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*Schools, Books, Knowledge:
Primary School Education in the Kingdom of SCS
The Case of Serbs in Croatia 1918–1929*

Summary

Upon entering the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians, the Serbs in Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia expected, amongst other things, the improvement of the situation in the field of education in their ethnic environments. However, in a state burdened with numerous problems, a state that needed to integrate and harmonize the inherited differences between some of its parts, a state constantly shaken by the whims of daily politics and pressed by the constant lack of financial resources, with an educational policy inadequately conceived, the improvement of the situation in the field of primary school education after liberation and unification of the territories that found themselves under its roof went slowly. The situation in Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia was complex as these territories were more developed than the eastern parts of the state, but also laden with significant differences between their separate parts. Proportionally, the smallest number of primary schools was on Serbian ethnic territories. These schools were old, derelict and badly equipped and their spatial capacities insufficient to sustain the pressure of the number of children that were obliged to go to school. The budget resources, allocated for constructing new school buildings and repairing old ones, were intended for counties with Serbian majority population, but merely allowed more than solving the most urgent problems. Serbs, above all, suffered the negative consequences of poor preconditions for educational development: as opposed to Croatian counties, where illiteracy was a less common phenomenon, the largest number of illiterate persons was registered in Serbian counties. This kept the Serbian community in a state of permanent and forced underdevelopment, preventing mobility and rise of its members up the social ladder, disrupting the promotion of the general cultural level, development of a better way of life and rise of the standard of living, drastically slowing down the process of overcoming unevenness that burdened the Croatian and entire Yugoslav region.