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The Forgotten Ones: Position of the Child in Romanian History

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Oral Presentation O7.1

THE FORGOTTEN ONES: POSITION OF THE CHILD IN ROMANIAN HISTORY

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Children are perhaps the world's most vulnerable population. In Romania particularly, children suffered from State-perpetrated neglect. Romania's rocky history and development of the educational system did not adequately consider the position of the child. The structure of the educational system, although evolving since the mid-18th century to be more inclusive, continued to exploit Romania's young. Public education was not common or compulsory until the mid-19th century, and by the 20th century, education was still largely inadequate. Under communism the system became much more inclusive, but shifted the focus of schooling away from academics. Alongside these changes in education, the structure of the family transformed from a large kin-based support structure to a nuclear family model that relied largely on institutional upbringing for children. This systematic neglect of vulnerable young citizens led to a devaluation and commodification of Romania's children.