a kind of emissaries, representatives of the Romanian spirit and culture; obviously, at a formal and diplomatic level, Romania had after 1866 diplomatic ties with different European states, especially after obtaining its state independence and proclaiming as Kingdom. The Romanian entered into a new stage of its foreign policy. An important episode was the Berlin Peace Congress from June-July 1878, during which the independence of Romania was recognized (Minister of Foreign Affairs was none other than Mihail Kogălniceanu, who had studied in Berlin in his youth; this choice was not accidental). An important role was also played by the Prime Minister at that time, Ion C. Brătianu.

There were also Romanian political leaders who were not educated abroad, such as the conservative Lascăr Catargiu (important Romanian political leader). An important case was represented by a Romanian woman who attended the courses of the Faculty of Law in Paris, Sarmiza Bilcescu, who was the first woman to earn a doctorate in law, in 1887 (Bacalbașa, 1928, p. 121).

These young people, returning home with new ideas of reform in Romania, gradually became involved in the organization of the state in order to modernise it on all fields: in education, architecture, clothing, leisure activities, politics, economy, culture etc. Over time, Paris still remained a favorite place for the Romanian elites, in the second half of the 19th century: “The elite was either going to their estates, or to Paris, or to the baths in Austro-Hungaria” (Bacalbașa, 1935, p. 72). The attachment towards what Paris symbolized was so strong, that some of the Romanian leaders lived or died

there. One example was that of Constantin A. Rosetti, who lived in Paris for some time; political leaders who died there were: Vasile Boerescu, Ion Emanoil Florescu, Mihail Kogălniceanu, Alexandru Lahovari etc.

At international level, when studying abroad, the Romanian leaders have strengthened their connections, establishing various friendships that will prove useful over time, France being a model for most Romanian leaders. Also, the Romanian society at that time was profoundly Francophone. Their efforts in those years spent abroad had results in time.

Western-European political influences in the formation of Romanian political leaders who studied in the 19th century

In the Romanian society there were several political groups, of liberal or conservative character, formed in the middle of the 19th century, which led to the establishment of the two most important political parties in the second half of the century: the National-Liberal Party (1875) and the Conservative Party (1880). Regardless of the period we took into consideration, during the 19th century, the Romanian students who studied abroad, mentioned in this article, became politicians of great importance during the reign of Alexandru Ioan Cuza and Carol I (Damean, 2016). Whether liberal or conservative, they were prominent in the second part of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, occupying important state positions (Prime Minister, minister, president/vice-chairman of the Assembly of Deputies or Senate etc.).

Many young Romanians who went to study abroad and returned to the country, each at different times, became remarkable personalities of the political life, having a big influence within the political regime. First-generation of political leaders have fought for the modernisation of the Romanian society: “by coming into contact with the Western civilization, the descendants of the old boyars introduced in the country the liberal reforms that were stirring up in France, at that time called *des années quarante*” (Papacostea, n.d., p. 171).

The process of modernisation and consolidation of the Romanian state has taken place over a long period. In the first instance, we appeal to the *first generation of politicians* (with studies in the West, influenced by the political context in the respective states, they adopted liberal or conservative ideas that they applied later, when they occupy political positions in the modern Romanian state), such as the liberals, of different nuances: Vasile Boerescu (parliamentarian, minister), Ion C. Brătianu (Prime Minister on several occasions, minister, parliamentarian, president of the Assembly of Deputies, president of PNL), Dumitru Brătianu (Prime Minister, minister, parliamentarian, president of PNL), Eugeniu Carada (founder and director of the National Bank of Romania), Alexandru Golescu (parliamentarian, minister, diplomat), Nicolae Golescu (army general, minister), Dimitrie Ghica

(parliamentarian, president of the Assembly of Deputies, president of the Senate, minister, mayor of the capital), Ion Ghica (Prime Minister several times, minister, parliamentary, diplomat), Mihail Kogălniceanu (Prime Minister, minister, parliamentarian), Nicolae Kretzulescu (parliamentarian, Prime Minister), Constantin A. Rosetti (president of the Assembly of Deputies, parliamentarian, minister, mayor of the capital) etc.; and the coagulation of all liberal groups took place in May 1875, when the National-Liberal Party was officially established. In parallel, we also mention some conservative leaders of different nuances: Barbu Catargiu (Prime Minister, minister, parliamentarian), Manolache Costache Epureanu (parliamentarian, president of the Assembly of Deputies, Prime Minister, minister), Ion Emanoil Florescu (parliamentarian, president of the Senate, Prime Minister, minister), Petre Mavrogheni (minister, parliamentarian, diplomat) etc. (the Conservative Party was established in February 1880, and the merger between it and the Constitutional Party (the Junimist group) was finally accomplished in 1907).

Along with other leaders who did not study abroad, like the conservative Lascăr Catargiu (parliamentarian, Prime Minister several times, president of the Conservative Party), they were all involved in organizing the institutions of the modern Romanian state, preparing in the same time a new generation of politicians capable of continuing their achievements.

The new generation of young Romanians with studies abroad, who returned to the country and became politicians, ensured the *generation change* within the Romanian political regime at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, and consolidated the state. They studied abroad in the second half of the 19th century, and they gradually became famous in the Romanian political life, some in the 1860s, 1870s, others in the 1880s, such as the liberals: Petre S. Aurelian (parliamentarian, president of the Assembly of Deputies, president of the Senate, Prime Minister, minister), Nicolae Fleva (parliamentarian, minister, mayor, diplomat), Nicolae Ionescu (parliamentarian, minister), Vasile Lascăr (parliamentarian, minister, mayor), Mihail Pherekyde (parliamentarian, president of the Assembly of Deputies, president of the Senate, minister, diplomat), Eugeniu Stătescu (parliamentarian, president of the Senate, minister), Anastase Stolojan (parliamentarian, minister, mayor), Dimitrie Alexandru Sturdza (parliamentarian, president of the Senate, Prime Minister several times, minister, president of PNL), Gheorghe Vernescu (parliamentarian, president of the Assembly of Deputies, minister, co-president of the Liberal-Conservative Party) etc. Among the conservatives, it is necessary to mention: Alexandru Lahovari (parliamentarian, minister), Gheorghe Grigore Cantacuzino (parliamentarian, president of the Assembly of Deputies, president of the Senate, Prime Minister several times, minister, president of the Conservative Party), Petre P. Carp (parliamentarian, Prime Minister

several times, minister, president of the Constitutional Party, later president of the Conservative Party), Nicolae Filipescu (parliamentarian, minister, mayor of the capital), Take Ionescu (parliamentarian, Prime Minister, minister, president of the Conservative-Democrat Party, since 1908), Titu Maiorescu (parliamentarian, Prime Minister, minister, president of the Conservative Party), Gheorghe Manu (parliamentarian, president of the Assembly of Deputies, Prime Minister, minister), Theodor Rosetti (parliamentarian, president of the Senate, Prime Minister several times, minister, president of the National Bank of Romania), etc. Later, the following conservatives became prominent: Alexandru Marghiloman (parliamentarian, Prime Minister, minister, president of the Conservative Party), Constantin Argetoianu or the liberal Ion (Ionel) I. C. Brătianu (parliamentarian, Prime Minister several times, minister, president of PNL) etc.; among those mentioned above, all of them had a major influence in the Romanian political regime, but there were some who oscillated at that time between liberalism and conservatism, such as: Dimitrie Ghica, Nicolae Fleva, Take Ionescu, Gheorghe Vernescu etc.

Conclusion

As for our analysis of Romanian young people who studied abroad and became politicians, we can conclude that most of them studied in France, choosing to study Law (bachelor or doctoral studies). On the other hand, the conservatives chose the German universities (the members of the Conservative Party came from important and old boyar families). However, there were also some conservatives who studied in France. In parallel, most of the liberals chose France as place of study, while some of them completed later their education at German institutions of higher education. During the 19th century, there were also young people who did not belong to illustrious boyar families, but had enough financial resources to study abroad and became prominent in the Romanian political life, holding key positions in the state apparatus.

Throughout the 19th century there have been many waves of young Romanians who chose to study in the West for various reasons – curiosity, professional formation, promotion of the national desideratum and building connections, networks, in order to increase their prestige and social recognition. Back home at different times, regardless of their political convictions, they all aimed to contribute to the formation, modernisation and strengthening of the young Romanian state. The contact of these young Romanians with the Western European societies was strong, and they acquired a solid education abroad, building later a Romanian political and cultural elite capable of leading the state and providing a model for their descendants.

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