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**EDUCATION OF PUPILS OF PRIMARY-SCHOOL AGE IN TWO LANGUAGES OF INSTRUCTION IN THE RURAL AREA OF MIDDLE BANAT\***

The village of Ečka, with 5,200 inhabitants, is situated in Middle Banat, only 6 km from Zrenjanin beside the main road to Belgrade. In addition to the Serbs, Rumanians also live in this town community, together with other nations and nationalities of Yugoslavia. Ečka is one of the oldest settlements in the commune of Zrenjanin. It was founded before the Turkish occupation of Banat but it is not known exactly when. The first known documents in which Ečka is mentioned date from 1439.

The ethnic structure of the population of Ečka has frequently changed. The original inhabitants of the village were Serbians and Rumanians. The Rumanian element was considerably increased after the settling of a large number of Rumanian families from Erdel in 1767 by order of Maria Theresa. At the end of the 17th century, Serbs from Bosnia and Germans came. After the Second World War, the Germans left Ečka, and Serbs as well as other nations and nationalities living in the territory of today's Yugoslavia came in their place.

Such large and frequent migrations of the population of Ečka are explained by the fact that these migrants never had their own land but were always on a hire basis, first with regard to the country and later by the feudal landlords. The agrarian reform of 1921 (partly) and that of 1945 finally gave land to the settlers.

The basic activity of the village is agriculture. The area of farm land available is approximately 2,888 ha, of which 982 ha (34%) is in the social sector and 1,906 ha (66%) in the private sector. In the planting structure, grains represent 74.8%, industrial plants (e.g. sunflower, sugar beet, etc.) 18.3% and vegetables 4.4%.

There are a number of agricultural organisations in the village itself: a fishing economic unit, the basic organisation *Kooperacija*, and the agricultural organisation *Pobeda*. A large number of private farmers are united in the basic organisation *Kooperacija*, thus realising their interests directly.

In the past few years, more of the inhabitants have worked in the city and lived in the village (18%). Being near Zrenjanin, Ečka is to a great extent under the influence of this large urban centre. A powerful agricultural and food-supply industry, a developed school system, numerous cultural institutions, a rich sports life - these are the characteristics of the city of Zrenjanin.

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\* Original: Serbo-Croatian

The elementary school was named after a well-known revolutionary, doctor and scientist, member of the Physiological institutes of Sarajevo, Skopje and Novi Sad and inhabitant of our village, Dr. A. Sabovljeva. The primary school (four-year) was founded in 1821. In that distant past, teaching was carried out in Rumanian and German, and sometimes in Hungarian. After the Second World War, in 1958, the school became an eight-year one. The number and division of departments in the school and the number of pupils is shown in Table 1.

The structure of the administration and working tasks in the school is given in Table 2.

Based on the principles of unity, democracy, accessibility, brotherhood and unity and the equality of the nations and nationalities, the elementary school provides the foundations of education and upbringing.

Table 1

| Grade        | No. of Dept.   |          | No. of Pupils | No. of Pupils | No. of Pupils |
|--------------|----------------|----------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
|              | Serbo-Croatian | Rumanian |               |               |               |
| I            | 2              | + 1 = 3  | 66            | 49            | 17            |
| II           | 2              | + 1 = 3  | 70            | 55            | 15            |
| III          | 2              | + 1 = 3  | 71            | 57            | 14            |
| IV           | 2              | + 1 = 3  | 60            | 43            | 17            |
| Total I - IV | 8              | + 4 = 12 | 267           | 204           | 63            |
| V            | 2              | + 1 = 3  | 63            | 45            | 18            |
| VI           | 2              | + 1 = 3  | 63            | 49            | 14            |
| VII          | 2              | + 1 = 3  | 67            | 50            | 17            |
| VIII         | 2              | + 1 = 3  | 59            | 44            | 15            |
| Total V-VIII | 8              | + 4 = 12 | 252           | 188           | 64            |
| Total I-VIII | 16             | + 8 = 24 | 519           | 392           | 127           |

Table 2

| Order No.                  | ADMINISTRATIVE AND WORK TASKS | QUALIFICATIONS    |                  |                    | Total |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|-------|
|                            |                               | Elementary School | Secondary School | College University |       |
| 1. DIRECTOR                |                               |                   |                  | 1                  | 1     |
| 2. PEDAGOGUE/EDUCATOR      |                               |                   |                  |                    | 1     |
| 3. TEACHER/CLASS LESSONS   |                               |                   |                  | 1                  | 13    |
| 4. TEACHER/SUBJECT LESSONS |                               |                   | 1                |                    | 19    |
| 5. ADMINISTRATIVE WORKER   |                               |                   |                  | 1                  | 1     |
| 6. TECHNICAL ASSISTANT     |                               |                   | 1                |                    | 1     |
| 7. ASSISTANT HELP AND COOK |                               | 6                 |                  |                    | 6     |
| TOTAL                      |                               | 6                 | 3                | 31                 | 42    |

The complete educational activity of the elementary school is clearly defined by the tasks laid down in the law on Education in SAP Vojvodina, as well as in the acts of the SKJ (League of Communists of Yugoslavia) and the constitutional decisions on the role of education in the realisation of complete equality of the nations and nationalities of Yugoslavia.

In the constitutional amendments of 1971, the obligations and responsibilities for the state and development of education were placed in the hands of the Socialist Autonomous Province of Vojvodina. As in many other schools in Vojvodina, the lessons in our school are bilingual: in the Serbo-Croatian and Rumanian languages. In the entire educational work, the teaching languages are equal and have a right to equal treatment.

In SAP Vojvodina, elementary schools are organised on the principle of territory. They enroll all the pupils from a defined territory (village, local community), without regard to the national affiliation and language which they use. From this follows that in all towns and urban centres with a multi-national composition of inhabitants, there are elementary schools with two or more languages.

In the community of Zrenjanin, with 18 elementary schools, lessons are taught in Serbo-Croatian in ten schools, in Serbo-Croatian and Hungarian in 6 schools, in Serbo-Croatian, Hungarian and Slovak in one school, and in Serbo-Croatian and Rumanian in our school.

Elementary schools in one language do not differ much from bilingual schools in respect of the specifics of such schools. In the planning of work in the professional as well as in the self-management organs of the operational programme of the work of the school, in the individual plans and programmes of the work of the teachers and in the normative acts, the needs and conditions for the realisation of the school tasks in two teaching languages have been clearly fixed. As a concrete example, we stress educational work in the plans, especially in the field of ethical education and the tasks which follow from this, such as "Socialist Humanism," "Yugoslav Socialist Patriotism," "Proletarian Internationalism," etc. Furthermore, special attention is paid to the staffing structure of the teaching personnel, or should we say, equal qualification and complete linguistic fluency in Serbo-Croatian and Rumanian. These questions are regulated by the corresponding normative acts which have been accepted by the workers in the school.

The pedagogic documentation and administration are prepared in two languages. Both languages are used at meetings of the professional organs (departmental conferences) and at parent-teacher meetings. One of the most important documents which regulate education in SAP Vojvodina is the "Plan and Programme of Basic Education in SAP Vojvodina." The extent, tasks, content and forms of both teaching and non-teaching activities are laid down in it.

The specific choice of activities is dependent on the social pedagogic estimation and the material and staffing possibilities of the school, as well as on the needs of the multinational



areas. Through this, the unique social and educational functions of the school and more are guaranteed.

The activity of the school consists of the following:

1. Lessons
  - a) compulsory courses
  - b) optional courses
2. Complementary educational work
3. Additional educational work
4. Educational work of the department heads
5. Activities of the collective department
6. Activities outside the classroom
7. Cultural and public activity
8. Socially beneficial work.

Regular lessons are carried out by following the compulsory program and plan. In this kind of teaching, there are more and more changes in the position and role of the pupil; he becomes a subject of the educational process.

The two basic factors of the teaching process, the teacher and the pupil, realise these important tasks of the teaching process through united, active work and a cooperative relationship. The optional lessons are performed in the same way as the regular lessons, through the plan and programme, which reflects the specific and cultural-educational needs of the province in its structure and content.

Our school is increasingly being built as an integral school of the nations and nationalities which live in our regional community. It is particularly important for us that the children learn the language of the social community: Serbo-Croatian in the departments in which the lessons are carried out in Rumanian and Rumanian in the departments in which the lessons are conducted in Serbo-Croatian. The languages of the social community are learned in an organised way from the first to the eighth grades.

With regard to the subject of lessons, it must be added that very important aims are achieved through the corresponding content and educational tasks of individual subjects.

In what follows we shall try to indicate those elements which directly point to how the level of the programme, content and aims of history contribute to the further strengthening of the concept of the collective education of the members of the various nationalities.

Of course, the remaining programmes (Serbo-Croatian, Rumanian, geography, nature and society, etc.) uphold the ideas and practice of unity (depending on the "nature" of each subject).

There is also the following in the methodological directions for history: "The teacher must take advantage of the suitability of this subject for directing and educating the pupils, developing love towards their homeland, towards all our nations and nationalities, developing pride that they belong to a land with such a progressive society..."

The need to learn the languages of the social environment transcends the frame of the lessons or teacher who teaches this subject, and becomes the concern of the whole of our collective, together with the socio-political organisations in the village and beyond. In using a questionnaire in the preparation for the introduction of Rumanian as a language of the social environment, we discovered that a certain number of children in the departments with lessons in Serbo-Croatian spoke Rumanian. If the children of mixed marriages are taken into account, this number is much greater. In the preparations for the introduction of the Rumanian language as a language of our social environment, we received the full backing of the parents as well as the full support of the social community. Knowing the languages of the social environment contributes to a knowledge of the cultural values of the nations and nationalities, makes possible the togetherness and equal activity of the members of both nationalities, and influences the further development of brotherhood and unity as well as equality.

The existing principles that lessons are conducted in the "language of the pupil" ensure that the school takes measures that the bilingual education be done systematically. Because of this, the teachers must make themselves familiar with bilingual pedagogic activity and receive in-service training through individual work as well as through seminars organised by the Educational Pedagogic Institute of Zrenjanin.

In the past few years, there has been more and more literature dealing with this field. Textbooks, workbooks and other materials in both languages which are approved by the Educational Council of Vojvodina are used in direct lessons.

The concept of unity is represented in the existing textbooks, especially in the textbooks of the mother language, nature and society (grades 1-3), society (grade 4) and history (grades 5-8). In addition to texts about the national literature, contributions from authors from among our nations and nationalities, as well as texts from world literature are included in the textbooks in the mother language. All the textbooks in SAP Vojvodina; except for those about the national culture, they are completely identical in content and in artistic and technical arrangement. As a direct help to the teachers and pupils, the textbooks have become a source for the realisation of the Marxist-Leninist outlook on the world; they are inspired with Yugoslav socialist patriotism, the idea of brotherhood and unity and the idea of proletarian internationalism.

Additional educational work in the educational programme is provided for those pupils who show exceptional ability and interest in individual subjects and scientific fields.

This form of work is organised through the regulations throughout the teaching year for pupils from the fifth to the eighth grades.

Lessons in this educational work are individual and use contemporary literature. It is important that the pupils get the ability to work independently through additional work. In total, the school plans about 300 hours each year for additional work (physics, mathematics, history), 30 hours for each subject. The



presence of members of both nationalities in the additional educational work, especially when the subject is history, has the advantage that in this way the history of the nations and nationalities of Vojvodina is illuminated from all sides and becomes better known through the choice of the subject of the rich cultural inheritance of all, as well as by presenting the movements and people who have played a progressive role from a class perspective and who also have had an exceptional role in the plan of bringing together our nations and nationalities.

Extracurricular activities in our school form part of the educational work which, in addition to performing the task of extending the educational activity of the school and stimulating individual interests, develop a collective consciousness and, in order to enrich the social life, influence the togetherness of the pupils and strengthen unity.

Pupils join into liberal activities on the basis of content and not by national affiliation or teaching language (except in cases in which the mother tongue is concerned). Extracurricular activities are organised in the following fields and areas:

| Field                    | No. of Sections |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Cultural-artistic     |                 |
| - literature recitation, |                 |
| folklore and orchestra   | 6               |
| 2. Scientific subjects   | 10              |
| 3. Work-technical        | 3               |
| 4. Sports activities     | 5               |

Extracurricular activities are organised in the school from the first grade through the eighth. They offer the possibility for each pupil to enroll into one section on the basis of individual choice, or two sections if the second is the sports section.

Pupils are enrolled in all the forms of liberal activities without regard to their language or national affiliation, except those which deal with the native language of the pupil, and both languages are used in the work. If a large number of pupils are enrolled in one section, it is divided into smaller groups according to the pupils' national affiliation but on the basis of other criteria: age, special interest, etc.

We are of the opinion that liberal pupil activities are very beneficial for learning the non-mother tongue. Experience has shown us that the children very quickly and easily learn the texts in the non-mother tongue while preparing the cultural-artistic programme. Such events of a cultural-artistic nature, using both languages equally, achieve the aim that the pupils get even closer to each other through friendly games performed together; this is one of the nicest and best conditions to be met with a view to achieving the unity and equality of the nations and nationalities within the multinational structure of the inhabitants of Ečka.

The folklore section, as well as the choir and the orchestra, is very active in our school. The children of both nationalities perform the dances of the nations and nationalities of Vojvodina

and Yugoslavia. When there is a dance, there is also singing. In addition to participation in festivals and ceremonies at the school and in the village community, the choir, orchestra and folklore group also take part every year in various events in the community of Zrenjanin as well as throughout Vojvodina.

The performance of selected works of the nations and nationalities of Yugoslavia and other nations makes it possible for the pupils to get to know the cultural traditions and achievements of contemporary musical life of the nations and nationalities, and influences their interregional togetherness and education in the spirit of unity.

The folklore group, choir and orchestra contribute to the affirmation of the school in the social environment with their achievements at contests and competitions and realise the aims of the school in the framework of its cultural and public activity.

As already mentioned, textbooks and workbooks in both languages are used in the direct teaching activities. However, because of the small number of the editions in the Rumanian language, their price is very high. The difference in price is covered by the social community.

In addition to the textbooks and workbooks, the *Bucuria pionierilor* is used in departments in which lessons are in the Rumanian language, as well as the children's newspaper *Tribuna tineretului*. Books printed in Yugoslavia are used for schoolwork in grades 1-8.

Teachers use the newspapers *Lumina* and *Biltenul* and the newspaper *Misao* in the five languages of the nations and nationalities of Vojvodina, for the most successful progress of pedagogic theory and practice.

The school library contains 5,000 books, of which 1,500 are in the Rumanian language. The town community also has a rich library of books in both languages.

Teaching staff intended to meet the needs of pre-school institutions and elementary schools and of the departments in which teaching is performed in the Rumanian language, are mainly trained at the Teacher Training Junior College in Vrsac. These are seats of the Rumanian language and literature in Belgrade and Novi Sad.

After finishing elementary school, pupils of our school of Rumanian nationality continue their further education at the secondary level in their native language. Such schools exist in Zrenjanin, Vrsac, Alibunar, Uzdin and elsewhere.

The mastering of Serbo-Croatian as the language of the social environment is invaluable for quicker and more effective education of pupils of Rumanian nationality in colleges and faculties in Vojvodina and Yugoslavia.

A knowledge of the Serbo-Croatian language makes possible a faster integration of members of the Rumanian nationality into all spheres of life and work in our broader community. That this

is so is proven by the greater and greater employment of members of the Rumanian nationality in the economy and in social organisations of the city of Zrenjanin and the region of Middle Banat.

At the end of this contribution, we may conclude that the conditions for the achievement of the education in Serbo-Croatian and Rumanian as teaching languages are given great significance in our school.

We are making every effort to find the best solution for making most possible the realisation of the educational tasks in our multinational community. This paper is only one modest contribution towards this aim.