

Ljiljana Stankov*

The contribution of male and female teachers to the foundation of empirical pedagogy in Serbia, with reference to Serbian association for child psychology (Srpsko društvo za dečju psihologiju)

Prispevek učiteljev in učiteljic k empirični pedagogiki v Srbiji na primeru Srbskega društva za otroško psihologijo

Izvleček

Na pobudo 16. generacije maturantov Moškega učiteljišča, ob 15. obletnici njihove mature 1906, so leta 1907 v Beogradu ustanovili Srbsko društvo za otroško psihologijo. Društvo je zbralo nad petsto članov, največ učiteljev in profesorjev. Pričelo je izdajati svoje glasilo – „Glasnik Srpskog društva za dečju psihologiju“. Društvo je pripravilo tri srečanja, en tečaj s področja otroške psihologije in opravilo 22 raziskav, s katerimi so preučevali različna področja otrokovega razvoja. Prav tako so učiteljem omogočali strokovno usposabljanje na področju otroške psihologije. V Vranju so odprli manjši laboratorij z moderno opremo iz tovarne Zimmerman v Leipzigu. Po letu 1910 je društvo prenehalo delovati, predvsem zaradi pomanjkanja denarja, saj niso imeli zadostne podpore državnih prosvetnih oblasti.

Abstract

At the initiative of the 16th generation of graduated students of the Male Teacher Training College, on the 15th anniversary of their graduation in 1906, the Serbian Association for Child Psychology was founded in Belgrade in 1907. The Association assembled more than 500 members, who were mostly teachers and professors. They published their own journal – „Glasnik Srpskog društva za dečju psihologiju“ / „The Herald of the Association for Child Psychology“. The Association organized three meetings, one course from the field of child psychology, 22 surveys to study different issues of child development. They also had ambition to offer teachers a professional training in the field of child psychology. A small laboratory was open in Vranje, with the most modern equipment ordered from the Zimmerman's factory in Leipzig. After 1910 the Association stopped its activities due to lack of money for professional activities, since the state authorities did not offer adequate support.

* Ljiljana Stankov, PhD, College of Professional Studies for Kindergarten Teachers, Šabac, Serbia; e-mail: ljiljanastankov@yahoo.com

Ključne besede: društvo za otroško psihologijo, učiteljstvo, Srbija, 1907-1910
Key words: association for child psychology, teachers, Serbia, 1907-1910
15th Symposium on School Life, part 38. Visit us / obiščite nas – Sistory:
<http://hdl.handle.net/11686/37688>

Introduction

The sixteenth generation of students from the First Male Teacher Training College in the Kingdom of Serbia graduated in 1893. On the 15th anniversary of their graduation, in 1906, they decided to found the Serbian Association for Child Psychology.¹ They were inspired by two reasons: the first one was their need to improve their position in the society, since they were not allowed to continue their education at the University of Belgrade (the grammar schools were the only preparatory schools for studying). Teachers demanded that the state authorities recognize their work, as one of national significance, since they had great impact on the development of future generations. The second reason was their need to keep pace with the development of modern experimental pedagogy, which was in progress in Europe at that time. Since the state authorities did not recognize their needs for professional development, teachers realized they had to do it by themselves. The experimental pedagogy was under the great influence of psychology, which introduced the scientific view on child development. That was the reason why teachers wanted to develop their own methodology of research.

The Foundation of the Serbian Association for Child Psychology

Their constituent assembly was held in Belgrade on August 4th, 1907. The Board of teachers was chosen.² Already in the first assembly the number of members increased from 60 founder members to 200 regular members. The rules of the Association regulated that they would deal with the research of children's physical and psychological development and the improvement of the methods of youth care and education. The aim of the Association was not to deal only with the theory of psychology, but with practice as well and in this way they wanted to develop the science of psychology and empirical pedagogy in Serbia. Anyone could become a member, regardless sex, occupation or age, as well as every institution – schools, associations and others.

-
- 1 The proposal was given by a teacher Sima M. Jevrić who then became the secretary of the Association and editor of *Glasnik / The Herald*.
 - 2 The first chairman of the Association was Sreten Pašić, the headteacher of the Female Higher School in Belgrade. A well-known Croatian pedagogue Davorin Trstenjak was an honorary member of the Board (1909-10).

Organizing the Association marked the first year of its work. In a very short time, the Association assembled more than 500 members, who were mostly teachers and professors. They launched their own journal *Glasnik Srpskog društva za dečju psihologiju / The Herald of the Association for Child Psychology*,³ which was always printed in 1,000 copies so that potential members would become interested. The first attempt of short methodological work was Sima Jevrić's article *Teacher's Role in the Study of Children with Brief Instructions on First Observations*, which had been duplicated before the launching of *The Herald* and sent to the founder members. Finding support for his attitude in the opinion of Stanley Hall PhD that teachers and parents had the most abilities to observe children, it was believed that the lack of psychological knowledge would be compensated if there were sympathies and interest in this work. He also defined some pedagogical problems, such as: the detection of child's ideals, the children's choice of future profession, children's play and toys, the origins of children's fears and lies. For each of the problems mentioned there was a professional reference book listed. Based on these proposals, the first works were written: *On the Feeling of Fear* (Vlad. Nikolić, Milica Jakovljević and Rista Cvetković), *On Children's Ideals* (Milica Jakovljević). In their journal *Glasnik The Herald* teachers published the translations of the works of famous European psychologists, also their original works, and, above all, the reports of their surveys. The journal also informed them about a lot of interesting information in the field of experimental pedagogy and psychology from all over the world. They could even read about research from Japan. However, their best inspirational models were Stanley Hall, Ernst Maumann, Edouard Clapere de and Alfred Binet.

Course in Experimental Pedagogy

In the first phase of its life, the Association organized a course in Belgrade, with the aim to introduce the method of experimental research to teachers. The course was attended by 143 male and female teachers. Paja Radosavljević, PhD, a well-known Serbian pedagogue, was invited to be a main lecturer. At the beginning of the 20th century he had organized an experimental laboratory at the Serbian Teacher Training College in Sombor.⁴ Soon after that he left Europe and moved to the United States where he worked as associate professor at the University of New York. Serbian teachers respected him very much. He was ready to travel across the Atlantic only to teach them about experimental research. Before visiting Belgrade, he also gave 15 lectures for teachers in Zagreb (which belonged to Austria-Hungary at that time).

3 Glasnik - The Herald, the journal of the Serbian Association for Child Psychology, 1907-08 (volumes 1-6) and 1909-10 (volumes 1-5).

4 At that time Sombor was in Austro-Hungary. In the same school there was a psychology and pedagogy laboratory even in 1910, although modest, in which the head Bozidar Bordjoski measured pupils' tiredness using Collin's dynamometer in order to define the most suitable teaching time. (Jevrić 1924, p. 43).

The theoretical part of the course was organized in the primary school which was located in the area close to the Sava River. At that time, it was the newest and the biggest school in Belgrade. An experimental part of the course was organized in another school in the district of Terazije. For that occasion a class of pupils from that school of both sexes and different ages was formed. An anthropometer, dynamometer and other smaller devices were used. The classes were illustrated with pictures and drawings.

Paja Radosavljević also proposed additional topics: the anthropometric measurements, the circle of thoughts, the observation of children's tiredness during the process of learning, the developing of the methodology of reading, writing and reckoning.

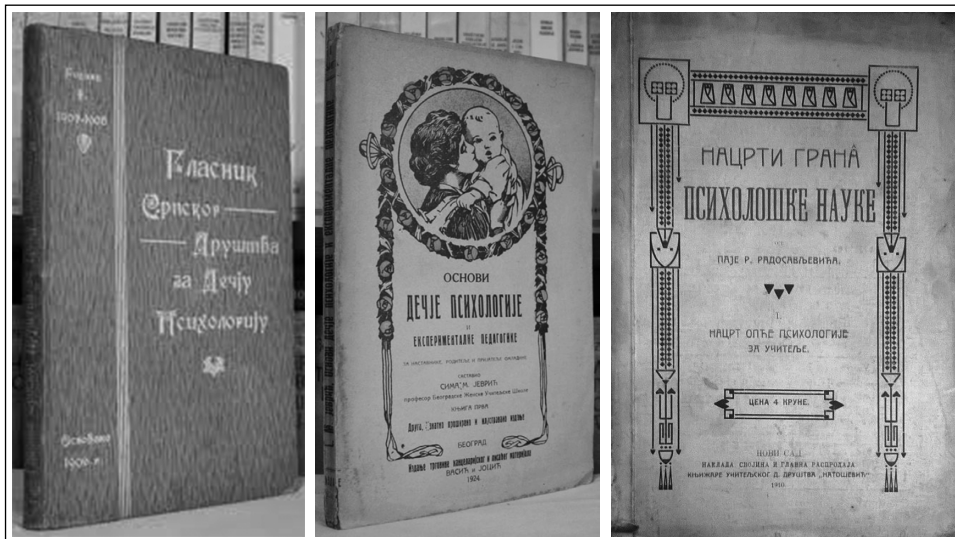
This course had a powerful response among teachers and it was written about not only in *Glasnik The Herald*, but also in other magazines published by teachers. Paja Radosavljević, PhD, agreed to give series of lectures without any payment, which was positively viewed in teacher circles, particularly because it was common knowledge that 'Serbian intellectuals do not share their knowledge for free'.⁵

Many articles, translations and original local works on the significance of systematic observation of children were published. In his articles Paja Radosavljević PhD, a student of Maumann, introduced readers to the latest achievements in this field in Germany and the USA. His *Diary for the Observation of Children* was published in the second year of the magazine's operation. It was a manual for teachers on how to observe pupils' physical, spiritual and moral life.

Glasnik The Herald reported on all of the more important activities initiated by similar associations in other countries. The journal's editorial staff published translations from foreign magazines, striving to make it possible for local readers to follow events in science and, by comparing themselves to others, to develop Serbian pedagogy according to general tendencies. Even though it was noticed that collective research of a larger number of children should be conducted in order to determine *psychological types*, it was still not possible to work in that direction due to the lack of qualified staff who would be in charge of certain sections. Therefore, the choice of problems to be observed and division of tasks were carried out after teachers had been educated in the Course.

Ernst Maumann PhD, in 1908 sent a letter to the Association, which was published in *Glasnik The Herald*. He supported the work of Serbian teachers in the field of experimental pedagogy and recommended, as an honorary member, working on a certain number of problems and questions that could be dealt with simple methods and instruments, like the development of children's memory

5 Anonymous. This year's course of the Association of Child Psychology, column Notes, Our School Voice of the Mlava Teacher's Association, 1908-09, 1, p. 25.



*Journal Glasnik Srpskog društva za dečju psihologiju /
The Herald of the Association for Child Psychology, 1907-1910.*

(<https://www.kucazasunce.com>, accessed 15.10. 2019)

Sima M. Jevrić: Osnovi dečje psihologije i eksperimentalne psihologije za nastavnike, roditelje i prijatelje omladine. [Essentials of child psychology and experimental pedagogy for teachers, parents and friends of the young], Beograd 1924. (<https://www.kucazasunce.com>, accessed 15.10. 2019)

Paja Radosavljević: Nacrta grana psihološke nauke. 1. Nacrt opšte psihologije za učitelje [Outline branches of psychological science. 1. Draft for General Psychology for Teachers], Novi Sad 1908. (<https://www.kupindo.com/Antikvarne-knjige>, accessed 15.10. 2019)

and spontaneous children's interests from age 5 to 18. Further research could observe and compare the increasing and decreasing of working skills of children of both sexes during a school year and throughout childhood. He offered his help in the future and recommended the instruments from Zimmermann's factory in Leipzig for their experiments.

Jovan Miodragović, a pedagogue- whose involvement in the work of the Association was welcomed by a great number of member-teachers, wrote about the relationship between general and child psychology in *Glasnik The Herald*. He thought that the observation of children should not be limited only to one period but that we should bear in mind the continuity of child development. At that time he was preparing his book *National Pedagogy Among Serbs - or How Serbian People Raise Their Offspring* (published in 1914). In it he dealt with family upbringing, comparing it to modern pedagogical principles of upbringing. The Association even founded a board for studying the history of child psychology in Serbia. The head of that board was Jovan Miodragović.

Keeping in mind that younger teachers, both male and female, had to take a practical exam, the Association assigned the editorial staff of Glasnik *The Herald* to publish these drafts with the review of foreign references in order to help those who prepared for the practical teacher exam.

The Organization of Empiric Research

In the second assembly 17 surveys were created and then there was a pause in the work of the Association and the publishing of Glasnik *The Herald* due to the delay in the organization of new surveys. The Board felt they should begin with the new school year.

With the aim of a systematic observation of the Serbian child, and based on Sima Jevrić's lectures in the second annual assembly, *On Methods of Psychological Research*, a total of 25 surveys were proposed,⁶ including: *On Individual Observation of Children*, *On the Development of Children's Language During Primary School*, *exercises for observing primary school pupils conducted in the Male Teacher Training Schools in Aleksinac and Jagodina and the Female Teacher Training Schools in Belgrade and Kragujevac*,⁷ *Experiments on Observing Grammar School Pupils*, *Children's Inquiries*, *On Children's Reading*, *Drawing*, *Anthropometric Measurements of Pupils*, *Testing Children's Reading Skills*, *Apprehension of Numbers and Arithmetic in Primary School*, *Motoric Exercises*,⁸ *Children's Answers*, *First Childhood Memories*, *On the Economy of Schoolwork and Homework*, *Testing Learning Skills*,⁹ *Testing and Determination of Psychological Types*, *Children's Ideals*, *On Memory*, *Testing Children's Concepts*.

The survey *Anthropometric Measurements of Pupils* required equipment ordered from Zimmermann's factory in Leipzig, as Maumann suggested. The head of this survey was Mihailo A. Stefanović, a teacher from Vranje (Southern Serbia). Since he had been appointed acting managing school supervisor for

-
- 6 Some of these survey could not be conducted, of which readers were informed afterwards: *The Analysis of Children's Circle of Thoughts when Enrolling in Primary School*, under authority of Dimitrije Stojanović, a teacher. Surveys: *Moral Development in Early Childhood and Early Education*, by Vojislav Mladenović a teacher (at that time); later PhD in pedagogy and *Children's First Geography Concepts at Preschool and School age*, by Vladimir Vemić, a teacher, could not be carried out because there were not enough members interested. However, both topics were covered afterwards and they were proposed for the holding of the third annual assembly.
- 7 It refers to four different surveys conducted in four teacher training schools which existed in the Kingdom of Serbia at that time. Male and female students carried out those exercises during their mandatory training.
- 8 Jovan Milijević was in charge of this research. He spent one year (1897-98) in Sweden in order to receive training in the well-known system of 'Swedish gymnastics' which was introduced in schools in the Kingdom of Serbia after that. Milijević then worked at The Male Teacher School in Jagodina.
- 9 Hristina Simičeva, a teacher in a village called Boljkovci near Gornji Milanovac (Central Serbia), was in charge of this research. She was the only female head of research.

several districts of Vranje county, Stefanovic managed to obtain eight devices: stethometers, cephalometers, dynamometers and other necessary devices. Due to his persistence, a small laboratory was opened there, although that county was one of the poorest in the country.

The surveys were organized in several phases. In the first phase, the head of research had a task to study a certain topic, read literature and propose the ways of the realization of a survey. The emphasis was on prompt implementation of new methods in the work with children. Since they could not get a detailed insight into child psychology before, but alongside conducted research, the tendency was to compare the results with the ones obtained in the world.

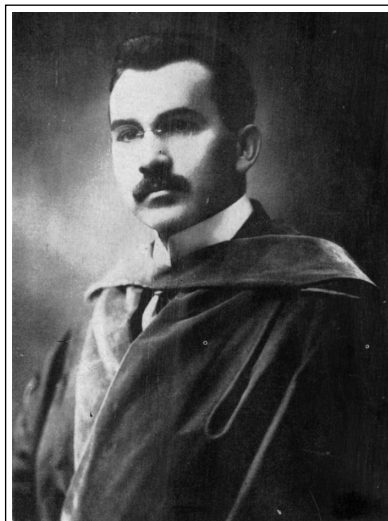
In the third regular session of the assembly, a total of 11 papers were read, among which: *On the Need for Pedagogy Laboratory in our Country*, *Moral Development in Early Childhood*, *Anthropometric Measurements with the Observations from Vranje County*, *Childhood Memories*.

The Association had intention to organize teacher training courses, courses for learning foreign languages and to found a laboratory for experimental psychology and pedagogy according to the similar laboratories in Antwerpen, Petrograd, Budapest, Zürich and Milan. They also had intention to send some teachers abroad in order to gain experience.

However, even lectures in the provinces could not be held because reduced fares could not be obtained, and the Association itself could not defray the expenses.

Preparations for the Exhibition on Child Development

The Association was preparing to hold its first exhibition in August 1910. A Board was chosen to design the layout of the exhibition.¹⁰ The plan was to show diverse material which attested development within three stages (age) – pre-school period, school period and post-school period, until the age of 15 inclusive. so that all the levels and types of institutions would be covered.



Paja Radosavljević, PhD
(1879-1958)

¹⁰ The Board consisted of two teachers and one preschool teacher.

The preschool period was supposed to be presented within two units: a child at home and a child in a playground and other places, including sports too: swimming, sliding and ice skating. The participation of few Belgrade kindergartens was announced. There was a growing interest in this type of institutions in other parts of Serbia as well, so the exhibition was an opportunity to show didactic means, as well as children's works.

It was planned that the exhibition objects, for the preschool period, consisted of: *photographs* of different moments during play and affective states: laughter, crying, anger, fear, indifference; types of movement: crawling, standing up, toddling sleeping; different face expressions: sweetness, sourness, bitterness, insipidness as well as photographs made during various children behaviour towards parents and other members of household, animals, plants and objects; *gramophone records* used to record cooing, laughter, crying, first words, with older children singing songs as well, and in addition different activities in a group. Should someone lack a gramophone, writing down notes or texts of songs was suggested. Within the collection of *objects of children's play*, there were, for younger ages, objects children used for fun: shreds, colourful paper, straws, short threads, small pieces of wood, buttons; and children's mud-works stood out as especially valuable. For the older group, these were *toys the children made themselves*: a doll, whip, ball, shreds made with scissors, cookies, pearls, pots and houses. The last group listed was a *collection of individual drawings*, on paper or planks, as well as exact copies of children's drawings on walls, doors or in sand.

The school period started with *kindergarten*.¹¹ The material would also include *photographs of children*, individually and in a group; *collection of different toys and objects* – children's handicrafts made according to instructions and under teacher supervision, toys; *collection of drawings* from kindergarten free and under supervision; *teaching resources*: Froebel Gifts, building blocks kits, tiles and others.

The school period was supposed to show the development of drawing, writing, free compositions, both male and female handiwork, teaching resources made by teachers and pupils, as well as information on pupils' reading rooms, books children most enjoyed reading and relevant statistical data. The type of objects was the same – photographs, gramophone records and handiwork. It was required that individual records of children be selected according to different criteria, for example school records, temperament, physical qualities (from the well-built to the ones who stagnated), and wealth (from the richest to the penniless), cleanliness (from the cleanest to the dirtiest), with a note that the photographs of the last mentioned could be sent anonymously. An instruction was given that group photographs should be taken both during classes and in different situations like entering and leaving school, extracurricular activities,

¹¹ According to the Law on Public Schools (1898, 1904) kindergarten made a constituent part of lower grades of primary school, it was intended for children of both sexes, from the age of five to seven and attending it was not obligatory.

school trips, play etc. Gramophone records should record speaking and reading extremes, singing songs typical of regions where they were made, individually and chorally. They could be written down in notes or at least textually. Collections of toys and objects made by pupils: a ball, top, instruments, *klis*, kite, popgun, cart, hat, little basket etc.; toys and objects made under teacher supervision; collection of forbidden toys among school children: marbles, slingshots, buttons, pistols, pupil lottery etc.; collections of tools and teaching aids. The collection of drawings should include works made on children's own initiative as well as the ones required and supervised by teachers. The themes of the drawings should be plants, animals, faces, situations, historic scenes and coursebook illustrations. The collections of compositions encompassed emergent writing up to free writing. Special collections should include new and the most famous teaching resources made by teachers and children, as well as typical female handiwork.

The post-school period should show the same types of objects (photographs, tone records, handiwork) and collections of self-taught pupils and works of deaf-mute pupils and blind pupils were also included as well as the work of the home for abandoned children and similar institutions.

It was also suggested that the photographs of the most comfortable school buildings and those of the worst (a shanty, the worst food for children, and other things) should be added.

The ambitious design of the project of the exhibition suggests that the Serbian Association for Child Psychology wanted to approach the study of childhood as comprehensively as possible. It is surprising that the demands for photographs were so extensive since at that time photography was a rarity in Serbia. Taking photographs, and especially gramophone recordings, required adequate equipment, training and competence which was not easy to fulfil.

The central board of the Teachers' Association decided to help the Serbian Association for Child Psychology financially with the condition that the objects exposed remained the property of the School Museum in Belgrade.¹² Even though collecting material was an ongoing process, the exhibition did not take place in 1910 as planned, but a couple of years later.

Conclusion

During the four years of the existence of Serbian Association for Child Psychology 22 surveys on child observation were organized, namely: 10 under the management of professors, 11 – male teachers and one under the management of a female teacher. The surveys were conducted with the aim of studying different issues of child development. Three assemblies and one course were held. Comparing the questions dealt with by experts in other countries, we come across

12 The Teachers' Association founded the School Museum (now the Pedagoški muzej / Museum of Education) in Belgrade in 1896.

significant similarities. The work of this Association was recorded in several countries: the USA, England, France, Russia, Germany, Italy and Spain. In the first two years, the members hoped to come closer to those movements in the world which made success in research in the field of child psychology and pedagogy and join their ranks.

The well - known Serbian writer Jovan Skerlić wrote these words: “When other nations begin some important things, they have difficulties. Contrary to them, Serbs initiate things easily, but they have a lot of difficulties in other phases and they very often do not have strength to realize their projects to the end-” (Skerlić 1906:27). The very same thing happened to this Association. Teachers were very enthusiastic about the foundation of their Association, but the Association stopped its activities in 1911, due to the lack of money for professional seminars and lectures. They also did not have funds for publishing the journal, since the state authorities did not offer adequate support.

Such enthusiasm could not be met in the next several decades. Besides enthusiasm, the power of the Association was in the teachers' devoted and persistent work. They made a significant contribution to the development of empiric pedagogy.

Bibliography

- Aksentijević, B. (1967). *Sedam decenija Pedagoškog muzeja u Beogradu* [Seven Decades of the Museum of Education in Belgrade]. Beograd: Pedagoški muzej.
- Anonim. (1908-9). *Ovogodišnji kurs Društva za dečju psihologiju* [This year's course of the association of child psychology]. *Naša škola organ mlavskog učiteljskog udruženja* 1, pp. 24- 25.
- Jevrić S. M. (1924). *Osnovi dečje psihologije i eksperimentalne psihologike za nastavnike, roditelje i prijatelje omladine* [Essentials of child psychology and experimental pedagogy for teachers, parents and friends of the young], Beograd: Vasić i Jocić.
- Mijatović, S. M. (1907-8). *Glasnik Srpskog društva za dečju psihologiju* [The Herald of the Association for Child Psychology]. *Učitelj* 9, pp. 799-800.
- Skerlić, J. (1906). *Omladina i njena književnost (1848-1871) izučavanja o nacionalnom i književnom romantizmu kod Srba* [Youth and their literature (1848-1871), research on national and literary romanticism among Serbs]. Beograd: Srpska kraljevska akademija.
- Todorović, D. (1997). *Eksperimentalna psihologija i njeni instrumenti: Čulo, um i mera* [Experimental psychology and its instruments: Sense, mind and measure]. Beograd: Muzej nauke i tehnike i Laboratorija za eksperimentalnu psihologiju Filozofskog fakulteta.
- Žeravčević, V. (1910). *Iz eksperimentalne dečje psihologije* [Experimental Child Psychology]. *Školski radnik* 1, pp. 20-30, 2, pp.87-91.
- Žujović, J. (1919). *Govor na XXVII učiteljskoj skupštini* [Speech in XXVII teacher assembly]. *Školski radnik* 6, p. 466.

Summary

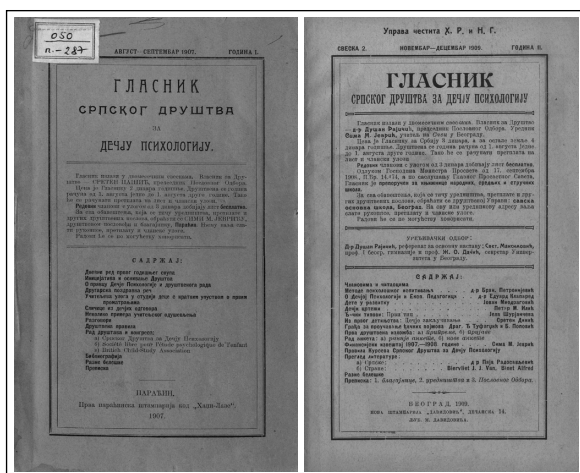
The contribution of male and female teachers to the foundation of empirical pedagogy in Serbia, with reference to Serbian association for child psychology (Srpsko društvo za dečju psihologiju)

Ljiljana Stankov

The Association of Serbian Teachers was founded in 1881. It launched its own journal *The Teacher*, at the very beginning of the next year. In the last decade of the 19th century this Association founded also the School Museum. In the first decade of the last century the branches of the Association published their own local journals. During that time, the idea that teachers can contribute to the foundation and development of national pedagogy, based on the research of physical and psychical development of Serbian children, matured.

At the initiative of the 16th generation of graduated students of the Male Teacher Training College, the Serbian Association for Child Psychology was founded in Belgrade in 1907. The Association assembled more than 500 members, who were mostly teachers and professors. They published their own journal *Glasnik - The Herald*. The Association organized three meetings, one course from the field of child psychology, 22 surveys. The surveys were conducted with the aim to study different issues of child development, like anthropometric measurements, children's speech, drawings, basic concepts like numbers, children's ideals, as well as their learning styles, memory and reckoning.

The exhibition with photographs, audio track, written materials and craftworks of children up to 15 was prepared, with the view to collect material for the foundation of the psychology of Serbian children. They also had ambition to offer teachers a professional training in the field of child psychology. Due to persistence of teachers from the district of Vranje, a small laboratory was open there, with the most modern equipment ordered from the Zimmerman's factory in Leipzig, although that district was one of the poorest in the country. After 1910 the Association stopped its activities due to lack of money for professional seminars and lectures and for publishing the journal, since the state authorities did not offer adequate support.



Journal *Glasnik Srpskog društva za dečju psihologiju* / *The Herald of the Association for Child Psychology*, 1907, 1909. (Pedagogical museum Belgrade, library)