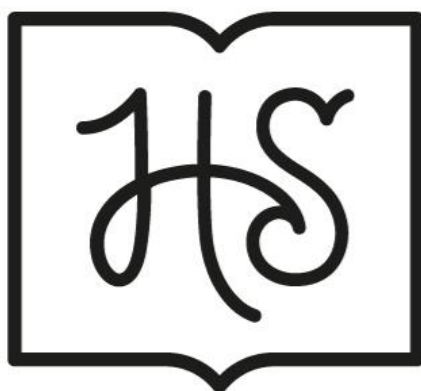


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# Private Female Schools between the Two World Wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Snježana ŠUŠNJARA

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## ABSTRACT

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### *Private Female Schools between the Two World Wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina*

Before the World War I, during the Austrian-Hungarian period of ruling in Bosnia and Herzegovina, female children were educated in schools for girls or in mixed schools. I would like to present private female schools led by the Catholic female order Daughters of God's Love who arrived to Bosnia and Herzegovina after the Ottoman period. These schools flourished in the Austrian-Hungarian period attempting to educate female children no matter of their religious background. The quality of schools was on a high level and their students became excellent teachers. However, between the two world wars, the authority from Belgrade did everything to prevent activities of these schools. After World War II, the schools' buildings and convict were closed and their properties were taken by the newly founded state of Yugoslavia led by the Communist regime.

## Introduction

The solid initiatives were made concerning private schooling in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the Austrian-Hungary governing in this country. The network of private schools started to function through the brave activities of several female catholic orders that arrived to Bosnia and Herzegovina at that period of time. They also established 11 higher female schools and several vocational schools. The special impact was given by the Private Female Teacher School (1882–1945) in Sarajevo, led by the Catholic female order Daughters of God's love. This was the first regular teacher school with the professional teaching staff and equipped classrooms. The first state male teacher school was opened later, in 1886 in Sarajevo. On the other side, the first female state teacher school was established in Sarajevo, in 1911 (Vukšić, 2003, p. 301). In the period between the two world wars these schools continued to work with some difficulties promoted by the new authority. This paper deals with the educational efforts of the Catholic female order Daughters of God's love. They did a lot for the education of female children in Bosnia and Herzegovina regardless their faith or social background. Their attempt to teach professionally and support local population in their common activities was priceless. They are still present in Bosnia and Herzegovina promoting the same aim,

supporting those who are in need and encourage young generations in their searching for a better education.

### **Formation of the order Daughters of God's Love**

The Catholic female order Daughters of God's Love was founded by Francisca Lechner who was very skillful teacher from Germany. During the period of industrialization, which brought social and economic turbulences in Europe, a large number of girls from villages decided to go to cities with the intention of finding a job, and escaping famine and misery. They usually worked in factories or as servants in the rich families. Francisca Lechner noticed that these young and naive girls were usually exposed to various temptation and dangerous situation. Looking the social situation in general she found herself thinking that something should be done to facilitate the position of these girls. She was not satisfied with her teacher profession anymore, feeling that her mission was somewhere else. Her spiritual life looked for new challenges and she devoted her life to God. She left Germany and went to Vienna where she found misery and poverty among common people, especially young female population as it was in Germany. She decided to establish a Catholic female order with a main mission – supporting those who were in need. Therefore, in 1868 she got permission to establish a new Catholic female order under the name Daughters of God's love (Caratan and Mutić, 1982, pp. 11–12). She accepted and applied the rules of St. Augustine and made the Constitutions for the Order underlining that the aim of sisters' mission would be: *upbringing and education of female youth from poor families and complete care for young female servants* (Ibidem, p. 12).

At first, she founded Maria's Institute in Vienna, a home for female servants, where they could live, take a rest or get spiritual and health care. Sisters were in charge to ensure a basic education for them. They taught them how to deal with a domestic work. This female order also took care for old and sick female servants in the Exile house that they founded in the Vienna's suburb. All their services were free of charge (room, instruction, food and clothes). They lived and functioned by the Providence. The founder Lechner kept repeating: *the real poverty is the best guardian of a good monastery life* (Ibidem, p. 12). As the life of common people became very difficult everywhere, sisters found themselves in a position to spread their activities to other countries. Therefore, they opened their houses for those in need in Low Austria (1868), Silesia and Moravia (1870), Hungary (1871), Czech (1874), Carinthia (1880, and Galicia (1885). As their mission was to support those who were in need, uneducated, poor and without hope, they did not hesitate to come to Bosnian 1882 and to face problematic and complex situation in this country (Ibidem, p. 12). When they arrived to Bosnia the bishop Stadler welcomed them together with his congregation and he supported their work.

The Catholic female order Daughters of God's Love arrived to Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1882, in a time of the Austrian-Hungarian governing. The majority of BiH population was illiterate and lived in very poor and primitive conditions. They started their educational mission very soon and were supported by the church and the state authority. They

immediately realized how difficult situation was in education and they were not frightened with the number of illiterate people, especially female population. In order to do their mission properly they needed to find a place for their activities. After negotiations with the authority, church and private donators, they succeeded to buy a land, and to construct a modern building. They called it St. Joseph Institute. This building was their home, but also a place for education and humanitarian activities that they promoted (Ibidem, p. 28).

### **Elementary school for girls**

Therefore, sisters first opened elementary school for girls at St. Joseph Institute in 1882. Parents expressed the great interest for this school and they eagerly sent their children to be educated in this institution. At start 53 girls (Catholic and Orthodox) were registered at school. Muslim girls also came to school but only to learn broidery and sewing. As the school became well-known among Bosnian-Herzegovina's population and abroad, the great interest prevailed for this school and the number of children increased rapidly every year. Classes were combined until 1888. The first and second grade students attended teaching process jointly; third and fourth equally. When the number of pupils increased the classes were divided in accordance to pupils' age. Good quality of school work, professional attitudes of teachers and practical results were recognized by parents who wanted their male children to attend this particular school as well. This was approved and the boys started to attend school from 1889. Teaching process was realized separately in two lines, in local and German language. This school also served as a rehearsal place for students of female teacher school to train their teaching skills and to make a practical presentation of their work. There was also a kindergarten for pre-school children nearby this school led by sisters who were qualified for this sort of education. Furthermore, this presented an opportunity to the students for practical learning and training with pre-school children (Ibidem, p. 46).

The first female professional teachers arrived from Zagreb and they were there for the period 1882–1887. Later on, a satisfying number of sisters finished the Female Teacher School opened in 1884 at St. Joseph Institute and they replaced those who arrived from other parts of the Monarchy. Opposite to teachers from the state elementary education who became state employees receiving a state salary, sisters were not paid for their work. However, they were obliged to provide necessary qualification for the particular level of education (elementary or secondary). Therefore, education in this school was cheaper than in the state elementary schools. The quality of teaching and education was on a great level. Curriculum was the same as in the state elementary schools. The school board used to organize excursion for children in accordance to the teaching plan and program. Every year, educational inspector appointed by the Ministry used to come and check the procedure of school functioning and quality of teachers' work. The reports were very positive with a recommendation that this good practice should be continued. They commented that female teachers, in this case, sisters, were an example of good manners, morality, tenderness and patience (Ibidem, p. 46).

### **Higher school for girls**

The immense innovations brought by the Austrian-Hungarian authority in Bosnia and Herzegovina were higher schools for girls. These schools did not deal only with theoretical and practical education, but also with spiritual life of children. As Truhelka, teacher in the state higher school for girls, commented that working on spiritual life of children was a good tool for making vigorous, honest and strong character (Pećnik, 1998). In 1883, sisters opened higher school for girls with Croatian and German classes. They also opened higher school for girls at the Institute of St. Augustine in Sarajevo (1893) and one in Tuzla (1888) (Vukšić, 2003, p. 301). Curriculum was the same as it was in state higher schools for girls. Teachers in Higher School for girls were qualified sisters who were permitted to work by the actual educational authorities. Female students were taught how to deal with domestic work (sewing, cooking, preparing laundry...), how to balance their own needs and economic status of their family (Šušnjara, 2017a, p. 63). "This was not a reproduction of similar schools from other countries, but specifically planned and organized institutions for education of young women from middle class" (Dlusuš, 1909, p. 103). The main goal of these schools was to prepare girls to be good housekeepers, wives and mothers as the first educators of their children. Curriculum of these schools included subjects that were in accordance with public expectations for women and her role in family (Šušnjara, 2017a, p. 63). Dlusuš also emphasized that these schools prepared girls to be useful in their families but also to be practical with their own ideas that could be beneficial to them in possible future independent career, especially for those who came from poorer families (1897, p. 572). Thus, the girls got general education in the school in accordance to their class background.

Due to actual curriculum the school management organized school excursions several times during a school year. For the start, students made a tour around Sarajevo visiting cultural and historical places of the city. They also visited factories and craft stores in the city, went to other regions of Bosnia with rich historical findings or paid visit to museums. This school had a dormitory from 1883 for the girls from distant parts of BiH and from other part of the Monarchy. The dormitory was always fully occupied. It was noted that there were 84 students in dormitory in 1912 (Caratan and Mutić, 1982, p. 50). After the graduation students did not get particular qualification. However, they had right to continue their education in Female Teacher School only if they finished 5 year of the higher school for girls. Public recognition of these schools that came later served for their job application in professions where female labor force was welcomed such as kindergartens, hospitals, hotels, merchants, etc. (Papić, 1982, p. 121).

The Ministry of education from Belgrade published a proclamation in 1925 that higher schools for girls were due to organize final exam for their students after finishing four or eight years of education. Sisters fulfilled this obligation as they did with all others requests that new authority put before them. They succeeded to cope with constant challenge that new authority kept commending. Thus, in 1933 this school celebrated its golden jubilee in the National theatre. From documents that are kept in the Archive it is evident that 5.485 female students finished this school in the period from 1898 to 1945 (Caratan and Mutić, 1982, p. 50).



### **Private Female Teacher School**

The constant lack of teaching staff at the beginning of the Austrian-Hungarian reign enforced the authority to approve founding of Private Female Teacher School. The opening of Private three year female teacher school at St. Joseph Institute in 1884 meant a lot for the sisters' community and for local population regardless their religion. In the first year of its functioning the school registered 5 students (4 Catholics and one Orthodox). Similar to elementary school, the first female teachers came from Zagreb and they stayed there for the period 1882–1887. This school was supported by the authority because their teaching staff was educated abroad and was very competent and professional. Curriculum was adapted first in accordance to curriculum from the Monarchy, later on with curriculum of State Male Teacher School that was opened in 1886. Nevertheless some changes occurred such as: instead organ playing and economy, female students got violin playing, housework and gardening (Caratan and Mutić, 1982, p. 53). In accordance to the Organization statute for teacher schools in the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy (Organizations statut für Lehrerbildungsanstalten) from 1874, professionalization of the teacher vocation was put on a higher level. Teacher schools offered wider general education, well organized vocational and theoretical teaching related to pedagogical, psychological, didactic, subject methods and special pedagogical contents. Practical training of future teachers was very well organized in elementary schools. This model served as a standard of teacher education in the biggest part of Europe. Its efficiency was proved with fact that it was in use for a long time even in the former Yugoslavia (Protner et al., 2012, pp. 6–7). Therefore, it is not strange that sisters promoted successfully this model of schooling and achieved very good results. Namely, after 5 years of Private Teacher school working, a satisfying number of sisters and external students finished the school and started to work as teachers in their own schools, elementary or higher. As it was the case in elementary and higher school for girls, sisters who worked in Teacher female school were not paid for their work even though they were requested to have all necessary diplomas and qualification. This was a policy of their mission and devotion to the Providence. The elementary school within the St. Joseph Institute served as a place for practical performing of teaching skills and competences as it was mentioned before.

In the beginning, female students got a final exam in their own school, that lasted until 1892. After that, the Common Ministry of Finance from Vienna ordered that final exam must be held in Male Teacher School before the commission made by professors of that particular school. The Principal of Female Teacher School noted some irregularity of the Commission's work and she mentioned it to Ludwig von Thalloczy, who was an influential state representative in the common Ministry of Finance in Vienna. He promised to intervene in order to make a professional procedure better. His intervention resulted with a decision given by the government in Sarajevo in 1906 that the final exam should be realized before the commission whose members were professors from Male Teacher School but also sisters who worked as teachers in Female Teachers School at St. Joseph Institute. The Commission was obligated to bring common decisions about students' final results. The government proscribed

that the exam from real subjects (math, physic) needed to be held after the third grade, but Pedagogy and languages needed to be examined after the fourth grade. If they successfully passed the final exam, female students would become assistant teachers in elementary schools. After two years in this position they had to attain a final exam in written and oral form in Male Teacher School. After the exam they gained a status of an independent teacher (Caratan and Mutić, 1982, p. 55). In school year 1904/05 school counted 81 students (64 were Catholics, 13 Orthodox, 4 Jewish). The number of students increased every year. It was registered that in the years before World War II over 100 students attended this school. Papić claimed that it never happened that any confessional school from that period of time had such a number of female students from other religious (Papić, 1982, p. 124).

From the beginning of school functioning, sisters kept sending an appeal to the government asking for public recognition of the school. The authority accredited the principal of State Higher Female school Viktor Pogačnik to make a detailed inspection of school work and teaching process in the period from 25 November to 15 December 1911. Pogačnik expressed his contentment in the report regarding students' knowledge. He especially showed his satisfaction with teachers' mentoring of students during their rehearsal teaching lessons. His report was a green light for the public recognition. The State government from Sarajevo wrote an act to the Ministry in Vienna in 1912, pointing out that this school should get the public recognition due to the fact that it produced so many well trained teachers. The Ministry agreed and in 1912 the school got the right of publicity (Caratan and Mutić, 1982, p. 57). This was the first Teacher Training School with professional teachers, curriculum, school building and equipped classrooms. In order to enter this school, students had to achieve a degree from five year higher school for girls (Šušnjara, 2013b, p. 94).

The Austrian-Hungarian government treated this school with respect and students of other religious started to attend this school (Papić, 1982, p. 124). The Private Female Teacher School at St. Joseph Institute was the only local resource of female teachers that was especially needed in female elementary schools and in female classes in mixed schools until 1914 (Papić, 1972, p. 72).

All the time of this school functioning, the state authority regularly received written demands to establish a State Female Teacher School in Sarajevo. Serbian cultural association Prosvjeta was much more persistent in this request. The members of this society underlined that the country has the lack of female teachers and from this reason they were forced to send their students to Karlovac. The state authority sent a proclamation in 1906, emphasizing that there is no need for opening a State Female Teacher School because the Private Female Teacher School held by sisters was able to produce necessary teaching staff (Caratan and Mutić, 1982, p. 57). The three year Female Teacher School varied in duration of studies. Four year training was validating after 15 years and continued until 1899. After 1900 this school became five year school. Eleven female teachers, sisters, worked in this school and one priest. Teachers were educated abroad and were competent and proficient (Šušnjara, 2013b, p. 94). A principal of the school was one of the priests from the Archbishopric (Papić, 1982, p. 124).

As times go by, the state authority decided to found the state Female Teacher School in Sarajevo in 1911 and a special dormitory for the students of this school in St. Joseph Institute Sisters were in charge for these students. In comparison to students from private schools, female students from the state school got some privileges such as free schooling, school books or scholarship (Caratan and Mutić, 1982, p. 57).

### **Period between the two world wars**

Bosnia and Herzegovina was a part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians (1918–1929) and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1929–1940) in the period between the two world wars. The country was in a difficult economic, cultural, educational and social position. Education was undeveloped. Hegemony and centralism prevailed in the newly founded state and this influenced educational policy as well. Inhabitants were illiterate and mostly lived in villages dealing with agriculture (Šušnjara, 2017b, pp. 762–763). The Law from 1929 proclaimed that education is mandatory for all, but situation in the terrain showed that this regulation was impossible to promote. There was a lack of school buildings especially in the rural regions. The educational reforms that were promoted in this period of time were not done gradually and with a sense for individual needs of students. One of the teachers claimed “Our schools are not school of life, lightness, warmth and intimacy. These are schools of scholastic narrowness, without colors, schools that are sterile and without spirit” (Broesler, 1926, p. 86). The state run from Belgrade manipulated with schooling system attempting to implement its ideological tendencies. Any professional or modern endeavor concerning school organization or school reform in accordance to Europe of that time was prevented. The authority had an aim to produce a new nation, Yugoslav one. Students were educated in the spirit of Yugoslav nation, devoted to the King. It was non democratic system with numerous restriction and discrimination. Therefore it did not look at confessional schools with appreciation (Šušnjara, 2017b, p. 762). The minister of education from Belgrade announced that there was a hyper production of intellectuals and that teacher schools and gymnasiums needed to be shut down (Bevanda, 2001, pp. 78–80). Thus, state mobilized its public education system and schools as instruments for the reproduction of particular interests that sustain state power. Curriculum in compulsory schooling was a common area where state pursued its goals. Therefore, education “is used – and perhaps manipulated – in an effort to create particular kind of citizens who suit the national stories and imaginations that governments and other agents hope to foster” (Staeheli and Hammett, 2010, p. 668).

As data illustrated, the private female teacher school functioned without problems during the reign of the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy. After World War I, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians (1918–1929) was established. The new authority aspired immediately to close this school. They kept sending a range of documents with this intention, but the church authority fought against such attempts. Finally, the new authority, this time it was the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1929–1940), brought decision that only professors were allowed to work in the Teacher schools planning that sisters would not be able to fulfill this requirement. Quite opposite, the Daughters of God’s Love decided to send their members

to Zagreb to gain accurate diploma at the Faculty of Philosophy. Unfortunately, they faced another obstacle in their attempts. The faculty accepted only students who finished gymnasium. This was additional challenge for sisters. However, they succeeded to finish all eight grades of gymnasium in Sarajevo and were accepted to the Faculty's departments of History, Geography, Slave languages, German, Math and other subjects necessary for teaching in Teacher school. In the meantime, professors from the State Teachers schools realized lectures in Private Female Teacher School. In order to realize their previous attempts, to prevent school work, the authority brought decision in 1930 that professors from the state schools were not allowed to teach in the private confessional schools (Caratan and Mutić, 1982, p. 60). General impression was that public authority wanted to close such an educational institution and to break private initiative. One of the author from that period of time commented: "Those who had power don't want school of good quality because they need masses without soul and mind in order to fulfill their own goals" (Turić, 1924, p. 19). The new regime wanted to unite educational laws in the entire Kingdom. This was not an easy process and was finally realized in 1929 by the Law of Teachers Schools. This Law announced that teacher schools should be organized as boarding school, male, female or mixed. According to it, every teacher school had to have elementary school for practical lessons of students' candidates. However, such a model was not a particular improvement in comparison with Austrian-Hungarian concept of teacher schools (Protner et al., 2012, p. 10). The Private Female Teacher School proved it with its constitution and organization. In 1932, the public recognition of the Private Female Teachers School was taken off, but thanks to prompt reaction of the church authorities this was eradicated. Furthermore, they were permitted to register only 15 students who lived in dormitory. The external students were prohibited to attain this school. Apparently, the authority kept inventing new orders and regulation limiting the number of students. It last for 15 years, but the school stayed open successfully enduring its work. In 1931, the inspector from Belgrade Vladimir Ćorović arrived to Private Female Teacher School in order to conduct the final exam process. He was satisfied with the students' knowledge and their teachers' efforts. He stated that this was one of the best schools he had ever visited. Another inspector Đoko Kovačević who was the head of Educational Department of the Royal Government said to the future teachers in his speech after their successfully accomplished final exam: "I have nothing to say only to recommend – go and educate future students implementing the way you were educated. Act as you acted here. Continue to work out as the sisters do and you will fulfill your task" (Caratan and Mutić, 1982, p. 63). In accordance to the school documents 830 female students graduated in this school in the 60 years of its existence. However, there are no documents for three school years, 1897, 1915 and 1916. Therefore, it could be concluded that the final number of graduated female students in this school was about 850. From 1937 to 1940 the Ministry of Education limited the number of sisters' candidates and external students into the first grade of this school. Each of them had to sign an agreement that they would not refer to state job (Ibidem, p. 62). Hence, the state have relied on schools to manage, control, regulate and

discipline teaching staff as subjugated citizens accustomed to national norms, values and beliefs.

### **The Course for pre-school teachers**

As it was previously mentioned, sisters opened the Course for pre-school teachers in 1913 at the Institute of St. Joseph. The course was the only one of this kind in BiH that trained future pre-school teachers. Their work was assessed as of high quality and they continued to work until 1931 when the principal of the State Teacher School in Sarajevo made phone call informing the management of St. Joseph that the Ministry of Education from Belgrade gave permission for opening the course for pre-school teachers within State Teacher School. Therefore, the course at the St. Joseph Institute had to be closed. The official announcement was published the same day in the Yugoslav newspaper in Sarajevo. Those students who attended this course were forced to go to the newly opened one or they will lose their status of students. In 1941 the Ministry of the national education from Zagreb gave permission for re-opening of the previous course and 33 candidates were registered again. In connection to this course, sisters opened kindergarten for children from 3 to 7 ages next to elementary school. There were 25–35 children in the kindergarten and qualified pre-school teachers (sisters) worked with these children. After World War II the course and kindergarten closed their doors (Caratan and Mutić, 1982, pp. 71–72).

### **The courses for merchants**

The Daughters of God's Love were very sensible for common people's problems. They thought that girls who were not able to regularly attend school should get a chance to finish it in a shorten version. Therefore, they followed an example from Austria where the courses for merchants became very popular. As they needed trained teachers for such lectures, sisters started to attend lessons from this field from the expert who used to come three times in a week to the Institute. They knew that this course would be of a great use for young girls. The course was open in 1917 in the St. Joseph Institute. It lasted three years and 56 candidates attended it. The course stopped working in 1920, after World War I (Caratan and Mutić, 1982, pp. 72–73).

It is apparent that sisters lived and acted with common people empathizing with their hard living conditions. They wanted to do something for them, especially for women. They were ready to study again and again and to make additional efforts in order to respond to the constant requests of the new authority and to be capable to teach new subjects in the best possible professional manner.

### **Female vocational school**

Female vocational school was opened in 1929 and was permitted by the Ministry of Trade and Industry from Belgrade. The teaching process was organized in accordance with the program of vocational schools. It had two preparation and three vocational classes. Teaching program enabled students to learn how to cut out and sew underwear and dresses, how

to do embroidery, and to gain soft skills in this process. Female teachers from Private High schools for girls taught in this school. The interest for this school was immense and 521 girls finished this school until 1945. There were 425 Catholic, 60 Orthodox, 31 Jew and 5 Muslim girls (Caratan and Mutić, 1982, pp. 74–75).

On May 1945, the National Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina declared liquidation of all private schools at Bosnia and Herzegovina territory (Ibidem, p. 76). This was the end of an educational era and starting of a new one with a completely new political constitution and one-party ideology that lasted until 1990.

### **Conclusion**

As it was evident from the data mentioned above, the private schools founded by Daughters of God's Love successfully operated until the end of the Austrian-Hungarian period. In period the two world wars situation drastically changed. The new state, Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenians was not so open towards private confessional schools. The capital city of the Kingdom was in Belgrade and the authority kept sending various documents with different requests for these schools. They wanted to close the Private Female Teacher School but the church authority fought against this and the school continued to work. In 1932 the new authority, this time the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, 1929–1940, proclaimed that only professors were allowed to work in teacher schools hoping to prevent functioning of Teacher female school led by sisters. Therefore, sisters had to finish gymnasium which was a precondition to become a student at the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb. Bosnia and Herzegovina did not have any Higher Educational Institutions at that time. Sisters successfully studied there and became professors of languages, math, history, geography and other school subjects. The fight with the new authorities lasted for 15 years (inspections from Belgrade were constant). The Private Female Teacher School functioned until the end of World War II, 60 years, when it was closed for good.

The importance of religious communities in education and upbringing was evident in this very good case that shows how God's love and human determined readiness can be powerful in their efforts to support others in order to make their life easier. Following this path, the sisters were engaged in the process of solving social problems in the new state giving opportunity to girls to be educated. By developing female education, the sisters prevented poverty and misery of young girls' possible destiny. Their readiness to study again and again in order to fulfill requirements that government constantly put before them showed their faith and eagerness to keep their schools opened. They were always ready to learn and support those in need following their founder's mission and human idea to be there for others. Apparently, their work was observed all the time of the new political authority in the period between two world wars. Situation was not encouraging for educational efforts of those who did not care about policy or regime and who looked for free and educated women ready to participate in their environment as equal members. Daughters of God's Love did not spare themselves in their holly mission – ensuring common female population life with dignity no matter of their background or faith.

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