



Adeline Paulina Irby 1831-1911
Suffragist -signed 1866 petition
Travel writer and founder of schools in Sarajevo and Bosnia

Paulina's father was Rear-Admiral Frederick Paul Irby and her mother was Frances Wright who was his second wife and came from Mapperley Hall. Paulina signed the 1866 petition and was a friend of Barbara Bodichon.

In 1857 she set out with her Scottish companion Georgina Muir Mackenzie visiting Austria-Hungary and Germany in 1858 they were arrested as spies in the Carpathian mountains. They travelled in Albania and Serbia investigating the conditions and both became supporters of Serbia and the southern Slavs and were particularly concerned by the plight of Serbian Orthodox women and girls who found they had poor access to positions and schooling. In 1862 they published *Notes on the South Slavonic Countries in Austria and Turkey in Europe* and *Across the Carpathians* but they did this anonymously.

Irby and Mackenzie established an organisation to raise funds and Irby was in regular correspondence with Florence Nightingale who encouraged and supported her and published the case in *The Times*. Irby and Nightingale had met at the Deaconess's Institute of Kaiserswerth. Their fund raising was very successful and they opened a Christian school in Sarajevo staffed by German Protestant Deaconesses. Irby took the lead in managing this school. However, the Sarajevo school was closed and she followed the Bosnian refugees and distributed food to 3,000 people.

By July 1876 she had returned to England and she reported on the seven schools which they had organised. She was mentioned in Parliament and Gladstone wrote an introduction to the second edition of her book. This book had been substantially expanded to include four extra chapters on what is now Bosnia. By 1878 they had set up 21 schools educating 2,000 Christian children and supplying food and clothing in Dalmatia and Slavonia. In 1879 she re-opened the Sarajevo Christian school which was seen as a model school and is credited with educating the next generation of teachers.

By 1907 she was given a letter of thanks signed by 200 prominent Bosnian people. When she died in Sarajevo she left all her money to aid education in Bosnia and there was mourning in Belgrade as well as Sarajevo and 15,000 people paid their respects at her funeral in Bosnia. She had been in correspondence with Florence Nightingale for many years but she asked that the letters were destroyed after her

death. She was awarded Order of St. Sava and Order of the Cross of Takovo and the are streets in Sarajevo named after her.