**THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION AND CHIL LABOUR**

The Industrial Revolution was a period of technological development between the 18th and 20th century. The inventions of new technologies and the use of new resources favored an economic progress in all Europe. New factories and industries were born and capitalists needed new labor and employees in order to augment their profit. They found a solution using children.

As the song “Work, terrible work” from “Horrible Histories” sais , children started to be exploited from young age . According to Jane Humphries and her researches, England had more than a million child workers between the 4 and 18 years old– accounting for 15 per cent of the total labor force. The economic situation in England wasn’t very favorable for all the social classes, indeed there was a high tax of poverty , especially in the suburbs of big cities. Parents couldn’t effort to maintain the family and they used to send their children to work to provide money. But why children? The reasons are very simple. They were young and could be easily malleable, they didn’t know about the rights and the existence of syndicates and entrepreneurs and capitalists could do with them whatever they wanted to . Because of their small size and small fingers children were mostly sent in tinny coal mine tunnels, they were fast and agile and they could reach the most difficult places. Their situation recalls the story of “Rosso Malpelo” (written by Giovanni Verga), a young Sicilian boy who worked in a cave. The work and life conditions are the same in both situations and the endings are similar. Thanks to their thin fingers children worked in cotton mills and glass factories .In the end they were exploited because cheaper than adults, indeed they were paid only the 10%-15% of the adults’ salary.

The professor Jane Humphries, after the analyze of many books and statistics, have found out that during most of the 18th century only around 35 per cent of ten year old working-class boys were in the labour force while the figure for 1791-1820 (when large scale industrialisation started) was 55 per cent, rising to 60 per cent for the period of 1821-1850.

During the Industrial Revolution there were no rules or laws that forbid the child labor and it was common to see children working in factories. They hadn’t the right to go to schools and that was the reason why all of them were illiterate. Working conditions were unsafety and unhealthy, many children used to be injured or even died. They used to work 12 hours a day and other times even during the night, most of them were abused both physically both verbally. Only at the beginning of the 19th people started to protest against the child labor and in the end, with the Factory Act in 1833, the government imposed some rules. Children under the age of 9 couldn’t work in factories and the working time was reduced to 8-10 hours with a lunch break; they also had to have two hours of education a day .

Child labor had for sure helped the development of England’s economy, the growth of capitalists’ profit and the progress of factories but it represented also a sign of human’s avidity. The employment of children showed that “money” was everything and the only goal of live. Big entrepreneurs had no qualms to use children for their own interests and preferred their profit to life.

Unfortunately, even if we live in the 21st century, there is still child labor in many States. After the ONU Convention about the Rights of the Child in 1989 many States have abolished the child labor but this phenomena is still present in many countries as China, India, Pakistan. Today the number of children who work is 246 million.

It seems that the only human’s goal is the money and richness. Even the video “L’Asia siamo noi” have showed us that the purpose of every State and every factory is the gain of money. Our society, in the end, hasn’t changed so much as we believe.

Children have the right to go to school and to be educated. They are still young and they have the right to live their childhood, play with friend and enjoy life. They are not machines but delicate creatures who have the right of freedom. In young age, the only important “work” should be the schools because it offers many possibilities to the future . Personally I think that child slavery and child labor should be completely abolished even if it could bring an economy decade. Because of their vulnerability they are always exposed to dangers and to a physical weakening, many of them die in early ages and others loose some of their capacity. If we really want to be a civilized society we should follow the code of the Rights of the Child and not act like animals.