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Habsburg School Reform Among the Orthodox Minorities, 1770–1780

At the death of the Orthodox Metropolitan Pavel Nenadović in 1768, the educational level of the great majority of his Serbian and Rumanian coreligionists was still very low. In the seventy-year period since the regions in which they lived had again come under Habsburg rule, only feeble and short-lived initiatives had been made to improve their lot. Literacy rates were minuscule, printed matter rare, and schools of any sort so few and so scattered as to make formal education a distinct oddity. This was true even of the Serbs, whose settlements in southern Hungary included a relatively large number of well-off merchants and peasants, and whose statutory position as leaders of the Orthodox minorities was thereby reinforced. Still worse off were the Rumanians, many of whom were just emerging from a pastoral economy and extreme cultural backwardness. Even among the lower Orthodox clergy, the ability to read and write in any language was deemed extraordinary. The literacy problem was complicated by the fact that both Serbs and Rumanians used variants of Church Slavonic instead of their own vernaculars as their literary vehicles.

Two decades later, at the death of Emperor Joseph II, the situation had changed substantially for the Serbs and to a lesser extent for the Rumanians. A primary school system had been extended to include most of the Serbian and many of the Rumanian villages; negotiations for a modern gymnasium for Orthodox youth were under way; a fair number of books, both sacred and profane, were freely available in the reformed languages of both peoples; and literacy had increased to an extent which allowed fair hopes for the publication of a Cyrillic newspaper.

These changes—particularly in the status of the Serbs, upon whom this article will concentrate—came about through a combination of initiatives of the Orthodox to protect themselves from cultural assimilation by the predominant Catholic element, and the imperial Court's desire to integrate the Orthodox minorities into the polity of the realm. A compromise between these sometimes opposing motivations was a political necessity; but the policies of the centralist Court were able to triumph eventually over the resistance of the autonomist Orthodox hierarchy. The crux of all reforms was the question of elementary schooling, and it is to the creation and early development

(1770–80) of a state-controlled school system that the following essay is addressed.¹

The areas of the Habsburg Monarchy inhabited by Orthodox populations had far fewer and poorer schools than elsewhere in the 1760s,² but there were certain common denominators. All institutions through the secondary level were confessional in nature, and most of them reflected the Roman Catholicism of the Court. Clerical bodies were everywhere charged with the funding and supervision of the schools and the training and selection of teachers. School directors and faculty were largely clerics. Among Catholics the Jesuit Order provided the main source of pedagogues, and the Order dominated higher education throughout the Monarchy.

In Hungary, where there lived a large Protestant minority as well as most of the Orthodox subjects of the realm, an uneasy compromise had been reached in the early eighteenth century whereby the two Reformed Confessions could organize primary and secondary institutions of learning. These were subject to the Court's arbitrary interpretations of their rights and ultimately to its continued good will. As for the Orthodox, they enjoyed a statutory autonomy in religious and cultural affairs, which dated from their large-scale immigration in the previous century.³ By its terms, the metro-

1. Literature on the founding of the new schools is fairly abundant in Serbian, less so in German and Magyar. I have used, among others, Dimitrije Kirilović, *Srpske osnovne škole u Vojvodini u 18. veku* (Sremski Karlovci, 1929); Vasa Stajić, *Grada za kulturnu istoriju Novog Sada* (Novi Sad, 1951); Andrija Ognjanović, *Graničarske narodne škole i njihovi učitelji na teritoriji Vojvodine od 1774 do 1872 godine* (Novi Sad, 1964); Mita Kostić, *Grof Koler kao kulturnoprosvetni reformator kod Srba u Ugarskoj u XVIII veku* (Belgrade, 1932); and Petar Despotović, *Istorija pedagogike* (Belgrade, 1926). See also J. A. von Helfert, *Die österreichische Volksschule*, vol. 1 (Prague, 1860); Gustav Strakosch-Grassmann, *Geschichte des österreichischen Unterrichts wesens* (Vienna, 1905); Hans Wolf, *Das Schulwesen des Temesvarer Banats im 18. Jahrhundert* (Baden bei Wien, 1935); Felix Milleker, *Geschichte des Schulwesens in der Banater Militär-Grenze 1764–1878* (Vršac, 1939); Gerson Wolf, *Das Unterrichts wesens in Österreich unter Kaiser Joseph II* (Vienna, 1880); and Gunther Rothenberg, *The Military Border in Croatia, 1740–1881* (Chicago, 1966). There is a great mass of periodical literature in the various annals and journals of the Matica Srpska in Novi Sad, and the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences in Belgrade.

Archives used in preparing this article were the Finanz-Archiv (formerly Hofkammer-archiv) in Vienna (hereafter HKA), the Voivodina Arhiv in Sremski Karlovci (hereafter VA), and the Patriaršija Arhiv, also in Sremski Karlovci (hereafter MPA). Extensive use was made of the libraries of the Matica Srpska in Novi Sad and the University in Belgrade, as well as the collections of the Pedagoski Musej of Serbia. I am indebted to numerous persons in these institutions for their assistance, particularly Professor Mita Kostić, member of the Serbian Academy and formerly director of the Historical Institute in Belgrade.

2. Descriptions of these schools are found in Kirilović, Despotović, and the various works of Radoslav Grujić and Dimitrije Ruvarac, among others.

3. Both the Serbian and Rumanian populations in Hungary preceded the Habsburg era. The Serbs in the mid-eighteenth century were concentrated in the southern and

politan in Sremski Karlovci was the supreme arbiter of both lay and clerical education for his flock. The church he headed was also the sole funding authority for schools of any description, which were considered by clergy and faithful to be integral parts of the church establishment.

Among the Serbs and Rumanians who constituted Habsburg Orthodoxy, only a handful had completed more than two or three years of primary schooling. Most of those who had gone further had done so with the averred intent of entering holy orders, under the sponsorship of a bishop or monastery. The few available books in Slavonic were commissioned by the church, written by the clergy, and dealt with liturgical or theological themes nearly exclusively. Most of the pitifully few textbooks were primers in the history and catechism of the Eastern church which had been donated at various times by Russian authorities. These works, written in the evolving Russian variant of Church Slavonic, were incomprehensible to most of the Serbs and Rumanians, including some who were otherwise "educated" and who held responsible positions.⁴

The hierarchy in Karlovci had an erratic record concerning the support of schooling for their clerical and lay subjects. The theocratic tradition, which was a legacy of the years under the Turkish system, encouraged the retention of tight controls over the educational process by and for the hierarchs themselves. On the other hand, the increasing pressure of Court-supported proselytization by both Catholics and Uniats dictated—if only in the church's self-interest—the creation of an educated lower clergy and laity, capable of understanding and defending their religion. In response to the latter need, a small number of elementary schools had been organized under clerical supervision as early as the 1720s. Attempts to create a more extensive network and to found a religiously oriented secondary school had been made before

south-central segments, being divided among three political administrations: the Grenzen (Confines) under direct military control of the Hofkriegsrat; the counties of Hungary; and the province of the Banat under the Hofkammer (Imperial Treasury). The majority were located in the Banat and in the Croatian-Slavonian and Banat Military Confines. In the latter they constituted an absolute majority of the population, whereas they were outnumbered by the Rumanians, Germans, and others in the Banat province, and were a small minority in the counties. By the terms of the Leopoldine Privileges granted the Serbian immigrants in 1690–91, the metropolitan's authority extended over all Orthodox inhabitants of Hungary regardless of nationality; his seven suffragan bishops (located in Buda, Pacrac, Karlovac, Temesvár, Vršac, Novi Sad, and Arad) were always Serb nationals.

4. A sort of way station between the written language and the vernacular, called Slavoserb (*slavenosrpski*), was generally used in daily correspondence and business among the Serbs, employing a great many individual variants and practically without grammatical or orthographical rules. The rare examples of secular Rumanian were in even more confused shape. A major result—not entirely intended—of the institution of a school system was a gradual reformation of both languages to make them approximate more closely the oral usage.

and during the reign of Maria Theresa.⁵ However, little of permanence came of these efforts. Although the primary schools, teaching the catechism and the three Rs, had managed a precarious existence in some of the larger centers, the secondary schools had repeatedly failed. A few Serbs and Rumanians attended the Protestant lycées and academies of northern and eastern Hungary, usually on scholarships provided by the bishops. But most of those few who had any schooling beyond mere literacy were obliged to attend one of the Catholic "Latin schools," where proselytization was intense, or to enter holy orders and pick up what little they could in one of the numerous small and intellectually stagnant Orthodox monasteries.

In this context, the Sabor called in 1769 to elect a successor to the deceased Metropolitan Nenadović was an important milestone in the affairs of the Habsburg Orthodox minorities. It was specifically significant for the Serbs, who retained their leadership as spokesmen for these minorities through the end of the century and well into the next. This was the first Sabor in twenty years, a period in which the clergy had become increasingly discontented with the implementation of the autonomy granted them seventy-odd years earlier by the emperor. (Upon the occasion of the mass immigration of Serbian refugees from the Turkish lands in 1690–91 under Patriarch Arsenije Cernojević, the Emperor Leopold I had issued a series of decrees establishing the self-government of the Orthodox in return for military assistance against the Muslims. These Leopoldine Privileges formed the basis of the Serbian status in Hungary until their effective extinction during the later years of the reign of Maria Theresa.)⁶

During the tenure of Nenadović, Russian influence among the Orthodox population had also risen sharply, while Vienna had striven to reduce such influence and to bring the Serbs more fully within the orbit of the central government's policies. This effort took the form of Court support of the Uniat faith among Serbs and Rumanians and of the creation of a new *Hofstelle* (imperial office) for the administration of Orthodox, primarily Serbian, affairs. Although attempts to wean the Serbs from their allegiance to Orthodoxy had been a dismal failure,⁷ the Illyrische Hofdeputation (Serbian Court Deputation) had proved itself at least moderately effective as a tool

5. See Kosta Petrović, *Istorija karlovačke gimnasije* (Novi Sad, 1951), pp. 3–24.

6. See Jovan Radonić and Mita Kostić, *Srpske privilegije od 1690 to 1792* (Belgrade, 1954).

7. Unlike the Rumanians, of whom perhaps as much as one-fifth were Uniats in the later eighteenth century, the Serbs had proved nearly invulnerable to the Court's efforts, and had sometimes violently resisted proselytization. For a contemporary view see the informative and balanced report of the Serbian Hofdeputation's secretary, Friedrich Wilhelm von Taube, *Historische und geographische Beschreibung des Königreiches Slavonien und des Herzogthumes Syrmien*, vols. 1 and 2 (Leipzig, 1777).

in supervising the Serbian clergy's activities and protecting them from the aggressively anti-Orthodox attitudes of the Magyar county authorities and their Croat allies.⁸ For several years before his death Nenadović had bombarded the Court with petitions asking alleviation of what the clergy considered to be gross violations of the Leopoldine Privileges. The Hofdeputation, on its side, was equally concerned about clerical abuse and negligence. Thus, besides the election of a new metropolitan, the 1769 Sabor had a long agenda pertaining to the general situation of the Serbs in the Monarchy, and its sessions (May-October) brought decisive changes in relations between government and church. Under the commands of the imperial commissar, Count Hadik, the bishops and notables assembled in Sremski Karlovci were compelled to yield on nearly all their complaints against real or alleged violations of the Privileges, and indeed found themselves stripped of most of the quasi-political rights they still enjoyed. The General Regulation (*Regulament*) issued by the Hofdeputation in 1770 for the Serbs clearly asserted the central government's control of all but purely ecclesiastic affairs.⁹

One point alone among the thirty "Gravamina" handed to Hadik by the bishops was approved by the Court without change: the one that asked for admission of Orthodox pupils to Catholic schools in places where the Orthodox had none of their own. The Court's continuing desire to bring the Serbs and Rumanians into the Catholic orbit had a great deal to do with this acquiescence, but changes in the Vienna government's internal priorities probably were more important. Coincidentally with the 1769 Sabor, the Viennese *Hofstellen* had placed a sweeping reform of the Monarchy's school system high on their agenda, and it remained there for the next several years. By 1777 the primary schools of the whole realm were on a wholly new pedagogical and administrative footing. These changes affected the Serbs perhaps more immediately and dramatically than any other of the Monarchy's varied peoples.

The tenth chapter of the 1770 Regulation dealt with the educational facilities of the Habsburg Serbs. Paragraph 65 prescribed the creation of an extensive primary (*Trivial*) school system, on the grounds that it would be useful to the nation's development. Paragraph 66 announced the imminent establishment of a special press and publishing house, located in Vienna and dedicated to producing textbooks and other "useful and necessary" works. These two items together heralded the beginning of a new cultural era for

8. The best analysis of the Hofdeputation's creation and activity remains the work of Johann Schwicker, *Politische Geschichte der Serben in Ungarn* (Buda, 1880).

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 277 ff., for an analysis with extensive summary of the ten chapters of the Regulation.

the Serb people. Although the press, under the management of Joseph von Kurzbeck, was set up with great rapidity,¹⁰ the creation of schools moved relatively slowly until the dissolution of the Jesuit Order impelled the empress to implement a general reform of schools and teaching. From that point on, the Serbs, like the other Habsburg nations, were quickly brought under a state-administered system of public education.

The first concrete indication of the Court's concern for improving the education of Orthodox subjects was in the Banat province of southern Hungary. Administered directly by the Hofkammer (Imperial Treasury) via the Temesvár *Landesadministration*, this province extended from the Danubian military frontier to Arad. Its population was highly mixed, thanks to many decades of immigration of Germans, Slovaks, and Ukrainians (and even a few Frenchmen, Italians, and Spaniards) to populate the nearly deserted lands recovered from the Turks at the end of the seventeenth century. Among the Orthodox population, which constituted a strong majority, the Rumanians held a plurality; but most of them were still living in extremely backward agricultural and pastoral conditions in the eastern half of the province. The Serbs, concentrated in the south and center in agrarian villages and market towns, were on a substantially higher economic and cultural plane. This circumstance reinforced their dominance over their Orthodox coreligionists, which was assured by the terms of the 1690 Privileges, and by the fact that the Metropolitanate of Karlovci was always occupied by a Serb.

While the Sabor of 1769 was still in progress, the Court began negotiations with a certain Daniel Lazarini, a jurist in Temesvár, for the preparation of an ABC *cum* reader for the Orthodox children.¹¹ The negotiations, initiated by the Hofkammer, quickly involved a number of agencies possessing competency or interest in school affairs: the Study Commission (Studienhof-commission) for the entire monarchy; the Hofkriegsrat, for the Orthodox inhabitants of the Confines; the Illyrische Hofdeputation; and on occasion the Ungarische Hofkanzlei (Hungarian Court Chancellery) as presumptive guardian of Magyar rights in southern Hungary. All of these were conceded a voice in the determination of affairs affecting the education of the Orthodox inhabitants. Since the jurisdictional bounds of the affected agencies were often unclear, the handling of Serbian school matters throughout the seventies was often marked by slowness in decision-making on even the most trivial

10. The Cyrillic press was installed during 1770–71 in the already existing German and Latin printing house of the Kurzbeck family. A summary of its early activity can be found in Aleksa Ivić, "Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte des serbischen Volkes: Josef Kurzbeck und die Errichtung einer serbischen Buchdruckerei," in *Archiv für Slavische Philologie*, 29, no. 4 (1908). The first Cyrillic book was published in 1771.

11. Lazarini's proposals for the needs of the Banat schools are given in HKA, Banat Akten, fasc. 79, no. 44 (July 1769).

affairs.¹² For a brief period before its demise in late 1777 the Hofdeputation was able to gain the empress's recognition as the leading agency dealing with the Orthodox, and most of the negotiations and contracts pertaining to the Serbs were conducted by that office under the leadership of Count Franz Koller.¹³

Lazarini's draft ABC was reviewed during 1770 and found to be too long and complicated for the task of teaching the fundamentals of reading and writing. While revisions were undertaken, he was tentatively appointed the first school director for the Banat province in 1771. Returning to Temesvár to take up his tasks, he soon proved unsatisfactory to the Court and was dropped.¹⁴ In the meantime, the Kurzbeck press had begun publication of Slavic Cyrillic textbooks, reprinted from or closely modeled on Russian originals. Kurzbeck now had a monopoly, valid for twenty years, on the printing and sale of Cyrillic-letter works within the Monarchy. Imports of such works, already severely restricted, were prohibited without the individual permission of the Hofzensurstelle by a decree in 1770.¹⁵

The Jesuit Order, long the mainstay of the Monarchy's educational system, was declared dissolved, and its members given the choice of leaving the realm or assuming civil status in September 1773. The empress had taken this step with a heavy heart (as she herself described it), but more for reasons of personal piety and sympathy with the Order's religious views than because she hesitated to assert the state's dominant role in education of citizens. Already in the late sixties and early seventies a series of investigatory trips to inspect recent changes in the Prussian school administration had been carried out by the empress's order. The reforms instituted by the Augustinian abbot Felbiger in the Prussian-Silesian system were especially recommended to her attention, and in early 1774 an invitation was extended to Felbiger to propose a thoroughgoing reform of the Monarchy's schools. On May 1, 1774, the abbot took up residence in Vienna, where he was made a member of the Study Commission and at once began work.¹⁶

12. Through the first years of the school reforms, and on occasion later, the affairs of the Orthodox population required the review of a special Gemischte-Hofkommission, composed of delegates from the *Hofstellen* named above. Its *vota* were then taken to the empress, who made the final decisions. Opposing points of view between the Serbian Hofdeputation and the Hungarian Hofkanzlei were frequent, with the monarch generally supporting the Hofdeputation until 1777.

13. Koller's role in Serbian affairs is described in Kostić, *Grof Koler*.

14. Lazarini seems to have overplayed his hand in asking repeatedly for permanent appointment and a higher salary. HKA, Banat, fasc. 32 (1770-71), nos. 48, 59.

15. The definitive prohibition on book imports seems to have been issued in September 1770. Hofkriegsrats Akten, nos. 38, 116/1770.

16. A complete account of Felbiger's work in the Monarchy through 1780 can be found in Helfert, *Die österreichische Volksschule*, vol. 1, passim.

A few months earlier, Teodor Janković (later ennobled Mirievski), private secretary to the Serbian bishop of Temesvár, Joanović-Vidak, had been appointed to the vacant post of school director for the Banat.¹⁷ Janković was a graduate of the reformed University of Vienna and (as an alumnus of Sonnenfels's and Riegger's courses there) a leading member of the first generation of the Serbian enlightened intelligentsia. His activity from his appointment to the school post, and especially from 1776 until his departure to Russia in 1782, was of great significance to the founding of a viable Serbian school system. At home equally among the Viennese *illumines* and the Serbian clergy, Janković was the driving force behind the reforms in the early, critical years; it was in large part thanks to the respect in which he was held by both the Metropolitanate and the German and Magyar officials that necessary compromises between the autonomist and the centralist points of view were reached.

While Felbiger was still drafting the organizational basis of the Monarchy's new school administration, the Court moved to improve the miserably inadequate Serbian primary schools. In the *Regulae directive für die Verbesserung der illyrischen und wallachischen nicht-unierten Elementar- oder Trivialschulen*,¹⁸ issued after extensive consultations with the Temesvár authorities, the Serbian Hofdeputation outlined in detail what it thought necessary to bring the schools in the Banat up to modern standards. In fifty-two paragraphs, the following principles were enunciated: (1) Elementary schools were an obligation, rather than an option, of each Orthodox parish (*Gemeinde*); they would be constructed and maintained primarily by the parish, although the large landholders, including the *Hofkammer in Banaticis*, would assist in the procurement of books and furnishings. (2) Parents would be encouraged, but not compelled, to send their children of both sexes to the new schools. (3) The curricula would consist of reading, writing, arithmetic, and the learning of the fundamentals of the Orthodox religion. (4) The curricula, methodology, and texts would be uniform in all schools. (5) Teachers must be examined by the state prior to appointment by the parish or landholder; and cadres would be trained in the new methodology

17. Teodor Janković von Mirievski (Sremski Kamenici, 1740–St. Petersburg, 1814) completed the Novi Sad “Latin School” (i.e., gymnasium) and the Vienna university course in *Staatswissenschaft* and law. He was the most distinguished Serbian educator of the later eighteenth century. In 1782, at the invitation of Catherine II, he left the Austrian Monarchy to begin work at the Russian Court on Catherine's abortive school reforms of the mid-eighties. He stayed in Russia for the rest of his life, promoting education there until the French Wars put an end to his official activity.

18. The *Regulae* were the result of an extensive inquiry into the state of the Orthodox schools initiated in 1770 by the Hofdeputation and carried out by the Temesvár authorities during 1771. HKA, Banat, fasc. 32, no. 112/1771. They were drafted in 1773 and issued in early 1774. HKA, Banat, fasc. 32, no. 15/1774.

being worked out in Vienna. (6) Supervision of the schools would be shared by the local Orthodox clergy and the provincial government.

The *Regulae* were presented to a Church Synod and Sabor held to elect a new metropolitan in May 1774; the bishops, now headed by Metropolitan Joanović-Vidak, were dubious about both the workability of the plan and the Court's ultimate motives, and asked for additional time to study the matter.¹⁹ In Vienna, meanwhile, the Hofdeputation's hopes of immediate implementation of the *Regulae*, without waiting for the training of Orthodox teachers in the elements of the Felbiger pedagogy, were opposed by the other *Hofstellen*, for whom uniformity of the schools throughout the Monarchy was essential. In November 1774 the empress ruled in favor of the Hofdeputation's plea that administrative supervision be shared between the civil authorities and the church, but against its hopes of starting school construction at once. It was decided that the Felbiger system was to apply equally to the Orthodox population, a decision which brought considerable pedagogic difficulties in its wake during the next several years.²⁰ Janković was instructed to proceed with the general preparations in Temesvár, encouraging the clergy to adopt the *Regulae* and to promulgate them within their several dioceses. He was able to make some progress in this, especially with the enlightened and energetic bishop of Temesvár, Moises Putnik, who was the most sympathetic of the Serb hierarchs toward the idea of mass education. On paper at least, the schools of the Banat began to increase rapidly.²¹

In December 1774 the *Allgemeine Schul-Ordnung für die deutsche Trivial, Haupt, und Normalschulen der österreichischen Monarchie* (ASO) was approved by the empress. It had lain in Felbiger's draft for the Court's perusal since late July, and was accepted after minor revision. (This must be some sort of record for educational administrative reform: Felbiger completed his draft in less than three months, going into expansive detail on every aspect of the structure, aims, curricula, and methodology of the Monarchy's primary and secondary systems. Considering the bitter infighting which characterized the Habsburg bureaucracy of the later eighteenth century, one can only conclude that Felbiger was a marvel of persuasion, and that the empress was giving the matter her undivided attention.) It was the basis

19. Extensive material on the instructions to the imperial commissar, Baron Mathesen, and the deliberations of the Synod are found in HKA, Banat, fasc. 32, no. 17/1774, and especially in the 1774 documents of the MPA in Sremski Karlovci, under the rubric "Synod."

20. The question of the application of the Felbiger pedagogy in its entirety to the Serbs is well treated in Wolf, *Das Schulwesen*, pp. 74 ff.

21. Janković reported 183 existing Orthodox schools in the Banat as of 1776, which would indicate almost a doubling of their number since 1771. HKA, Banat, fasc. 32, no. 41/1776.

for the school system of the Western Habsburg lands, including the Military Confines, until 1805; and with some changes it applied to the Hungarian Kingdom as well, in the form of the *Ratio educationis* promulgated in 1777.²²

The issuance of the ASO marked the actual implementation of the plans for educational reform in the Monarchy. It called for the creation of a three-tiered state school system open to all confessions, supported chiefly by the localities (*Gemeinden*) in which the schools were operating. The teachers were to be state examinees and responsible to the central authority, though hired and paid by the community. The curricula and texts, including religion, were precisely defined by the state for all schools, and deviations from the norms were punishable. Each of the three tiers (*Trivial*, *Haupt*, and *Normal* schools) had its separate function. The elementary (*Trivial*) school was designed to instruct the sons of peasants and craftsmen in reading, basic arithmetic, and religion. The higher (*Haupt*) schools were to continue this instruction, deepening and extending it somewhat for the bourgeoisie, through an additional year (or two) of classes. The normal schools were to act as a model for the others in terms of teaching techniques and to provide the training for the teachers of the lower grades. One of these was to be established in each provincial capital, under the eye of a new School Commission responsible for the entire system in their respective provinces. General supervision, including the preparation and approval of texts, would be exercised by the existing Study Commission in Vienna, which appointed the provincial commission and the school directors (for the normal schools) and inspectors (for the lower schools).

This system was applied to the Orthodox schools of the Banat via a special statute in November 1776.²³ The Banat *Schul-Ordnung* made some concession to Orthodox needs and feelings, while maintaining the keystones of the Felbiger administrative system and, thereby, the state's claim to final arbitership in educational affairs. Unlike the ASO, it provided only for the erection of an elementary school network, on the perhaps justified assumption that the conditions in the Serb and Rumanian settlement did not call for anything more as yet. The document, divided into thirty-one paragraphs, was printed in German and Slavoserb for general distribution among the civil and church authorities in the Banat. Though its fundamentals are similar in spirit

22. *Ratio educationis totiusque Rei Litterariae per Regnum Hungariae et Provincias eidem adnexas*, drafted by members of the Hungarian Hofkanzlei from Felbiger's work, was issued in 1777 and served, with alterations in the nineties, as the general ordinance for all schools in the kingdom until 1806.

23. "Schul-Ordnung für die illyrische, nicht-unierte Trivialschulen in dem Temescher Banat," HKA, Banat, fasc. 32, no. 47/1776.

to the *Regulae* of two years earlier, some changes are visible. A summary follows:

1. The opening paragraphs prescribe the construction of a schoolhouse within one year (from June 1777) in every village containing an Orthodox parish, and the hiring of a schoolmaster as soon as possible. (The time period was later extended to three years.) The state, through the *Landesadministration*, would supply the necessary building materials and otherwise assist.

2. In those communities where no Orthodox school presently existed, but a Catholic one did, the Orthodox were to send their children to the Catholic school; but they “were not to be given the slightest injury, or compulsion in their religious belief; at the time for religious instruction they were to be released forthwith from attendance; and also, in these mixed schools, no book was to be used with confessional content.” (Par. 4).

3. The schoolhouse was to be used for no other purpose, and was to possess a suitable apartment for the teacher. Where sufficient demand existed, a second room for instructional purposes was to be provided. The school was to be easily accessible to all, and was to be properly maintained at the cost of the parish. (Pars. 5 through 8).

4. Teachers were to have written certification from the provincial School Commission, but they could be elected by the community. Not only must they be capable of teaching the three Rs and religion, but they also “must possess the ability to instruct the student in a clear and comprehensible fashion, have a calm and docile nature . . . [and] display an inclination to their office, discharging their duties in a patient manner.” Teachers must affirm “pious, Christian, and upright moral background and obedience to their clerical and civil superiors.” Only Orthodox masters might be hired in principle; Catholics could be admitted only when no Orthodox could be found. (Pars. 11, 13, 15, 16). Teachers must devote themselves primarily to school duties.

5. The Orthodox *pop* was specifically excluded from the teaching post, unless no secular master could be found, “or because of its extreme poverty, the parish cannot afford to pay a lay teacher.” (Par. 14).

6. The parish was given guidelines for hiring adequate teachers, who must be capable in instruction in Slavic; “however, those teachers who are able to instruct at least some of their students in the German language will be rewarded with distinction.” The teacher must keep record books for both the academic progress and the conduct of his charges. The misuse of pupils for labor in the teacher’s private affairs was strictly prohibited. (Pars. 18, 19, 29, 30).

7. The impending distribution of the Felbiger handbook for teachers was announced; this would soon be followed by gratis distribution of various

beginning texts in arithmetic, the ABCs, and religion. Other texts were prohibited. (Pars. 17, 20–23). The instruction of the children in the fundamentals of the Orthodox belief and liturgy was to be carried out by both the teacher and the *pop*. (Pars. 24–26).

8. The hours of instruction would be from seven to nine in the morning (eight to ten in winter) and from one to three in the afternoon. The school year was to last from the beginning of December to the end of March, “at least.” Children (of both sexes) from ages six to thirteen were *schulschuldig*, that is, were supposed to attend classes; older students could attend, and were encouraged to until they had mastered the three Rs. Exceptions were allowed for those children who were needed by their parents during the farming season. (Pars. 27, 28).

9. Monthly visitations by the local *pop*, quarterly ones by the *protopop*, and annual ones by the bishop and the Temesvár School Commission were ordained for all schools. (Par. 31).

It will be seen that the Hofdeputation’s view on the necessity of dividing the supervision of Orthodox schools between the civil and clerical authority had prevailed; this was different from the German-speaking parts of the Monarchy, where the administration was put into the hands of the bureaucracy. However, the distinction was somewhat illusory: although the *pop* was entitled to take an active hand in the teaching of religion outside the school, he was prohibited from conducting lessons in the school unless the parish could not find a lay teacher. The provision for visitations by the clergy was ineffective in offsetting the much greater authority of the state officialdom in training and certifying the teachers, reviewing their written reports to the School Commission in Temesvár, and prescribing the curricula and texts. The demand for annual visitation by the bishop remained solely on paper, because it was a physical impossibility. This was doubtless the Court’s intent; the Orthodox clergy was to be brought into the new system as a distinctly junior partner of the state.²⁴

The Banat *Schul-Ordnung* was followed within a few months by the *Ratio educationis*, which covered the Serbs and other Orthodox living within the bounds of Hungary and Transylvania, and whose provisions for secondary schooling were then applied to the Banat with the integration of that province into Hungary the following year. Thus by 1778 all the regions where Serbs lived within the Monarchy had basically similar pedagogical constitutions in force: in the Military Confines, the *Allgemeine Schul-Ordnung*; in the

24. Wolf, *Das Schulwesen*, p. 99, believes that the Court was not interested in enforcing the administrative regulations calling for Orthodox clerical participation in the Temesvár School Commission and the bishops’ rights of visitation (“es liegt keine einzige Nachricht vor, dass ein Administrationsrat jemals eine Reise zu Schulbesuche gemacht hätte”).

Banat, the *Schul-Ordnung*; and in Hungary proper, Croatia, and Slavonia, the *Ratio educationis*.

At the primary school level, the Serbs made rapid strides during the remaining years of Maria Theresa's reign. Three of their conationals were appointed school directors (or inspectors, both titles being used) for Orthodox educational facilities in areas where compact masses of Serbs and Rumanians lived. Stefan Vujanovski was appointed to head the schools of the Croatian-Slavonian Military Confines and Civil Croatia. Avram Mrazović was given a similar appointment for the Bačka-Baranja and the Arad Orthodox diocese.²⁵ Teodor Janković-Mirievski was confirmed as director of the Banat province. The Serb directors reported to the Catholic "Studiorum Directores" in three of the nine administrative Study Districts into which the Hungarian Kingdom *et partes adnexas* was divided by the *Ratio*: Győr (Mrazović), Veliki Varadin (Janković), and Zagreb (Vujanovski).

The duties of the Orthodox school directors were numerous and difficult. They were to oversee the organization and construction of schools, the hiring of qualified teachers, the distribution of the teachers' handbook and school texts, and a myriad of other details. They acted as courts of first instance in the many disputes between the teachers and the parishes; they encouraged the often-reluctant parents to send their children to the new schools; and they served as the first line of communication between civil and clerical authorities.²⁶

Perhaps the most difficult single task facing the new directors was the training of competent teachers who would be content with the very low pay and poor working conditions of most primary school jobs. Compared with this, the actual construction of schools proved to be relatively easy. Thanks to the provision of free building materials and Director Janković's energetic intervention, the Banat province possessed no less than 205 Orthodox primary institutions in 1778. Vujanovski and Mrazović had been equally busy in their

25. Vujanovski (?1743–Osijek, 1825) made his seat in Osijek and from there directed the activities of from one to two hundred schools located in the Croatian-Slavonian Military Confines and Civil Croatia. Mrazović (Sombor, 1756–Sombor, 1826) worked mainly from his birthplace supervising an almost equal number of schools, most of them attended by Rumanians. Both men continued in service until their forced retirement in 1810, after the reorganization of Orthodox schooling carried out by Uroš Neštorović. They both contributed substantially to the texts being turned out on the Kurzbeck press, and Mrazović was considered a scholar of some repute during his lifetime.

26. The difficulties between the school directors and the Orthodox clergy are frequently reflected in the MPA documents, under the rubrics "Schulsachen" and "Schulwesen." Vujanovski particularly was often under fire from the clergy for insufficient attention to Orthodox interests during the eighties and nineties. (Examples are found in MPA, fund A, nos. 65/1790 and 94/1809.)

respective districts. Within a very short time after 1776 an extensive network of both Serbian and Rumanian language schools existed—at least on paper—wherever these two nationalities lived in large numbers.²⁷ The teacher problem, on the other hand, was complicated by several factors, some of them quite beyond the control of the school directors.

In the first place, the Court insisted on the uniform application of Felbiger's methodology to the Orthodox schools. This meant that all teachers, presently employed or candidates, had to undergo a course in the so-called *Normallehrart* prescribed by the abbot. This was a complex system of instruction, outlined in five divisions or chapters of a handbook written by Felbiger in 1774 and subsequently translated into every major language of the Monarchy, including Serbian (1776) and Rumanian (1777).²⁸

Felbiger's system aimed at the *Aufklärung des Verstandes*, so that the child would be led from the most simple to more recondite knowledge by distinct stages. The teacher's chief responsibility was to lead the child through repeated questioning (*catechisieren*) on material already taught. Instruction was effected through simultaneous readings and recitations (in contrast to the traditional method of individual tutelage), and mnemonic devices were considered essential to success. Various tables, consisting of the first letters of words to be memorized, were exactly prescribed by the handbook for all the curricula of the school. Texts were written embodying these tables, and any deviations from them were considered destructive to the whole system.²⁹

In order to acquaint him with Felbiger's principles, the Hofdeputation called Janković to Vienna in 1776 and had him take the special course supervised by the abbot in the newly reorganized *Normalschule* at Saint Anna

27. The numbers of extant schools at various times from 1771 to the end of the century are given by Wolf, *Das Schulwesen*, p. 40 and passim. These are based on the annual report filed by the Orthodox school directors from 1776 onward, and on the statistical surveys of Demian and others in the first decade of the nineteenth century. In 1781 Janković reported a total of 452 Orthodox *Trivialschulen* in the former Banat, a very large increase over the 183 of 1776. In the district supervised by Vujanovski and Mrazović at this time the figures are less easily determinable, but certainly numbered in the 300-odd range by 1780, also a very substantial increase over four years earlier. In the Military Confines almost all of the primary schools were "Simultanschulen," that is, open to all confessions, with separate religious instruction by the *Pfarrer* or the *pop*.

28. The original was entitled "Nothwendiges Handbuch für den Gebrauch der Schullehrer in den deutschen Trivial-Schulen" (Vienna, 1774). It was based on a series of other publications by the abbot relevant to his experiences in training teachers for the Catholic schools of Prussia.

29. An interesting and clear description of this methodology will be found in Ognjanović, *Graničarske narodne škole*, pp. 17 ff. Uniformity in instruction and texts was considered of very great importance for success by both Felbiger and the Study Commission.

(formerly Jesuit). At the same time the Serb translated and adapted the handbook into his mother tongue. The question of adapting the tables for Serbian usage caused considerable problems. The usefulness of these devices had already been attacked by Hofrat Keess of the Hofdeputation on general academic grounds;³⁰ now Keess's objections were reinforced by Janković's remarks on the difficulties the tables would present to the Cyrillic-reading population. The use of initial letters to form the tables would not work in Cyrillic, said Janković, for the following reasons: (1) The beginning letter of Serbian words is not always pronounced the same way, for example, Slavonic *e*. (2) There are words in Cyrillic which are formed of a vowel only, so that the children could not know whether these were whole words or only the initial letters. (3) There are single-consonant words which are written, but not pronounced, separately—namely, *s* and *k*.³¹

These objections from an acknowledged expert could not be ignored, and accordingly a decision was rendered by the empress which dropped the *Buchstaben* or *Literarmethode* from the Orthodox schools, but kept the tables, which would now be written not with the first letter only but with the entire word for purposes of memorization.³² The Hofdeputation could not resist commenting that the new method consisted in nothing more than memorization of the table of contents of each textbook, which it indeed was. The tables, upon which Felbiger put great store, were in fact the most vulnerable element of his system, and were quietly dropped throughout the Monarchy's schools during the 1790s. Conceived of as a device to assist understanding, they proved far too complicated for the teachers and students to employ usefully, and contributed greatly to the undue emphasis on rote memorization which brought the abbot's pedagogy into disrepute in the nineteenth century.³³

When he returned to Temesvár in late 1776, Janković arranged for the sending of seventeen other Serbian teachers to the capital to be trained at the Saint Anna school at the Hofdeputation's expense. They were the first cadre of *Normallehrer*, and were instructed to spread their new skills among

30. Wolf, *Das Schulwesen*, pp. 93 ff. Keess felt that the *Buchstabenmethode* might have some use as a mnemonic device, but that it "neither sharpens the reasoning faculty, nor makes the curriculum more comprehensible, nor widens the students' horizons." The tables were useless, because they were meant for a logical analysis of knowledge, but the courses of the Orthodox primary schools "contain no such logically analytical material."

31. HKA, Banat, fasc. 32, no. 41/1776, contains Janković's "Bemerkungen" on the Felbiger system.

32. Staatsrat Akten, no. 2570/1776, cited by Wolf, *Das Schulwesen*, p. 226.

33. A critique of the tables, remarking that they were already obsolete in German schools where the system had been introduced by Friedrich Hahn in the 1750s, is given in the final chapter of Helfert, *Die österreichische Volksschule*, vol. 1.

their fellows. In addition, Mrazović in Sombor and Vujanovski in Osijek were ordered to begin so-called Normal Courses in the fundamentals of Felbiger's pedagogy, starting every first of May and lasting for three months. The first of these was held by Mrazović in 1778, and within a few years the courses were regularly attended by upwards of fifty prospective or currently employed Orthodox schoolmasters. In this fashion, the majority of the Serbian and Rumanian teachers were gradually introduced to the new pedagogy and followed it as best they could. The Mrazović course continued for over thirty years, and was eventually superseded by the creation of the first Serbian *Normalschule* in Saint Endre near Budapest, in 1812.⁸⁴

Having been certified by the district School Commission as qualified to teach, the graduates of the Normal Course were faced with the prospect of getting and holding a position which would allow them a living wage. Despite the efforts of Janković et al., many of the Orthodox villages were strongly reluctant to take on the burden of maintaining a school and paying the teacher. The peasants often could see no possible gain in having "book-educated" sons. Literacy was considered moderately advantageous, but hardly necessary unless one intended to enter the clergy. Instruction in religion and morals was the traditional competency of the church and the family. For these, the schools were considered by many superfluous. Hence in some places the newly constructed buildings stood empty.

Attitudes toward the teachers varied sharply from village to village. In some places the teachers were held in high esteem, next only to the *pop*; in others their incompetence or miserable material conditions, or both, induced an attitude of contempt on the part of the better-off members of the community. The low social position and poor material conditions of many of the pedagogues of the later eighteenth century were not significantly different from those in any other contemporary agrarian society; but the lay schoolmaster in the Orthodox settlements had to labor under the additional handicap of being looked upon as a competitor—imposed by alien hands—to the traditional and still highly respected educational authority of the church. Petty friction between *pops* and village teachers was often enough a reflection of more serious conflicts between bishops and school directors over what the hierarchy regarded as usurpations of their historic rights to lead the faithful, and to keep it free from "Latin" contamination.⁸⁵ The fact that the great

34. Among the early graduates of the Normal Courses in Sombor were the distinguished Serbian playwright Joakim Vujić, the poet and translator Aleksije Vezelić, and the later bishop of Buda, Platon Atanašković. Kostantin Kostić, *Is istorije učiteljske škole u Somboru* (Novi Sad, 1938), gives the history and development of the Serbian normal institutions in Hungary.

35. The bishop of Temesvár and later (1781–90) metropolitan, Moises Putnik, was an exception to this general rule. Most of the Serbian hierarchs, notably in Pacrac,

majority of the teachers in the Orthodox schools were coreligionists of their pupils, as the Banat statute had ordained, did little to relieve the clergy's fears and antipathies. The system was clearly controlled by Catholic Vienna, and the statute's exhortation to learn German was not designed to quiet the hierarchy's suspicions.

The schoolmasters' pay was left to the individual communities, and here again there were substantial differences from place to place. In general, however, the pay scale was very low. Anywhere from 60 to 120 florins per annum, partly represented by *naturalia* such as firewood and pasture-rights, was the rule in the villages. The towns paid somewhat better; but even here the primary teachers were on the lowest rung of the pay scale for officials of any sort.³⁶ Their contracts were from year to year, generally calling for ten or eleven months of availability for school duty, although very few places actually held formal school courses for so long. Until the Josephinist reforms, the teachers were not entitled to a pension, regardless of years served. Because of the niggardly salaries, the practice of *Nachstunden* (tutoring) soon became widespread, and was frequently abused in order to gain extra income. Also, the teachers were often obliged to take extra work to make ends meet. The only occupation specifically forbidden them was tavern-keeping; but the stipulation in the Banat statute and the ASO that the teachers were not to take second jobs which interfered with their educational tasks was usually observed in the breach.

Among the Orthodox, the requirement that the teacher assist in religious instruction generally resulted in combining the school post with that of sexton and choirmaster for the village church. Often enough, the desire that the teacher possess a good voice and some knowledge of music took precedence over his academic abilities. In many places the teacher of the local school was bullied by the *pop* into becoming his nonpaid jack-of-all-trades. If the teacher resisted, the *pop* had both his visitation right and his considerable influence among the community members to threaten effectively the unfortunate master with loss of his job.

All these factors induced many newly certified teachers to change their post frequently, or to give up their profession at the first opportunity. A Serb proverb has it that "with the cranes fly the teachers," that is, in the fall, at the beginning of the school year, schoolmasters were seeking new posts and

Vršac, and Karlovac dioceses where Catholic pressures were particularly strong because of the mixed-confessional population, were not very enthusiastic about the new schools, and did little to encourage them of their own volition.

36. Cases are on record in which the annual cash remuneration was under 20 florins. As a comparison, School Director Janković's salary in the early eighties was 600 florins (plus expenses), and the lower ranks of the civil bureaucracy received anywhere from 200 to 350 florins annually.

new contracts. The fact that the teacher was given the use but not the proprietorship of several acres of land as part of his contract contributed to the high turnover rate. Even recognizably incompetent masters were usually able to find new posts without much difficulty, so poor was the remuneration.³⁷ On the other hand, teachers who were able and in any degree ambitious could and did leave the profession in large numbers. Many of them entered holy orders, or became amanuenses to the upper clergy, a material improvement in either case. Some entered the central or provincial bureaucracy.

The building and maintenance of the new schools were effected through two major fund sources in the Orthodox settlements. One was the state, in the form of subsidies from the Hofkammer; the second was the church, in the form of contributions from the central National Fund and direct levies upon the affected parishes.

The Hofkammer contributed to meeting educational expenses in several ways: free building materials, cash subsidies for preparing and printing textbooks and school equipment, subsidies to many villages situated on Cameral lands in the Banat (where the Hofkammer was the largest landlord until the eighties), payment of administrative salaries and other expenses of the directors and commissions, and so forth. These funds were distributed most generously in the 1770s, as the school system was getting under way. In Joseph's reign and later, the burden was shifted to the church and voluntary contributions of the faithful.

The National Fund was the contemporary term for the general financial resources of the Metropolitanate in Sremski Karlovci, represented in part by the usufruct of church property, in part by the estates of the clergy and bequests of the pious, and in part by the capital and income of various church loans. A proportion of it had been reserved by tradition to school support since the 1720s. Metropolitan Nenadović later set an example by bequeathing half of his personal estate to school purposes. The Regulation of 1770 had reinforced this by insisting on the reduction of the bishops' formerly unlimited rights to the estates of the childless and intestate lower clergy (*Caducitätsrecht*), channeling this income to the National Fund for educational uses. The Court-enforced disposition of monastic properties, further reductions of the *Caducitätsrechte*, and other ordinances adopted by the church synods of 1774 and 1776 increased these funds again. Under the supervision of the Hofdeputation, they were then devoted to educational purposes of all types, including the

37. Again, the documents of the MPA contain complaints of both schoolmasters and parishes about the laziness and poor moral character of some village schoolteachers, on the one hand, and the long delays or refusal to fulfill salary contracts by the communities, on the other. Teachers who had not been able to obtain certification were often able to find refuge in a particularly low-paying community, for want of a better alternative on both sides.

training of the clergy as well as laymen. Many of the Kurzbeck press books were commissioned and distributed through the Fund.³⁸

The church also acted as financial supporter of the primary schools at the community level. It organized the collection of compulsory tuition fees from parents of school children, and voluntary contributions from all residents, in cash or kind, for maintenance and salaries.

In some localities where large private holders were common (Slavonia and the Bačka-Baranja district), the local landlords supported schools as part of their seigneurial position. However, since very few large holders were Orthodox, and since the Magyar government usually left such arrangements to the good will of the county nobility, relatively little was afforded Orthodox schools through this channel in the seventies. In the Josephinist decade, considerably more pressure was put on the landed nobility for school support: a directive of 1786 for the Banat laid down the principle that the *Grundherr* was responsible for one-third of the costs of erecting and maintaining schools, while the community had to find the other two-thirds (often assisted by the Hofkammer).³⁹

Funding of Orthodox schools and teaching posts in the Military Confines was done wholly through the church, because the Hofkriegsrat strongly favored Roman Catholicism and for many years devoted state funds exclusively to those schools which were under the purview of the Catholic clergy. Repeated protest from the Serbian bishops finally brought some amelioration in the 1790s. But, in general, Orthodox institutions were maintained solely by the parishes, for the military authorities considered them "eine ungerechtfertigte Last."⁴⁰

The curricula of all the Monarchy's primary schools were carefully defined in the ASO. They were limited to instruction in reading and writing of the mother tongue (and where possible, German), the four elements of arithmetic, and the fundamentals of religion and church history. The methodology to be employed was fully described in Felbiger's handbook. Beginning texts had to be written (or rewritten) to conform with the emphasis on learning the alphabet by rote, the use of tables, and the importance of recitation and questioning. For the Serbs and Rumanians almost all of the texts had to be created from scratch, since the Court was not inclined to continue

38. The handling of these funds was the subject of some dispute between the Metropolitanate and the Court agencies. Parts of the Regulations of 1770 and 1777 were aimed at obtaining a more exact accounting of the source and disposal of the church monies, as it had been the habit of various metropolitans and bishops to make loans for their own ends out of the National Fund, often without security.

39. Ungarische Hofkanzlei, no. 4424/1786.

40. Wolf, *Das Schulwesen*, p. 111.

the former dependence on Russian imprints, even if these had conformed to the new pedagogy. Following the abortive Lazarini draft of 1770, the Court commissioned a large series of scholastic materials for the Orthodox population from the Kurzbeck press. Although the purely religious works were often reprints or slight adaptations of extant Russian publications, the ABC books, readers, and arithmetic handbooks were generally new, and written with the Felbiger precepts in mind.⁴¹ Their authors were usually Serbs who had found favor with the Hofdeputation, or who had been recommended to the Vienna government by the bishop. The Metropolitanate itself possessed a consultative right in the production of books for the Orthodox population, which was stronger in the era of the Hofdeputation's existence (until 1778) than later. The supervision of the Kurzbeck product's religious and linguistic correctness was put (in 1772) in the hands of the Vienna Orthodox *pop* Atanasije Dimitrijević-Sekeres, who held the post of censor for Oriental languages until his death in 1794.⁴² Day-to-day business leadership remained in the control of Kurzbeck, who found himself sometimes financially embarrassed by the conflicts between the Court censorship and the Metropolitanate, but who was able to retain his monopoly on Cyrillic printing until his death at the beginning of the reign of Emperor Franz. As exceptional cases, imports of foreign Cyrillic works were allowed into the Monarchy; but these had to be individually approved by the censor and were to be sold only by Kurzbeck, with discretionary mark-up.⁴³

The final years of Maria Theresa's reign saw some administrative changes in the status of the Orthodox schools, but were generally characterized by advances in their number and quality. At the beginning of December 1777 the empress suddenly decided that the Serbian Hofdeputation had outlived its usefulness, and distributed its agenda and personnel among the Hungarian Hofkanzlei and the Hofkriegsrat.⁴⁴ In the following year the Banat province

41. A complete listing of the Kurzbeck (and other) works is found in Georgije Mihailović, *Srpska bibliografija XVIII veka* (Belgrade, 1964). The Russian catechisms were eventually replaced with one by Jovan Rajić, commissioned by the Hofdeputation in 1774 and printed in 1776.

42. Sekeres (Győr, 1740–Vienna, 1794) later converted to Catholicism, which damaged his standing among the Serbs, as did his role in substituting certain passages in the German-language version of the Rajić catechism to conform more to the Catholic theology. On him, see Mita Kostić, *Grof Koler*, pp. 66 ff., and also his "Dositejev prijatelj i savetnik Sekeres," in the *Glas* of the Serbian Academy, 256 (1963): 25.

43. The relevant regulation is contained in HKA, Banat, fasc. 32, no. 41/1778.

44. The immediate occasion for the empress's decision was the riotous disturbances which had taken place in Vršac and Novi Sad against some of the announced provisions of the Regulation of 1777. There existed a long history of conflict between the Hofdeputation and the Hungarian Hofkanzlei regarding the best means of dealing with the Serbs' demands for a freer hand in educational and church affairs. When the optimistic prognoses of the Hofdeputation concerning the salutary effect of the Regulation

was dissolved and re-formed as the three Hungarian counties of Krasso, Torontal, and Temesvár, under the jurisdiction of the Vice-regal Council (Consilium Locumtenentiale) in Buda. And in 1779 the two Regulations of 1770 and 1777 affecting Serbian affairs were followed by the *Erläuterungs-Reskript* (Explanatory Decree) which put a definitive end to the Leopoldine Privileges of autonomy in all except purely dogmatic and some ecclesiastic matters. Outside the Confines, which remained as before under the Hofkriegsrat, the Serbs' political administration was now in practice in Magyar hands. These changes had little practical effect upon the Orthodox schools. Janković, Mrazović, and Vujanovski continued their efforts with the assistance of the Hungarian Hofkanzlei at Court and the Council in Buda. The number of functioning schools rose steadily, particularly in the former Banat province. By 1780 the large majority of the Serb villages, and more than half of the Rumanian villages, had Orthodox schools of one to three years' duration.⁴⁵ Most of them were single-classroom, one-teacher institutions. How far the Felbiger pedagogy was actually put into effect by the rapidly trained cadres of teachers is difficult to know; but a substantial number, probably most of the teachers, had been at least exposed to the abbot's system in the Normal Courses, and the directors worked hard to enforce the highly prized uniformity of texts and method.

The attendance of children in the new schools varied a great deal. As a general rule, attendance was much higher—two or three times as high—in the towns than in rural areas. Considerably more Orthodox children went to school in areas of mixed-confessional population than where the Orthodox constituted a strong majority—another aspect of the town-country ratio, for the towns were always mixed in confession. The proportion of Serbs going to school was substantially higher than that of Rumanians; as a rough generalization, the further east one went, the fewer school-age children were in attendance. The opposition of the Catholic authorities to Orthodox institutions in the Confines forced a disproportionately high number of Serb and Rumanian children to attend either Catholic or *simultan* (nonconfessional) schools there. Finally, the attitude of individual Orthodox clergymen resulted in better or worse acceptance and support of the schools by the parents.

All in all, the attendance of male students, at least, was surprisingly high. In Director Janković's report for 1781, almost half of the male *Schulfähige* (six to thirteen years of age) were listed as visiting school regularly, compared with about a third who came occasionally and somewhat fewer who

proved false, the monarch decided that Serbian affairs would best be handled by the Hofkanzlei and the Hofkriegsrat. On this see Schwicker, *Politische Geschichte*, pp. 324–32.

45. Ungarische Hofkanzlei Akten, no. 5830/1781, cited by Wolf, *Das Schulwesen*, p. 147.

did not attend at all. The number of females who came to school regularly was around half that of the males (about one in four as opposed to one in two), with sharp variation between town and countryside.⁴⁶ When one considers the staunchness of the patriarchal tradition among both Serbs and Rumanians of the era, even this number of girls seems fairly high. It is, of course, very difficult or impossible to assess the accuracy of these figures, which were reported to the director by the individual teachers on a semestral basis. However, since there was no compulsion to *attend*, as against compulsory levies to *support* the schools, it is reasonable to assume that the attendance figures are fairly close to the mark. This is particularly true for the year in question, when Janković was still on the scene and engaged in tireless activity on the schools' behalf.

The number of operating schools apparently reached its apex in the early eighties. When Janković departed to Russia in late 1782, his colleague Mrazović was assigned by the Court to supervise the three Banat counties, in addition to his former district in southwest Hungary. This huge area made visitations on any regular basis impossible. Perhaps because of the emperor's parsimony in refusing him additional salary,⁴⁷ but more probably because of the difficulty of travel and the disruptions caused by the Court's preparations for the next war with Turkey, Mrazović did not fully sustain his predecessor's efforts. The Normal Course in Temesvár was closed, and a good many villages allowed their schools to disintegrate, physically and otherwise. A report to the Vice-regal Council in 1786 states that not a single Orthodox school in the Banat was currently teaching arithmetic. Another shows that the number of operating schools was considerably lower in 1789 than in 1778, although the decline in the proportion of children in attendance was somewhat smaller.⁴⁸ The movement of the population away from the war zone was no doubt in large part responsible; but the number of Orthodox schools did not again reach the level they had attained in the early eighties until almost the turn of the century. By then, the schools of the Serbs and Rumanians—like the rest of the Monarchy—had entered upon a different epoch.

The first decade (1770–80) of school reform among the Orthodox minorities of the Monarchy thus effected a very substantial improvement in

46. *Ibid.*, pp. 185 ff.

47. A documentary account of Mrazović's difficulties in receiving his salary for the previous five years of service in the Banat is given in Aleksa Ivić, *Grada o jugoslovenskim književnim i kulturnim radnicima* (Belgrade, 1956), 5:141 ff.

48. Report on arithmetic in Serb schools: Ungarische Hofkanzlei Akten, no. 10,465/1786. Mrazović's *Bericht* to the Hofkanzlei in 1789 shows fewer schools operating in the Banat than in 1778. A good deal of the blame for this decline can be given to the wartime conditions in southern Hungary.

educational opportunities, although they were limited to basic learning and were subject to the vagaries of local opinion and central policy. The imperfections of the new schools were serious and numerous: Felbiger's pedagogy was often unsuited to the needs and capacities of the children, and lent itself too easily to vapid memorization at the hands of the miserably paid and hastily trained teachers. The quest for uniformity in the curriculum and in methodology often led to silly distortions in the classroom. Many communities looked upon the school as an imposition from above, to be abandoned at the first opportunity. And many children, particularly in the rural areas, remained untouched by schooling.

The simmering conflict between the Metropolitanate and the Court over the autonomy issue weakened respect for the schools and their secular staffs among the influential clergy—a condition which was to be exacerbated during the following reign of Joseph II. And the longstanding distrust of many of the Orthodox for the Catholic central authorities was increased by the creation of a system which gave effective command of education to the latter.

This being said, there still remains little doubt that the cumulative advantages of the reforms to the Serbs (and somewhat later to the Rumanians) were very large and far outweighed the negative elements. If only in the most elementary sense, literacy in both the Cyrillic and Latin alphabets became much more common, thus opening many previously closed doors to material advances and official careers. The numbers of the bourgeoisie began to rise sharply, as did those of the budding intelligentsia. The fundamental orientation of Serbian culture was turned from the Russo-Byzantine East to the Germanic West, a process continued into the present century.

The reforms also contributed to a transformation of the previously theocratic social and political structure among the Orthodox. The conservative hierarchy's position as sole arbiter of the goals and purposes of education was effectively challenged. The identification of national with clerical interest began to break down; and the next generation of Orthodox clerics were not only better prepared to defend their faith but also were generally more responsive to popular wishes. Increased contacts with German and Magyar officialdom allowed many Serbs and Rumanians access to Western cultural currents previously unknown to them. While some resisted on principle, others accepted the new ideas of the Enlightenment and spread them, even among the clergy. With their promotion of the secular and the utilitarian virtues and their implicit attacks upon sectarian exclusiveness, the Theresian school reforms allowed a new day to open for the Monarchy's Orthodox inhabitants.