

Academician Grujica Žarković (1915-2010)

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Academician Grujica Žarković was the corresponding member of ANUBiH from 1967, and he received the status of academician in 1972, thus being, for a long time, a doyen-academician with the longest service in the current composition of the Academy. With his human, intellectual, scientific, pedagogical, research and other qualities, as well as with his world view, academician Žarković was a unique personality in our region. It is difficult to scrutinize comprehensively his forty-three years of work in the Department of Medical Sciences of the Academy of Sciences and Arts of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ANUBiH), since each year of that work brings a long list of activities in which academician Žarković participated.

Academician Žarković was born on the 12th of April 1915 in Bogotin (Glina municipality). He grew up and received education in the Croatian part of the former Military Frontier (Vojna Krajina). During his childhood, living in the rural environment, he truly sympathized with the severe life of peasants, and it encouraged him to search for solutions to their toilsome lives, and to advocate social changes which could have

improved the position of that highly numerous part of the population at that time. The roots of his future orientation towards social aspects of medicine and left-wing political options should most probably be sought in his early cognitions of human inequality and injustice.

After graduation from the School of Medicine in Zagreb, he applied for the job of teaching assistant at the Department of Physiology of this School of Medicine, but the war did not allow him to learn the job application results, or engage in neuroscientific research. At the beginning of World War II his family was deported to a concentration camp, and afterwards expelled, whereas doctor G. Žarković, after a short engagement at a hospital in Nova Gradiška, joined partisans at Psunj in Slavonia.

Since 1941, during the National Liberation War, he served as Head of the Medical Corps of the Croatian Third Operative Zone, Head of the Medical Department in the headquarters of the Sixth Corps of the National Liberation Army and the Resistance Movement, Head of the Medical Corps of the principal headquarters of the National Liberation Army and the Resistance Movement in Croatia, member of the National Anti-Fascist Council of the People's Liberation of Croatia (ZAVNOH), and assistant Minister of Health on the National Committee of the Liberation of Yugoslavia.

After the war he played a number of responsible roles in the health care system, among others he was an assistant minister in the Ministry of Health of Yugoslavia, the Yugoslav consul in Australia, assistant Minister of Health of the Republic of Croatia and chief medical inspector in the Ministry of Health of Yugoslavia.

Many reforms, which academician Žarković recommended at that time, were accepted and have remained embedded till today within the health systems of the successor states of the former Yugoslavia, but not all, especially not the one, for which he was interested in the most: the right of citizens for equal health care. When they asked him if that idea was Utopia or reality, even in his 95th year of life, he was self-consistent and thought of it as the only way for the achievement of the community welfare.

In 1951 he was elected assistant professor for Hygiene at the School of Medicine in Sarajevo. Afterwards he left for postgraduate studies at Harvard School of Public Health in Boston where he gained his Master's degree in methodology of epistemological research. After obtaining a master's degree at Harvard, he visited several medical faculties in the USA and became acquainted with their attitudes towards doctors' education and specialization.

Upon his return from the USA, he modernized the classes of his subject, prepared and edited a course book in preventive medicine, collaborated with the Republic Institute for Health Protection and the Ministry of Health, and trained associates of the Institute for Preventive Medicine in synchronized performance of teaching practice, professional and scientific research tasks. He was farsighted. For some time he succeeded in his efforts to organize classes at the School of Medicine in Sarajevo on the basis that we know today as the principles of Bologna.

Twice he was the Dean of the School of Medicine in Sarajevo. He was the first at the School of Medicine in Sarajevo to perceive the importance of postgraduate studies in the development of medical science, and therefore, in 1962, organized postgraduate studies in Public Health and specialization in the methodology of the science research work.

As a delegate in the Social-Health Council of the Federal Assembly and a president of the Council of "the Federal Health Centre" in the nineteen-sixties, he opposed the preparation of legislation on decentralization of the health insurance funds and drafted his own counterproposal. Being feisty and courageous, he collected signatures of three thousand citizens, and requested from the Federal Assembly to take into consideration his "*Proposal for health service re-*

form in the SFRY" at the same time. His proposal was rejected for debate in the Assembly on a procedural basis.

During the next twenty years he had the impression that he was under a special regime, because he was consistently moved away from the politics of the health service organization in our region. However, besides this, he was honoured in expert and public circles. He was elected as president of the University of Sarajevo Association of Teachers, president of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Association of Medical Doctors, and president of the Union of Yugoslav Associations of Doctors. As a WHO consultant he visited India and Ceylon, participated at the congresses of medical doctors, led a couple of great research projects and performed regular teaching jobs.

He retired in 1975 when he was sixty years old, but he was very involved even after that. Whenever he had the chance, he spoke or wrote about the causes of the crisis of Yugoslav health policies, and about alternative strategies for the improvement of the citizens' health conditions. He published four monographs and series of articles about the population politics and advantages of the population planning for the poorer republics with high fertility.

In 1980 he published a course book entitled "*The Scientific Basis of the Health Care Organization*". The ideas which he then announced did not induce administrators in health care politics to change their course and style of work, which he criticized justly and uncompromisingly. According to the opinion of academician Žarković, there was amateurish management in our health care system which had a disastrous effect on the tremendous and socially significant health care system. Afterwards he organized postgraduate studies in management of health care systems and programs.

In 1992 he was a guest researcher at the Institute of Medical Informatics and System Researches in Munich where he studied and compared the characteristics of the former USSR health care systems and other socialist states of that time with health systems of other developed countries. On the basis of those comparisons, attitudes and suggestions of the international organizations, and study of the theory and practice of management in health care, he formulated alternative programs and strategies suitable for the

reform of health care systems in former socialist states. He published the results of his research in several articles and books, which were published in six languages.

He published one version of these books with colleague co-authors Hrbač and Nakaš in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1999. Since this book did not produce the expected response, he published a monograph "Health Care Politics and Management of Health Care Systems" in 2004 as an ANUBiH publication.

Ten years ago the Department of Medical Sciences renewed and activated its former Committee for Health Care which was led by academician Žarković. The Committee gave three recommendations for reform of health care in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but there was no reaction from the responsible political factors in society.

Even in the tenth decade of his life he did not stop proposing new, contemporary and quality solutions for reforms of the health care system for the population. He was and remained a person with unquiet spirit, inquisitive, communicative, decisive and objective.

In the field of medicine he particularly dealt with the organization of the health care system, long-term planning in the health care system, health education and population problems.

In the area of the former Yugoslavia, in the field of epistemology, he was a pioneer in the research of mass chronic non-infectious disease problems, most significant being iodine deficiency disorder, rickets among children, traumatism, alcoholism, diabetes, heart diseases, neuroses, injuries of workers in industrial firms in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the influence of social factors on the growth and development of children and children mortality. In the field of hygiene, he dealt with population food inspection, water supply problems, and especially radiation hygiene problems.

His publications, starting with the scientific and professional works, scientific reports,

monographs and books, can be found nowadays in world index bases of medical journals, the libraries of the world health organizations, and other scientific and cultural institutions around the world. The study of academician Žarković's writing opus deserves to be approached scientifically and should become one of the future assignments of ANUBiH.

The greatness of academician Žarković's life work will be remembered for the numerous eminent scientists who developed under his mentorship and who collaborated with him over a long period of time.

Repeating the destiny of the people who were ahead of their time, he was often misunderstood by those who managed our health care system. However, his scientific and social opus in public health is priceless, if not at the time for his contemporaries, it will certainly be for future generations. With his inexhaustible, persistent work based on principles, deeply infused with humane intercession for health to become a value of all people, with his numerous scientific works and personnel which he directed into the modern flows of social medicine, academician Grujica Žarković held one of the most eminent positions in ANUBiH, at the University of Sarajevo, as well as at the region of former Yugoslavia and beyond.

Academician Žarković received several awards and medals (Commemorative Medal of the Partisans-1941, several war medals and 27th of July reward in 1963) but not those which were rightly his.

The departure of academician Žarković is an irreplaceable loss for ANUBiH. He was one of the most active and most appreciated members of ANUBiH, an unsurpassed reformer in our social service. He left an indelible mark on medical science and his profession. As a comfort we should hope that many young scientists and employees in public health service will find inspiration in his ideas for more active engagement in promoting public health.