

MILENKO KARANOVICH

THE BEGINNING OF GIRLS' EDUCATION
IN MODERN SERBIA, 1838-1858

*The schools of the country
are its future in miniature*

TEHYI HSIEH

Serbia, a powerful medieval Balkan state and one with a rather developed culture, lost her independence and became a part of the large Ottoman Empire at the end of the fourteenth century. From then until 1830, when she received her autonomy, black clouds covered the cultural life of her people. There is no indication of the existence of a regular Serbian school on the territory of Serbia before the beginning of the nineteenth century. Those schools which did exist were mainly Turkish, intended for the children of local Turkish leaders. The only places in their native land where Serbs could be trained in literacy were churches and monasteries, and this was a light which smouldered with an almost invisible flame. Therefore it is not surprising that before her First Insurrection of 1804 Serbia had only a few men of her own who were even literate, let alone educated in any broader sense.

Serbia began to open her first regular schools during the First Insurrection (1804-1813). This action was almost completely stopped between 1813 and 1815, the period when the Turks reestablished their firm control. However, when the Second Insurrection broke out in 1815 schools began to be opened again. After 1830, when Serbia as an autonomous state was free to shape her own internal policy, much greater attention was paid to the development of education and culture, particularly during the so-called Constitutionalist reign (1838-1858). The Constitutionalist or *ustavobranitelji*, as they were called in Serbian historiography, consisted of popular leaders, wealthy merchants, and bureaucrats who can be considered the first bourgeoisie of the young Serbian state. Through the *Soviet* (a council of senators) they dominated the political life of Serbia whereas Princes Michael Obrenović (1839-1842) and Alexander Karadjordjević (1842-1858) were more or less marionettes in their hands. The Constitutionalist devoted special attention to education and their reign was, undoubtedly, one of the most important periods in Serbia's educational and cultural history.

Since Serbia did not have her native cadre which could carry out her edu-

cational policy, she entrusted that delicate and important task to the educated Serbs from Vojvodina. They lived within the framework of the Hapsburg Empire and had much more opportunity for economic and cultural development than the Serbs in Serbia who lived under the rule of the backward Ottoman Empire. Under the influence of the enlightened absolutism of Maria Theresa and Joseph II, Vojvodina showed significant progress in her economic and cultural-educational development at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. For instance, the first Serbian gymnasium (secondary school) was opened in Sremski Karlovci in 1791¹, a cultural-literary society called the *Matica Srbska* was founded in 1826, in 1791 the Serbs from Vojvodina began to publish their first newspaper in Vienna, and so on. In addition, her youth had an opportunity to be educated in the fine Austrian and Hungarian schools and universities.

Dositej Obradović (1742-1811), well-known philosopher, writer and educator from Vojvodina, was the first advocate of Serbian girls' education. As early as 1784 he wrote in his book, *Sovieti zdravogo razuma* (The Counsels of Common Sense), that girls were to be educated as well as boys. Furthermore, he suggested a program for their education. According to this girls were to begin their education at the age of five and attend school until they reached the age of twelve. Classes were to be conducted every day, except Sunday, for four hours: two hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon. The listed subjects show clearly that Obradović wished to offer the female children much more than a basic elementary education. For instance, he pointed out that special attention was to be devoted to the following subjects: history, geography, logic, and moral philosophy. "Logic will show them", he wrote "the way and the method of how to think correctly about everything and how to make right decisions". In his opinion, moral philosophy will be of a particular importance to the young girls because it will teach them about their obligations as daughters, spouses, mothers, and housewives. In addition, it will teach them "what they have to do and what to avoid in order to please God and their fellow citizens and how to spend their life peacefully and usefully"². Unfortunately, this

1. The founder of the school, a Greek from Naoussa (Western Macedonia) established in Karlović, donated 20.000 fiorins for the foundation of the school, also helped with grants Greek and Serbian children to study elsewhere. His name is known as Dmitar Anastasijević Sabov, see Stevan V. Popović, Dmitar Anastasijević Sabov, osminač Karlovčka gimnasije, almanach, *Orao*, 1888, p. 10.

2. Dositej Obradović, *Dela* (Beograd, 1911), p. 103.

Obradović's noble and useful suggestion was not realized in his life-time despite the fact that in 1811 he was appointed Serbia's first minister of education. There are many reasons for that among which the war with the Turks and his death in the same year of his appointment can be singled out as the most important.

Ten years later, a suggestion for the opening of a girls' school came from Dimitrije Davidović, journalist and diplomat, also from Vojvodina, who performed various functions in the still unliberated Serbia. In his patriotic appeal of August 3/15, 1821 he pointed out the need for female children's education. Since the state was at war with the Turks and almost unable to concern itself with the opening of schools, especially a girls' school which at that time was not considered either urgent or indispensable, he suggested that such a school could be opened in his house where a certain number of girls could learn how to read, write, cook, sew, embroider, knit, and so on. His wife would teach home economics and his sisters-in-law reading and writing. The teaching would be free because they wished to do that as a token of love and devotion to their people³. This suggestion was not accepted although it would not cost the state and the girls' parents anything. It may look strange and somewhat surprising to those who are not sufficiently acquainted with Serbian history and particularly with the structure and way of life of her society. It was still a very strong patriarchal society divided into extended family groups in which *patresfamilias* had almost unlimited power and male domination was irreproachable. To this society the education of female children was unnecessary and some kind of luxury. Thus, for instance, when Otto D. Pirch, Prussian army officer, asked about the education of female children during his journey through Serbia in 1829, he was told: "They will neither be engaged in trade nor have a profession, therefore why do they need the skill of reading and writing, except to be able to understand love letters and to answer them?"⁴.

Yet, though a girls' school did not exist in the first four decades of the nineteenth century, a certain number of Serbia's female children, especially in the cities, were educated. They attended schools together with male children. For instance, in 1832 among 211 Belgrade pupils there were 16 girls⁵. The girls

3. Tihomir R. Djordjević, "Školske prilike u Srbiji za vreme prve vlade kneza Miloša Obrenovića (1815-1839)", *Prosvetni glasnik*, No. 5 (Beograd, 1920), pp. 275-276. Since at that time Serbia used the old or Julian calendar, which in the nineteenth century was twelve days behind the new or Gregorian calendar, I used in this article both, one after the other (e.g., January 1/13, 1825 or October 30/November 11, 1825).

4. Otto D. Pirch, *Putovanje po Srbiji u godini 1829*, Translated from German by Dragiša Mijušković (Beograd, 1900), p. 130.

5. Mihailo S. Popović, *Beograd pre sto godina* (Beograd, 1930), p. 196.

who attended schools together with boys received only the most elementary knowledge, and after that they discontinued their education and in many instances forgot almost everything they had learned in school and a very small number of them was able to read and write correctly⁶. It is not known exactly how many girls learned how to write and read until the Constitutionalist came to power in 1838. On the basis of available sources it may be said with great certainty that their number did not exceed 40, and it was like a drop of water in the ocean because in that time Serbia had about 750,000 inhabitants⁷.

In the first years of the Constitutionalist period the question regarding the opening of girls' schools became alive again and this time much more attention was paid to it. Suggestions came from state officials as well as from private persons. Dimitrije Isailović, secondary school teacher and a member of the School Commission, took the first step in that direction. In the spring of 1840 he sent a letter to Prince Michael advocating the establishment of girls' schools. Explaining the main reasons for such an action he pointed out that female children were exclusively left to their mothers who were incapable of offering them any education because they were uneducated themselves. In addition, he warned the Prince that "the female sex makes up one half of mankind" and if that half is not educated the other half will suffer because of it⁸. This effort, like the two before, remained fruitless. It was not a long wait until the next attempt. On November 16/28 of the same year the Ministry of Education suggested to the *Soviet* the establishing of girls' schools in Belgrade, Šabac, Kragujevac, and Smederevo. The *Soviet*, as was its practice, informed Prince Michael Obrenović about it. The Prince favored the opening of girls' schools, but he pointed out in his letter to the *Soviet* of November 23/ December 5, 1840, that such a school should first of all be opened in Belgrade so that, after a certain time, on the basis of its operation it could be concluded "whether it is worthwhile to develop this institution in other places"⁹. But, for unknown reasons, this plan was not realized. Two years later, in 1842, the question of the establishment of a girls' school was again raised, this time by the Lekić sisters (Sofija and Katarina)¹⁰ and by Natalija Petrović, all from Vojvodina, who came to Belgrade

6. Arhiv Srbije (Belgrade), MPs, I-41/1842.

7. Nikola Vučo, *Privredna istorija Srbije do Prvog svetskog rata* (Beograd, 1955), p. 171.

8. Olga Obradović, "Osnivanje prvih ženskih škola u Beogradu", *Izveštaj V ženske gimnazije u Beogradu za šk. 1939-1940. godinu* (Beograd, 1940), p. 40.

9. Vladimir Grujić, *Školsko reformatorski rad J. St. Popovića u Srbiji, 1840-1848* (Beograd, 1956), p. 41.

10. Sofia and Katarina Lečić who were the first to open a girl's school in Belgrade were members of the Greek family Lekkou from Klissoura (Western Macedonia) established in

with the desire of opening girls' schools. Their applications were granted in June, 1842, and they were instructed to teach young girls: reading, writing, mathematics, and home economics. They were to be paid by their pupils' parents and their teaching was to be inspected by the Ministry of Education¹¹. Having received permission, the Lekić sisters established one school and Natalija Petrović, who had some teaching experience, another one. In order to avoid competition between those two schools and help parents to choose between them, the makers of the educational policy decided that Natalija Petrović, as the one better educated and with experience, would teach reading, writing, and mathematics; and the Lekić sisters only home economics¹². Unfortunately, those two first girls' schools in Serbia operated for a very short time. Because of Toma Vučić-Perišić's revolt they discontinued their operation as early as August of the same year and never again resumed it. In the next year, 1843, when the political situation in Serbia was somewhat stabilized, in an article entitled "The Need and Usefulness of Girls' Schools", which was published in the supplement to the *Serbian News*, the so-called *Podunavka*, Jovan S. Popović, personnel chief in the Ministry of Education and the greatest school reformer of the Constitutionalist period, advocated strongly the necessity for opening girls' schools. He preferred public schools to private ones and pointed out that "the state is obliged to take care of the public education of both male and female children"¹³. Since the government did not take any quick action to open such schools, applications and suggestions were sent from all sides during the next two years.

On June 28/July 10, 1844, Persida Djurčin from Vojvodina applied to the Ministry of Education for permission to establish a girls' school in which Serbia's laws, reading and writing in Serbian and German, and mathematics would be taught. Her application was rejected on July 15/27 of the same year without any explanation¹⁴. In the fall of the same year, on September 23/October 5, Serbia promulgated her first general law for all schools, from elementary to the highest, entitled "The Organization of Public School Education". In this document the education of female children was officially mentioned for the first time. Only one short article was devoted to them. It was Article 18 which

Zemun and Belgrade, see, D. Popović, *O cincarima*, Beograd 1937, p. 40. Natalija Petrović might also be of Greek origin as the Greeks often adopted for their names the ending *ich* after they were established for a time in Serbia.

11. *Istorija Beograda*, Vol. 2 (Beograd, 1974), p. 576.

12. O. Obradović, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

13. V. Grujić, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

14. Arhiv Srbije, MPs, IV-68/1844.

says that “in villages and other small places the female children will be taught together with the male children in one classroom”. According to the same article girls could attend school until they reached the age of ten. The same article indicated that in cities and larger towns girls’ schools would be established and that the Ministry of Education would issue a special curriculum for them¹⁵. The second official document which treated the education of female children was “Instructions for Elementary School Teachers” issued on October 24/ November 5, 1844. Like the “Organization of Public School Education” it devoted to them only one article by which teachers were instructed to take particular care about mixed classes and to pay special attention that girls be seated separately¹⁶.

Probably influenced by those documents and by Popović’s article written in *Podunavka*, the Belgrade commune decided on January 2/14, 1845 to establish and finance a girls’ school. Two days later, on January 4/16, Petar Radovanovic, one of the directors of all elementary schools in Serbia, informed the Ministry of Education in detail about that decision. For instance, according to the commune’s proposal this school was to hire a woman teacher who was well-educated and of good moral quality. She was to be selected by the commune and approved by the Ministry of Education. Her annual salary was to be 150 talers (1,500 *grošes*) plus free lodging. The instruction was to last for four years and the classes were to be conducted in the morning and in the afternoon. Reading, writing, and mathematics were to be taught in Serbian only, every morning, and afternoons were to be devoted to home economics. According to the same proposal only the girls who were six years of age and older could be enrolled in school and they were allowed to attend it until their tenth birthday, after which they had to discontinue their education¹⁷. The Ministry of Education accepted this proposal of the Belgrade commune and informed Radovanović about it on February 24, 1845 (O.S.) and concluded the letter by saying: “The Ministry permits the opening of such a school with this stipulation, that it will issue the necessary regulations for such a school at its convenience”¹⁸.

While the government was making preparations for the opening of such a school, newspapers continued to advocate its need. For instance, in June of

15. *Sbornik zakona i uredaba*, Vol. 2 (Beograd, 1845), p. 319.

16. Arhiv Srbije, MPs, V-74/1844, p. 25.

17. Arhiv Srbije, MPs, I-26/1845. At that time Serbia did not have her own currency and therefore numerous foreign currencies, especially the Austrian Taler (in Serbian *talir*), Groshen (in Serbian *groš*), and Zwanzig (in Serbian *cvancig*), were in circulation.

18. *Ibid.* O.S. (Old style or Julian calendar).

1845 *Podunavka* published an article entitled "About Education" in which it said among other things:

He who only educates men and does not concern himself about the education of female children does well only to one half of mankind, and to the other half he does the greatest injustice¹⁹.

In September of the same year a girls' school was established in the town of Paraćin. In numerous works of Serbian historiography this school is considered the first regular girls' school in Serbia. True, Paraćin's school was indeed the first girls' school established and financed by a commune, but in the opinion of Vladimir Grujić, one of the best experts on the history of Serbia's education, it "does not yet represent a girls' school, different from a regular school for male children, a school according to a special plan and program for females"²⁰.

It took the Ministry of Education more than a year to draw up the first plan and program for girls' schools. Finally, it was issued on July 3/15, 1846 under the title "The Establishment of Girls' Schools" and it considerably differed from the Belgrade commune's proposal of January, 1845. According to this decree the instruction in the future girls' schools in Serbia was to last for six years. Every school was to consist of three classes and every class was to be divided into two grades in which instruction was to last for a year. For every class a woman teacher was to be hired and she was obliged to teach both grades²¹. If we simplify this somewhat complicated plan it comes out that girls' schools were to have six grades and three instructresses each of whom was to teach two grades in one classroom for two years. According to the same decree instruction was to be conducted for three hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon during the winter, and three hours in the morning and three in the afternoon during the summer. General subjects were to be taught in the morning, and home economics in the afternoon. Only girls over five years of age could be admitted. The decree, however, did not prescribe any upper age limit for school girls. As was indicated, according to "The Organization of Public School Education" of 1844 and the Belgrade commune's proposal of 1845, girls who reached ten years of age had to discontinue their education regardless of whether they had completed it or not. On the basis of an application sent by Milovan Spasić, one of the directors of all elementary schools, to the Ministry of Education on December 12/24, 1849, it may be concluded

19. *Podunavka*, No. 22 (June 2, 1845).

20. V. Grujić, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

21. *Srbske Novine*, No. 61 (August 5, 1847).

that the upper age limit of ten years was accepted despite the fact that “The Establishment of Girls’ Schools”, as has been mentioned, prescribed that only girls over five years of age could be admitted to school and that instruction was to last for six years. For in his application Spasić asked the Ministry to extend the upper age limit from ten to fourteen because in some places girls’ schools were not yet established when many girls reached their school age and therefore they had to be enrolled later, sometimes at the age of eight, nine, or even ten. In his explanation he pointed out that if the upper age limit would not be extended some newly-opened girls’ schools might be closed down as the result of an insufficient number of school girls²². Influenced by this request the Ministry of Education extended the upper age limit from ten to twelve²³. It is interesting to mention article 6 of the first plan and program for girls’ schools which says that no girl who was not vaccinated against smallpox could be admitted to school²⁴.

“The Establishment of Girls’ Schools” prescribed the curriculum which was to be used in all future girls’ schools. Since it was the first official curriculum intended for these schools in Serbia it is useful to present it in its entirety. In the first grade of the first class the following subjects were to be taught: secular (cyrillic) and ecclesiastic alphabets and the beginning of reading, beginning of writing, and the most important prayers. In the second grade of the first class: reading of a primer and a reading book intended only for female children, writing, learning of some prayers by heart, and writing of numbers and beginning of arithmetic. In the first grade of the second class was to be taught: reading from reading book, writing, short history of religion (probably Eastern Orthodox), and four elementary operations in mathematics. In the second grade of the second class: reading, writing, history of religion, and arithmetic. For the first grade of the third class the curriculum prescribed was: reading, writing including dictation, the first chapter from the catechism (Religion) and arithmetic. For the second grade of the third class: reading, writing, the second and the third chapters from the catechism (Love and Hope), general knowledge which every Serbian woman needs, mathematics, and how to write letters, bills, receipts, and other documents. In addition, in all grades and all classes home economics was to be taught. Examinations were to be held twice a year, at the end of the first and the second semesters²⁵.

“The Establishment of Girls’ Schools” has a section entitled “About the

22. Arhiv Srbije, MPs, IV-314/1849.

23. *Ibid.*

24. *Srbske Novine*, No. 61 (August 5, 1847).

25. *Ibid.*

Methods for Teaching the Subjects” which instructs women teachers to keep in mind the peculiarity of girls' schools and therefore observe the following rules: 1) to read carefully so that girls could immediately understand the meaning of the text; 2) although Serbian grammar was not prescribed “syntax and composition” were to be taught in the higher grades; 3) girls had to learn the most elementary orthographic rules; and 4) only as much mathematics was to be learned as was necessary for the management of a household, especially verbal arithmetic²⁶. It ought to be mentioned that like all elementary schools in Serbia the future girls' schools were to be under the control of the chief elementary school directors²⁷.

The first girls' school set up according to “The Establishment of Girls' Schools” was inaugurated in Belgrade on October 16/28, 1846. Natalija Petrović from Vojvodina was appointed its first teacher with an annual salary of 125 talers²⁸. Immediately 134 girls were enrolled; this clearly shows how much parents were interested in the education of their female children²⁹. Such a parental attitude is rather surprising when one realizes that Serbia still had a strongly patriarchal way of life and that only about ten years before this school was opened many parents had sharply opposed the education of any of their daughters.

Soon after the inaugurating of this school similar girls' schools were opened, not only in large population centers, but in small towns as well. In places where such schools could not be established for lack of material support, girls attended elementary schools together with boys. Most girls' schools were financed by the communes or by private persons, but in time they were equalized with regular elementary schools and were financed from the Main School Fund³⁰. The Serbian press, which in some instances initiated reforms and new actions in the fields of culture and education, strongly supported and advocated the need for opening a greater number of girls' schools throughout Serbia. Its correspondents, who were largely gymnasium and lyceum professors, tried to encourage communes and individuals to establish them. When such a school was opened somewhere, they expressed their joy in articles full of gratitude and enthusiasm. Thus, for instance, after the opening of a girls' school in Aleksinac in 1850, the *Serbian News* wrote:

26. *Ibid.*

27. *Ibid.*

28. V. Grujić, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-44.

29. O. Obradović, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

30. In order to lighten the financial burden of communes, which were obliged to finance all elementary schools, the government created the Main School Fund on January 13/25, 1841 which was to be supported by all the Serbian people.

The heart of every real Serb has to melt with joy when he sees girls' schools alongside so many schools for the male children in his fatherland... Serbian girls, the future mothers of young Serbs (concludes the writer of the article) should also receive enough moral education in school so that one day as mothers they will know what they are and how to raise and educate the future citizens of the fatherland in a real Serbian spirit and in the Serbian nationality³¹.

The number of girls' schools grew rather quickly. Ten years after the inaugurating of the first such school in Belgrade there were already 24 of them, and at the end of the Constitutionalist period in the school year 1857-58 that number reached 30, attended by 894 school girls³². It was a rather small number of school girls for Serbia which, according to the census of 1859, had 1,078,281 inhabitants³³. In the same school year the number of regular boys' elementary schools was considerably greater. It amounted to 320 and they were attended by 9,785 pupils³³.

The first girls' schools in Serbia were confronted with many problems. The absence of a qualified teachers' cadre was, undoubtedly, one of the biggest. Since native women teachers did not exist, the state was forced to hire the more literate Serb women from Vojvodina. With the desire of selecting the most capable of them, the Ministry of Education formed a commission composed of gymnasium and lyceum professors with the task of examining the candidates before they were hired. In spite of that, Serbia did not get enough qualified women teachers because of the small number of candidates and her great need for them. The examining commission was forced to pass every candidate who showed the most elementary teaching ability³⁴. They were, writes M. Spasić, "poor in reading and writing, and real ignoramuses in mathematics. In home economics, on the other hand, they taught children well, but they damaged our (Serbian) language, teaching children German terms in home economics"³⁵. It should be mentioned that Belgrade, and so Serbia, got the first qualified

31. *Srbske Novine*, No. 137 (December 9, 1850).

32. Milovan Spasić, "Državopisni podatci školski avezdenija u Knjaž. Srbskom od 1856/7 do 1860/1 god. školsk.", *Glasnik Društva Srbske Slovesnosti*, No. 14 (Beograd, 1862), pp. 283 and 288.

33. *Stanovništvo Narodne Republike Srbije od 1834-1953*, Vol. 1, Serija B, Sveska 1 (Beograd, 1953), p. 11.

34. M. Spasić, *op. cit.*, p. 288.

35. M. Spasić, "Neki podaci o osnovnim školama u Srbiji od 1845. do 1861. god.", *Glasnik Srpskog Učenog Društva*, No. 73 (Beograd, 1892), p. 221.

woman teacher in June, 1847. It was Marija Obradović from Gornji Karlovac in Vojvodina. She was hired by the Belgrade commune, paid 125 talers per year, and exempted from all examinations³⁶.

Like regular elementary school teachers, the women teachers had very low salaries. On the average they were paid about 120 talers annually³⁷. It was such a small amount that they had great difficulties to make both ends meet. For instance, in 1843 one *oka* (1,280 grams) of bread cost 0.20 *grošes* (1 taler was worth 10 *grošes*), one *oka* of beef 1.10, one *oka* of lard 4, one *oka* of beans 0.30, and one *oka* of potatoes 0.12 *grošes*. The cost of living rose rapidly so that in 1853 one *oka* of bread cost as much as 1.09 *grošes*, and one *oka* of beef 2.17 *grošes*³⁸. In some places, however, women teachers were paid so poorly that one may wonder how they could live on their salaries. For instance, Jelena Tomić, teacher in Gurgusovac, had annual salary of only 60 talers, and a woman teacher in Čačak whose salary was somewhat higher earned 80 talers³⁹. In addition to their regular salaries, a large number of women teachers, particularly in the villages, had lodging and wood for heating free.

During the Constitutionalist period, in addition to the regular or communal girls' schools, a certain number of private girls' schools was opened, mainly in Belgrade. In the school year 1857-58, when the Constitutionalist power came to an end, there were seven of them; two for male and female children and five exclusively for female children⁴⁰. These private schools were attended by the children of wealthy parents who were able to pay for their education. Taken as a whole, the quality of private schools was poorer than the quality of regular girls' schools. The only exception was "The Educational Institute for Female Children" (*Vaspitatelno zavedenije za žensku decu*) which was the best and the most important girls' school in Serbia during the Constitutionalist period. It was established by the married couple Klara and Leopold Špaček with the permission of the Ministry of Education granted on April 27/May 9, 1853⁴¹. Besides Leopold Špaček, the teachers in this school were his wife for home economics and at one time or another Milan Miličević, Djura Jakšić, Jovan Derok, and other eminent cultural figures. Špaček's school had the character of a prestigious girls' school and it was attended by the children of Belgrade's most respectable families.

36. V. Grujić, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

37. *Sbornik zakona i uredaba*, Vol. 10 (Beograd, 1857), pp. 68-69.

38. Nikola Vučo, *Raspadanje esnafa u Srbiji*, Vol. 2 (Beograd, 1958), p. 74.

39. *Srbske Novine*, No. 121 (October 23, 1851) and No. 107 (September 18, 1852).

40. M. Spasić, "Državopisni podatci", *op. cit.*, p. 288.

41. Arhiv Srbije, MPs, II-269/1853.

The Ministry of Education prescribed the rules and curriculum for the operation of this school at the same time that it issued permission for its opening. In order to inform the public, they were published in the *Serbian News* on May 14/28, 1853. According to those rules only girls who were six years old could be enrolled. In exceptional cases younger ones could also be enrolled, but they were treated not as regular, but as part-time students of the school. The instruction lasted for five years, and besides home economics, general educational subjects were also taught, among which were German, Serbian grammar, physics, elements of psychology, ethics and esthetics, general history, and mythology. None of those subjects was taught in normal girls' schools. In addition to the compulsory subjects, those pupils who wished could study French, Italian, modern Greek, singing, piano, and dancing. The study of these subjects was not obligatory and those pupils who decided to take all or some of them had to pay an extra fee. The lessons in foreign languages, singing and dancing cost 1 taler per month, and piano lessons 1 ducat. It should be mentioned that in the rules for Špaček's school the Ministry of Education emphasized that "literary subjects would regularly be taught in Serbian, but in higher grades one of them would be taught in a foreign language, too". Home economics, according to the same rules, was to be taught in Serbian and German only in the first grade, whereas in all other grades the women teachers were to speak only in German "and those (pupils) who study yet another foreign language also in it (or them)"⁴².

Špaček's school, like all the other elementary schools, was under the control of the Chief Director of Elementary Schools. This school was not only important because it was a kind of girls' high school but because it was also a school which produced the first native women teachers in Serbia.

Leopold Špaček's girls' school operated successfully, and its results were pointed out in the daily press. "We have to be pleased with this institution", wrote the *Serbian News*, "which is the only one among private institutions where our fair sex can become well-educated and, for our circumstances, quite appropriately educated"⁴³. One can wonder why parents sent their children to those private schools which were of lower quality and more expensive than regular schools. There were two main reasons. First, in some places regular girls' schools did not exist and those parents who wished to give education to their female children, and did not wish them to attend school with male children, did not have any choice than to send them to private schools. Se-

42. *Srbske Novine*, No. 57 (May 14, 1853).

43. *Ibid.*, No. 83 (July 22, 1858).

cond, to send children to a private school carried a kind of social prestige because they were rather expensive and therefore accessible mainly to the children of wealthier families.

Girls' schools mostly used the same textbooks which were used in boys' regular elementary schools. As far as is known, in the Constitutionalist period there were published only a few books, mainly reading books, exclusively intended for female children. In addition, Matija Ban, lyceum professor, began to publish the first women's journal in Serbia in the middle of 1847 under the title *Vaspitatelj ženskij* (Women's Instructor). After the first issue its publication was discontinued and never resumed for an unknown reason.

The education of female children in modern Serbia began after her liberation from Turkish rule. In the beginning, as was indicated, the parents' opposition was great, but gradually it weakened so that as early as the 1840's a large number of parents, particularly in the bigger towns, was eager to give elementary education to their female children either in regular elementary schools or in separate girls' schools. Due to the Constitutionalist's educational policy girls' schools began to proliferate throughout Serbia; even small towns began to open them. In spite of all efforts, only a modest progress in the education of Serbia's female children was achieved because the obstacles were numerous. Nevertheless, the first steps were taken and foundations laid, foundations on which the future education of Serbian female children was to rest.

*Lake Forest High School-West Campus
Lake Forest, Illinois*