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SOCIAL SERVICE: ESTABLISHMENT AND PUBLIC COMMITMENT (1938-1939)
(Summary)

Keywords: sociology, Romanian village, monographic inquiry, research teams, Dimitrie Gusti.

One of the most controversial measures of the school led by Dimitrie Gusti was the ephemeral institution of the Social Service. Together with King Carol II, Dimitrie Gusti and his collaborators, Henri H. Stahl and Octavian Neamțu, founded an institution, later known as the Social Service. It became legal with the publication in the Official Monitor of the Social Service Law, on October 13, 1938. However, it had a short period of operation, of about one year. An analysis of the internal and external context in which this institution emerged, how it operated and was suspended, as well as a presentation of a case study, will find their place in this presentation.

The institutional model of the Social Service somehow fit its era, if we take into account the fact that a large movement of voluntary or community service had developed after the First World War, in a large part of the European states. The obstacle was given by the fact that the state did not show support. The same cannot be said about Romania, where with the installation of the Carlist regime, the initiative of such activities dedicated to the community had their starting point even in royalty. The difference, however, was the mandatory nature of the law by which young people were subject to work. Young university graduates were conditioned to acquire a license, to complete social service. The purpose for which the institution of the Social Service was created as specified in art. 1, ch. 1 of the Act, was “for the work of raising villages and towns”. It was not excluded that the king wanted to divert the attention of young people from the legionary movement that was on the rise in the 30^s, but it is also possible to consider the creation of a cultural copy of the National Renaissance Front. The creator of this extensive process was Dimitrie Gusti. The institution operated through the cultural home. Within it there were three directions of action named after the field they were part of: “culture of mind”, “culture of health” and “culture of work”. The young people, grouped in teams, traveled to the villages and cities of the country and carried out activities proposed by the Social Service on these topics, aimed at helping to raise the standard of living of the population.

It should be mentioned that the “Gustian” school prepared the ground for the application of this innovative and unique project in the world before 1938. Between 1934-1938 it created experimental cultural dormitories, formed royal student teams (historians, biologists, physicists, doctors, veterinarians, economists, psychologists, geographers) who drew up monographs of the villages. The institution of the Social Service was intended to be the fruition of these results and the culmination of the school led by Dimitrie Gusti.

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