Dr. Husref Tahirović: Dr. Isak Samokovlija. The life in a white coat. Academy of Sciences and Arts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo, 2022

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endemic syphilis in Banja Luka. As a member of that medical team, he was officially a government employee, which protected him and his family and helped him survive the horrors of the war.

After liberation, Dr. Samokovlija joined the Yugoslav National Army. When the war ended, he and his socially-minded friends, who were then in power, enthusiastically began organizing the health care services, which were almost nonexistent in that war-ravaged country. Recognized by his colleagues as a writer, he assumed the role of editor-in-chief of an educational medical magazine aimed at the populace at large. The magazine entitled Life and Health, had its first issue appeared in print in April 1946. It was printed in 20,000 copies and distributed free of charge to libraries, schools, and other public places. He edited the magazine for three years and wrote most of the educational articles.

The magazine was written primarily for lay readers, with most articles being stories about various diseases written in a colloquial, easy-to-understand format. Afterward, he became an editor at a major publishing company in Sarajevo, but still continued to practice medicine until the end of his life in 1955.

Dr. Tahirović has divided his book about Dr. Samokovlija into several parts. The first part deals with his life and medical practice, the medical education of common people, and the organization of health services. The second part contains a selection of medical educational articles and articles written for doctors and nurses reprinted from his magazine Life and Health. Reprinted are also nine poems about various diseases written by Dr. Samokovlija for the same magazine. At the end of the book, there is a complete list of his medical educational writings and all the photographs that Dr. Tahirović has collected to illustrate his book. A color portrait of Dr. Samokovlija painted by a well-known Bosnian-Herzegovinian artist, Mario Mikulić, currently in the JU Muzej Sarajeva (Museum of Sarajevo), is on the front page of the book.

In summary, this book is a valuable document about a remarkable man who was both a well-known writer and a physician. He lived in Bosnia and Herzegovina during some of the most turbulent times: two world wars separated by a 23-year-long interwar period, and an exciting postwar period of country rebuilding after 1945. Dr. Samokovlija left an indelible mark on both the cultural and medical history of his homeland, to which he devoted his entire life.

The book documents how he loved his countrymen and how they reciprocated that love in turn. Above all, this book is a document illustrating how love and dedication to Bosnia and Herzegovina and its people can surpass all troubles and also leave a deep mark on history.

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