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The Most Influential Physicians in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Abdulah Bukvica (1881-1969)

Izet Masic

Dr. Abdulah Bukvica was born in Rogatica in 1881. He comes from a very prominent family that occupied a significant place in the social life of Bosnia during Ottoman rule (1-5). He was a descendant of Mustafa-pasha Bukvica, Zvornik Mukhafiz. It seems that he is a descendant of the Bogumil family, who went to Islam during the fetah. Dr. Abdullah is one of the seven first Muslim doctors from Bosnia and Herzegovina (6-10). Abdulah-bey Bukvica finished Primary school in Rogatica and a Gymnasium in Sarajevo in 1902. Upon completing the Gymnasium, he enrolled in a Faculty of medicine at Vienna University, which he graduated in 1909. From 1908 to 1910 he practiced his medical practice in the State hospital (Landesspital) in Sarajevo, after which he was appointed as a city doctor and hospital manager in Brcko. At the same time, he was entrusted with the research and treatment of patients with syphilis in several villages in the Brcko area, because in these villages was affected with syphilis in epidemic proportions. Since then, his laborious work and life began with a variety of problems and temptations worn by pre-war, war and post-war years of both world wars. During the epidemic of syphilis in some of the villages, he recorded the living conditions of the inhabitants of these predominantly remote and inaccessible villages. He saw the spread of ignorance, unsuccessful houses and courtyards, impurities in houses and villages, etc. This was the reason for writing about the importance of cleanliness and health care and similar issues that would induce the population to do something to improve their living conditions. He wrote in various newspapers and magazines that were intended primarily for all Muslim populations (3). With constant medical engagement, he engaged himself

with all his abilities in the work and development of the society "Islahijet". The First World War Dr. Bukvica spent in the army and on the front. In 1916, he suffered from a typhus because of which he lost hearing, but despite this loss, he continued his work as a doctor and a social and cultural worker. His work between the two world wars was extremely fertile and abundant. He founded the Brcko Anti-begging Society (3). In 1924 he arranged a municipal building with two rooms for homeless people, a twin room with a twin room and a woman with ten beds. The Homeless Home was fully stocked, and it was administered by the city hospital and the city chief until the Second World War. At the initiative of dr. Bukvica, in 1923, was established the Cooperative of Municipal Officials and Mutual Assistance Officers. He was president of that cooperative. He headed the Red Cross branch from 1924 until the Second World War. In the difficult times of the political organization of the Muslims of the then-former Yugoslavia, which abounded with the discord and dissociation of Muslims, Bukvica joined the Young Muslims Organization led by Dr. Mehmed Spaho and was a national deputy. From 1927 to 1945

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he was a member of the Vakuf Assembly for Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo (3).

When he was arrested for the first time by the partisans, they had to release him shortly after many citizens made a petition for his release, and especially the mothers whose children were rescued from escorting into concentration camps during the occupation of Brcko by the German army. Some facts from this time spent in Brka and Brcko, where Dr. Bukvica was engaged as Administrator for refugees from Eastern Bosnia, described by my father Muhamed Masic in his memoirs (11). Refugees were accommodated in Primary school in Brka in 1943 where my father was teacher. In the year 1945 Dr. Bukvica was again arrested and charged with supporting and cooperating with the Ustashas. For four years he was in prisons in Zenica and Tuzla. After serving the prison sentence he returned to Brcko without civil rights. It was a difficult period of life by Dr. Bukvica. Still, the citizens of Brcko have not forgotten the kindness and the humanity of their doctor, and they were selflessly assisted, especially traders and artisans. The family house of Dr. Bukvica was confiscated by the Communist authorities, leaving only the space for medical practice and necessary accommodation. Some parcels in the city were confiscated. As an educated man, a true intellectual, he owned a home library of 1500 works which were irrevocably taken from him. From the furniture, only the piano of his wife Avnija was left, which was a well-educated and culturally advanced woman at that time. He got his education in Turkey by attending vocational school. Turkish and German were spoken by Bosnian (3). Dr. Bukvica spoke five foreign languages. While he did not have civil rights, he worked as a doctor for railroads and later when civil rights were restored. According to his contemporaries who are still living today, he has only paid for medical services to wealthy citizens, while a large number of poor people in Brcko provide healing services with the highest level of medical ethics. He worked as a doctor for 60

years. After leaving for a deserved retirement, he handed out his wealthy supplies from his own ambulance to the local ambulance in Gornji Rahic. He has spent his rather long life in the work of cultural education raising new generations of youth through the struggle against backward, conservatism and primitivism in the very difficult times of the disturbing changes and the arduous needs of the two worlds, which took place in the territory of BiH in 1878. Together with the group of our first intellectuals in the occupied homeland, he was placed in the service of universal assistance to the people of BiH. He has published a lot of professional articles - mostly from the health education area, namely hygiene, health care, diseases of our regions, first aid to the injured, etc. (1, 3, 5).

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