

Dr. Maša Živanović: A Pioneer in Health Care for Women and Children in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Abstract

The aim of the article is to present, primarily to the medical world and also the general public, the personality and work of Maša Živanović (1890–1960), a pioneer in the health care of children and mothers in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BH), a health educator and one of the leaders of the Yugoslav Women's Rights Movement in the period between the two world wars. She was born in Croatia (then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire) as Maria Skopszyński, in a family of Polish-Czech origin. After studying at the Temporary Women's Lyceum in Zagreb and passing the matriculation exam at the boy's High School (1909), she obtained the title of Doctor of Medicine in Vienna (1916). Her activity in the Women's Rights Movement has so far generally attracted more attention from researchers than her medical work. However, this work was very important because the general and health education of women, expectant mothers and mothers, after the two World Wars was very poor in BH, and the rates of child morbidity and mortality were high. Maša Živanović spent almost her entire working life in Sarajevo. For 30 years, she was the head of the Dispensary for Mothers and the Children, later the Institute for Maternal and Child Health Care, into which the previous institution grew in 1931. She was among the first followers of the new concept of "comprehensive paediatrics", which included social care for children, disease prevention and treatment of the sick. She successfully connected the medical mission with the mission of a women's rights activist, also trying to act as a health educator through articles published in the Women's Movement magazine (*Ženski pokret*). For a time, she was the president of the Society for the Education of Woman and Protection of her Rights, i.e. the Women's Movement, and a delegate at conferences of international feminist organizations. **Conclusion.** Maša Živanović was a physician, a pioneer in the health care of children and mothers in BH, a long-time director of the Institute for Health Care of Mothers and Children in Sarajevo, and one of the leaders of the Yugoslav Women's Rights Movement.

Key Words: Maša Živanović ■ Mother and Child Healthcare ■ Women's Rights Movement ■ Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Introduction

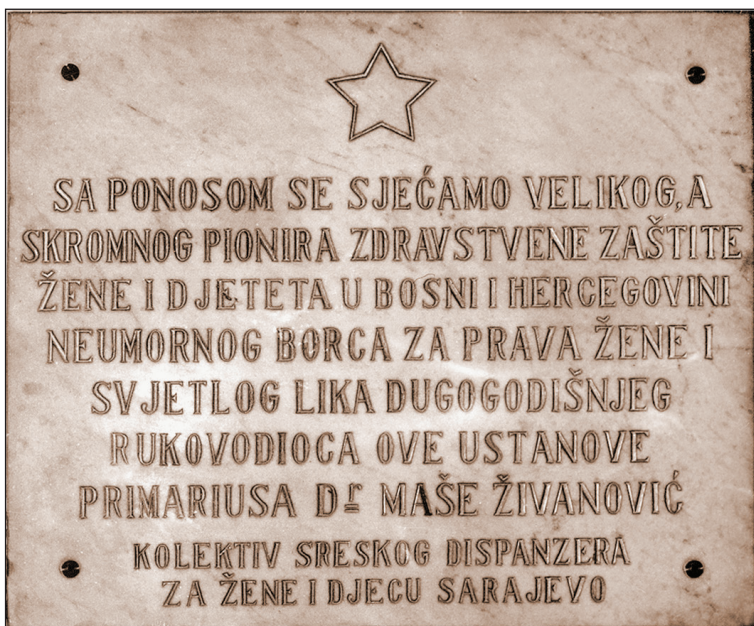
The name of Dr. Maša Živanović can be found most often in the literature on the history of the Women's Rights Movement in the former Yugoslavia. The long-term activity and the prominent place she occupied in that Movement seem to have overshadowed her professional activity in the field of child and maternal health protection, in which she was one of the pioneers in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as Yugoslavia, and to which she dedicated her professional career. Only one *In Memoriam* was published when she passed away,

in the magazine *Nova žena*. At the beginning of her emotional text, the author, Dr. Smiljana Kršić, expressed her regrets that the news about the death of Dr. Maša had gone almost unnoticed among the citizens of Sarajevo, assuming that the cause of this was her withdrawal from public life. Along with a short biography, Kršić emphasized Maša's social and cultural work (1).

That Maša Živanović (Picture 1) was not forgotten by her colleagues and the current authorities was evident on April 28, 1961, when a memorial plaque was ceremonially unveiled on the building of the Dispensary for Women and Children



Picture 1. Maša in the mid-1930s. Archives of Maša Živanović, with permission of the family.



Picture 2. A memorial plaque was unveiled on April 28, 1961, at the building of the Dispensary for Women and Children in Sarajevo, Skerlićeva 1 (today Josip Vancaš Street). Archives of Maša Živanović, with permission of the family.

in Skerlićeva Street in Sarajevo (2). It read: “We proudly remember the great and modest pioneer of women’s and children’s health care in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a tireless fighter for women’s rights and a bright figure of the long-time head of this institution, Primarius Dr. Maša Živanović” (Picture 2). Today, after more than 60 years, there is no longer a Dispensary for Women and Children in the building, there is no memorial plaque, and no trace of what happened to it. There are only the memories of rare elderly residents of Sarajevo and a photo of the memorial plaque preserved in the family archive of the descendants of Dr. Maša Živanović.

In 1966, Milan Glibonjski, a teacher, journalist and prominent advocate of the idea of Yugoslav unification in the first decades of the 20th century, wrote down his memories, dedicating them “To the shadow of the late Dr. Maša Živanović, former supervising physician at Osijek hospital.” He described an event from the end of the First World War in which Maša played an important role. In September 1918, it was already clear that the Austro-Hungarian Empire was losing the war, but it still ruled its territory. In the garrison in Osijek, Yugoslav-oriented officers were preparing a rebellion, and one second lieutenant, a Croat, publicly insulted the city commander, a Hungarian lieutenant colonel. Therefore, it was necessary to save his life. Glibonjski, who was a member of a secret revolutionary organization linked to the leaders of the Serb-Croatian coalition, asked Maša for help. Putting her own life in danger, she agreed to provide a shelter in the hospital for the young officer. Thanks to Maša’s courage and nobility, his life was saved (3).

In the Second World War, Maša participated as a volunteer, joining the National Resistance Movement (Yugoslav Army) on August 23, 1944. For the next nine months, she performed medical duties in military medical units (4). Her participation, however, was not recorded in Vera

Gavrilović's famous work *Women Doctors in the Wars in Yugoslavia from 1876 to 1945* (1976) (5).

Maša's name is mentioned in the books *Women Heroes* (1967) (6) and *Women of Yugoslavia in the Workers' Movement and Women's Organizations, 1918–1941* (1978) (7). Short biographical notes were published in the book *Recorded: Women and Public Life of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the 20th Century* (2014) (8), as well as in the article *Kornelija Rakić: A Woman Doctor for Women and Children in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina* (2021) (9).

More comprehensive biographies of Maša Živanović have only appeared in recent years, six decades after her death. Her biography, given alongside the biography of her husband, Dr. Teodor Živanović, was published in 2018 by the historian Goran Miloradović (10). The following year, an extensive study by Sonja Dujmović was published, in which the author devoted equal attention to the study of and insight into Maša's personality, and her professional and social activities, as well as her role in Bosnian society (11). Two years later, in the *Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference on the Women's Movement Magazine*, Maša's biography, largely based on her notes and memories preserved in the family archive, was published by her great-granddaughter, Maša Miloradović (12). More recent are contributions at scientific meetings and articles in which Maša's name was mentioned in the context of the activities of the *Little Entente of Women* (13) as well as in the context of the personal, friendly ties she maintained with Milica Bogdanović, her former teacher from the Zagreb Lyceum (14, 15, 16).

Since we were unable to find an article about Dr. Maša Živanović in medical journals and



Picture 3. Brod na Savi "Public High school." With permission of the Museum of Brodsko Posavlje, Slavonski Brod, Croatia.

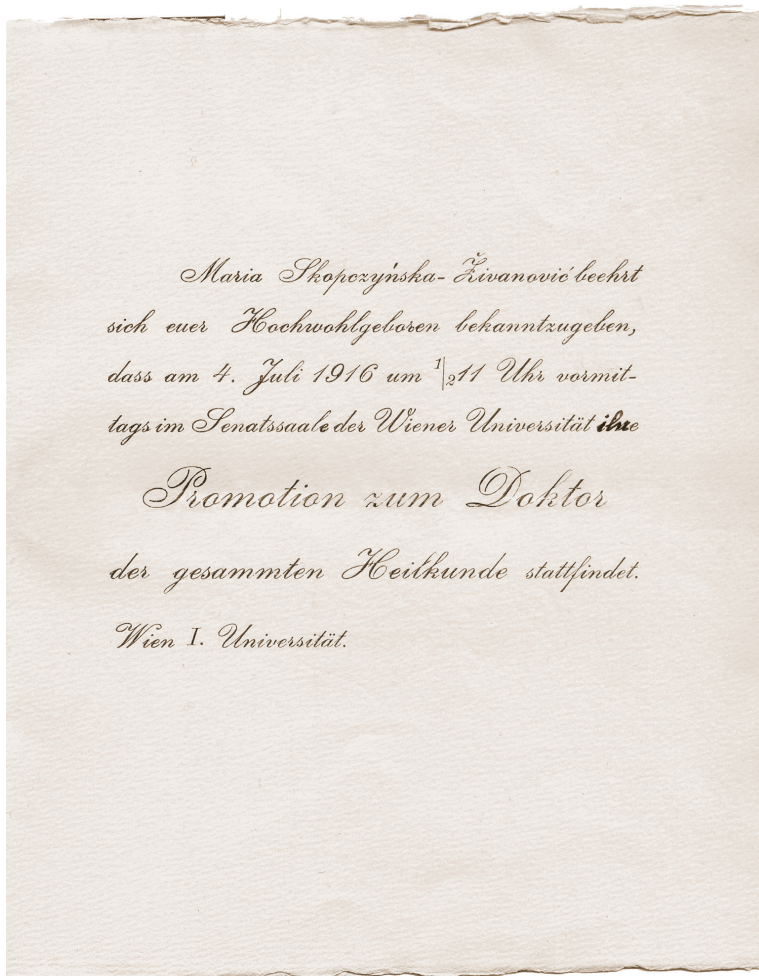


Picture 4. Final (8th) grade of Higher Primary School in Brod na Savi (Slavonski Brod) with teachers, in 1906. Maša is in the middle row, third from the right. Archives of Maša Živanović, with permission of the family.

publications on the history of medicine, the aim of this article is to present her personality, work and achievements primarily in relation to the medical world, but also the general public.

Živanović's Short Biography

Maša Živanović was born on December 14, 1890 in Delnice (then the Triune Kingdom of Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia, as part of the Lands of the Crown of St. Stephen in the Austro-Hungarian Empire), now Croatia, as Maria Skopszyński (12).



Picture 5. Invitation to the graduation ceremony at the Faculty of Medicine in Vienna. Archives of Maša Živanović, with permission of the family.



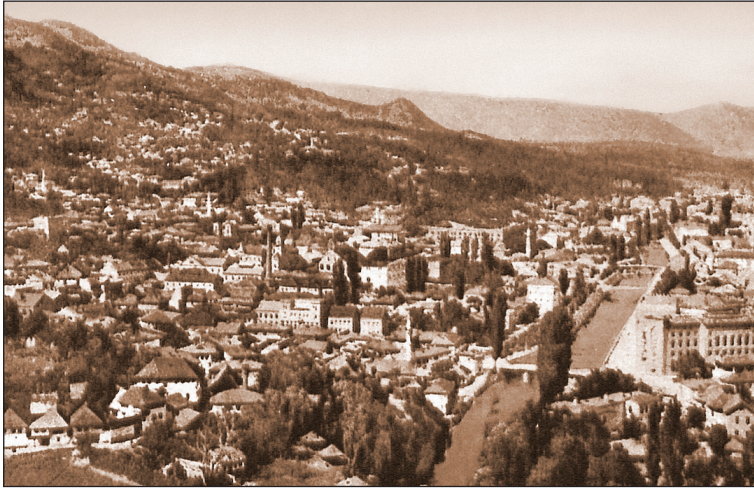
Picture 6. Maša Živanović in the hospital in Osijek 1916-1917. With permission of Archive of Maša Živanović (Family owned).

Her father, Teofil Skopcsinsky, was Polish,¹ and her mother, Otilija², a Czech, née Polak. She graduated from teacher training school but did not work as a teacher. She was a housewife and a caring mother who educated and raised her children from their earliest childhood.

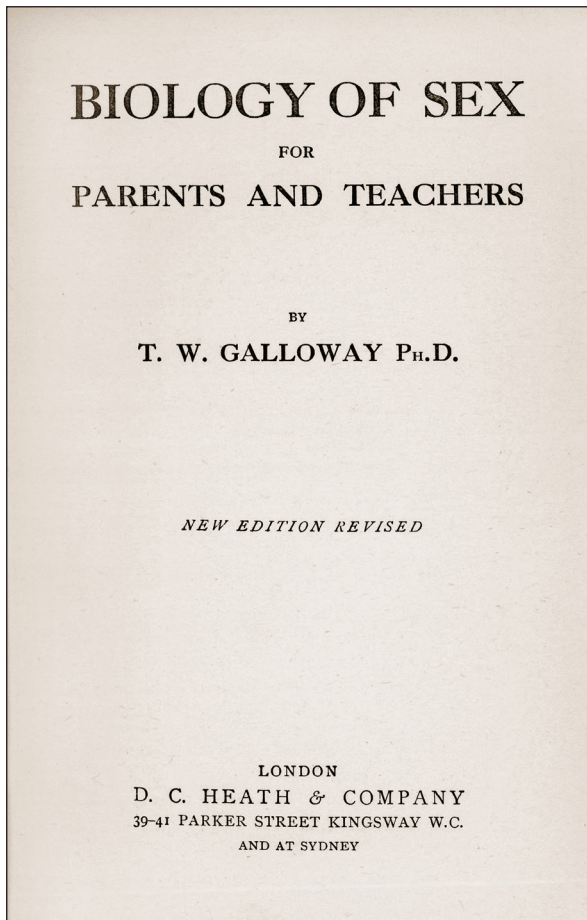
In addition to Maria, who was the oldest child, Teofil and Otilija had five more children. Despite their father's limited clerical income, all the children received a solid education (12). Maša began her education in Gospić in 1897, where her father was employed as a civil engineer in the area of the district, but as early as 1900, the family moved to Brod na Savi (Picture 3), today Slavonski Brod, Croatia, where Maša continued her education and graduated from the Public High School in 1906 (Picture 4) (17).

In the autumn of the same year, Maša's mother took her to Zagreb, where Maša continued her education at the Temporary Lyceum for Girls³, which she successfully completed in 1909, along with passing the matriculation exam at the Boys' High School in Zagreb, in order to gain the right to enrol in the Faculty of Medicine (4). Many years later, in July 1950, Maša wrote that her departure to Zagreb to study was accompanied by the "general disapproval of all relatives and acquaintances" who "predicted a terrible future, corruption, and misfortunes" (18).

She began her studies of medicine at the Faculty of Medicine in Vienna in the winter semester of 1909. She graduated as Doctor of General Medicine from the same faculty on July 4, 1916 (4) (Picture 5).



Picture 7. Sarajevo at the time when Maša Živanović started there. Published with kind permission of the Bosniak Institute - Adil Zulfikarpasic Foundation.



Picture 8. A book cover from Dr. Maša Živanović's library. With the permission of the Museum of Science and Technology–Belgrade.

During her studies in Vienna, Maria Skopszyński met Teodor Živanović⁴ from Zagreb, who was also a medical student and her future husband. During their studies, they completed one semester together at the Universities of Lausanne and Innsbruck. Just before the beginning of the First World War in 1914, Maria and Teodor were married in Zagreb (19). In the new environment, she changed her family nickname Mici (Mitzi) to Maša and she signed her name in that way from then on in her private and official life, and she freely chose to replace

her undecided nationality⁵ with the nationality of the Serbian people. After the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, Teodor and other students at the Vienna Medical Faculty were mobilised into the Austro-Hungarian army and sent to the front, and Maša successfully continued her medical studies after the birth of their first child.

After her graduation at the end of the same month, Maša started work as an assistant at the National Maternity Hospital in Zagreb, where she remained until February 1917 (20). From March to October of the same year, she was employed at the Municipal Hospital in Slavonski Brod (21), and from November 1917 to November 1918, she worked at the Foundation Hospital in Osijek (22) (Picture 6). It is interesting to note that the work of Dr. Maša was rated very highly in these institutions, and her humane work with the patients and the creation of deep trust and gratitude towards her were emphasized. In recommendations for her future employment, the high rating of her knowledge, diligence, conscientiousness, and ability for independent medical work were emphasised (20, 22).

In March 1919, she went to Sarajevo (Picture 7), where she began her brilliant career in the field of social care for children, and disease prevention and treatment. She stayed in Sarajevo until a few months before her death in 1960, except for the period of the Second World War, when she was forced to flee to Serbia with her family.

Throughout her education, Dr. Maša Živanović was consistently ranked among the top students. She spoke German, French and English, and as a doctor educated abroad, she used foreign medical literature (Picture 8). To acquire new paediatric knowledge, she collaborated with world medical institutions, and she was equally interested in the protection of women's reproductive health. In the 1930s, she corresponded with Dr. Hannah M. Stone (1894–1941),⁶ a well-known campaigner for women's reproductive rights and an associate of Margaret Sanger (1879–1966), a founder of the movement to legalise birth control.⁷ As a doctor, she established cooperation with top paediatricians in Yugoslavia at that time and beyond, with whom she exchanged experiences and opinions, and thus gained new insights (23).

A few months before her death, already seriously ill, she moved from Sarajevo to Belgrade for treatment, where her older daughter lived at the time. She died on August 12, 1960, and was buried at the New Cemetery in Belgrade. Her last wish, to be cremated, could only be fulfilled a few years later, because the first crematoria in Belgrade and Yugoslavia were not opened until 1964. Her younger daughter lived with her family in Sarajevo until 1967.

Živanović's Professional Activities in Sarajevo

Dr. Maša Živanović spent the majority of her career in Sarajevo. She belonged to a group of doctors who worked in the periods immediately after the First and Second World Wars. Those times were characterized by the poor general and health education of the people, their poor health and sanitary conditions, poor nutrition, especially of the rural population, the frequent occurrence of various infectious diseases that had the characteristics of epidemics, the insufficient number of primary health care institutions, and a

shortage of health care personnel. The effect of this situation on the health of the child population was reflected in the occurrence of various infectious or non-infectious diseases, which resulted in a high rate of infant mortality in those periods.

From March 1919 to March 1922, she worked as a children's doctor in the Municipal Health Service, and from July 1923 to May 1924, as a doctor in the Pasteur Institute (4). In the mid-1920s, in addition to her regular duties, she also managed the work of the Sarajevo School for Nurses, which began operations in 1923. The school was a boarding school, located in a separate building in the grounds of the hospital. The classes, which were held in the form of six-month courses in those years, were attended by an average of about six participants (24).

After her education with the help of state scholarships in Switzerland and France in 1920 and in Austria, Czechoslovakia, France, England, and Belgium in 1924, where she was acquainted with the organisation and work of children's institutions, she was appointed a doctor and head of the newly founded institution known as the Dispensary for Mothers and Children in Sarajevo (Picture 9). This institution, known under the abbreviated name the "Children's Dispensary", was founded by the Inspectorate of the Ministry of Public Health in Sarajevo with the intention of "socially and hygienically" protecting children's health, not only after birth but while the child was still in the mother's womb (25).



Picture 9. The Dispensary for Mothers and Children on Musala Street in Sarajevo, c. 1925.

The patients of the Children's Dispensary were pregnant women, mothers in labour, infants, and children of preschool age. In the first year, one doctor and two visiting nurses were employed, who worked alternately one day in the Dispensary and the other day making home visits. The work took place mainly in Sarajevo, although visits to small nearby towns (Pale, Ilidža, Nišići, Vareš) were not rare (25).

Special attention was paid to the work of the visiting nurses, who were required to visit all registered newborns and children who had already been examined in the dispensary. It was necessary to get in touch with the mothers as soon as possible after the birth and warn them not to use previously acquired bad habits in terms of child care, that is, to familiarise the mothers with the procedures of proper care of the newborn, and invite them to come to the dispensary with the child as soon as they recovered and not to only come when the child was in pain. Visiting nurses were supposed to demonstrate practically the procedures for caring for a newborn, write a social map of the family, record their observations, and hand it all over to the doctor at the end of the week. They were also required to submit monthly reports, on the basis of which, among other things, the further programme of work of the dispensary was drawn up.

When visiting a woman in labour at home, the visiting nurses carried a brush for washing their hands, a towel, soap, alcohol, scissors, educational leaflets, two thermometers, tincture of iodine, dermatol, a sterile bandage for the navel, gloves, etc. (25). Their work was made difficult by the low cultural level of the birth attendants, the difficult terrain, and the lack of communication. Regardless of these difficulties, which sometimes arose unexpectedly, and the great lack of education of women, the reception of visiting nurses during home visits was friendly. Mothers were interested in acquiring new knowledge, and were happy to listen to their advice, very happy to accept printed materials (25).

The goal of the work was to provide oral, written, and practical training based on modern socio-medical knowledge about the prevention and elimination of social factors of disease, as well as the constructive creation of favourable factors for health, that is, the gradual eradication of harmful practices in child health care that had their origins in folk medicine.

It was the beginning of organised health care for the most sensitive population in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in which modern attitudes of social medicine were incorporated with the aim of promoting disease prevention methods. The provision of health care to the population by official health institutions was broad, aimed at preventing the onset of disease by taking social-medical preventive measures in a timely manner. Health workers, especially doctors, were asked to keep the social condition of the patient and his environment when in mind working with patients.

The Children's Dispensary in Sarajevo was not only an institution that took care of the health of mothers and children, but it was also a place for the education of paediatricians from the interior of Bosnia and Herzegovina. They came to learn how a modern children's social-medical institution works, specifically the institution where Dr. Maša Živanović (4) and Dr. Mara Kurtović⁸ (26) worked. One of the



Picture 10. Dr. Maša Živanović with colleagues from Sarajevo's Institute for Maternal and Child Health Care. Maša third from the right. Archives of Maša Živanović, with permission of the family.



Picture 11. The Children's Dispensary building on Skerlićeva Street (today's Vančaševa Street) in Sarajevo, c. 1972. With the permission of Cantonal Institute for the Protection of Cultural, Historical, and Natural Heritage–Sarajevo.

paediatricians who was trained for six months at the Children's Dispensary was the respected doctor Kornelija Rakić from Mostar (9, 27).

Constant professional development and expansion of the Children's Dispensary's activities from year to year, under the leadership of Dr. Maša Živanović, resulted in its growth to become the Institute for Maternal and Child Health Care at the end of 1931. The Institute had five departments and well-organized outpatient services. Dr. Maša Živanović, managed its work for many years later (Picture 11).

After the capitulation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in World War II and the creation of the Independent State of Croatia, which included Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dr. Maša Živanović found herself in a difficult situation. She was attacked by the new authorities because of her national and political orientation. Together with her husband, Todor, and daughters, and with the help

of one of his patients, she managed to leave Sarajevo and escape to Serbia.⁹ They were registered by the Commissariat for Refugees in Belgrade on July 17, 1941. In occupied Belgrade, like most citizens, the Živanović family lived in great material poverty. Maša's private medical practice that was approved by the Chamber of Physicians in August 1942 (28) barely completed the domestic budget. In 1942, Teodor went to Soko Banja due to his poor health, where he was then engaged in the treatment of refugees. As a former Yugoslav civil servant, Maša was accepted into the civil service only in August 1943. At first, she worked at the Department for Health Care of Mothers, Infants, and Young Children of the Central Institute of Hygiene and then, from January 1944, at the Children's Department of the General State Hospital. During the Allied bombing of Belgrade in April 1944, she travelled to Soko Banja with her daughters. After joining the Yugoslav Army in August 1944, she performed the duties of the director of the mobile hospital of the 19th Brigade of the XXV Serbian Division of the XIV Corps and the doctor of the Command of the city of Soko Banja (4).

After the liberation of the country, Maša and Todor returned to Sarajevo. Maša was demobilised on May 30, and already on June 4, by decision of the Minister of Health of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, she was placed at the disposal of the Federal Ministry of Public Health of Bosnia and Herzegovina (29). By the decision of the Minister of Health of the People's Republic of BH, Dr. Nedo Zec¹⁰ (30), she was immediately appointed acting head of the Institute for Maternal and Child Health Care in Sarajevo, of which she was one of the founders and a long-time manager before the Second World War. At the end of the same month, in addition to her regular duties, she was assigned to the Ministry of Public Health of the People's Republic of BH to lead the report for Women's Counselling Centres (31). Dr. Maša Živanović first retired on July 29, 1950, but due to the needs of the service, she remained in the same position until her final retirement on April 14, 1958 (32).

Due to her attitudes and principles, to which she adhered firmly, and which often did not meet

with the understanding of those around her, she came into conflict with her superiors. The first time this happened was at the beginning of 1922, when she refused to participate in activities she did not agree with. This was also discussed in the press (33, 34, 35). In the autobiographical note, it is also stated that “in September 1948, she was punished by the Ministry of Public Health for disciplinary negligence” (36).

Živanović’s Social and Cultural Work

In addition to the fact that the First World War brought about major changes in the social position of women, and the fact that numerous new female associations (the National Women’s Association, the Alliance of Women’s Movements in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes/Yugoslavia etc.) (37) were established throughout the newly formed state, the roots of Maša’s social engagement in the struggle for the equality of women, mothers’ rights and child protection could be traced from an early age. Her schooling was crucial for the formation of her personality – both at the Lyceum and the Faculty of Medicine in Vienna.

Among Maša’s teachers at the Lyceum for Girls in Zagreb, there were several prominent women responsible for the organization of the education of girls in Croatia at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, such as the principal Marija Jambrišak, and teachers Štefa Iskra, Kamila Lucerna, Natalie Wickerhauser, and Milica Bogdanović (12). Among the older pupils, Mira Kočonda (Vodvařška) was one of the Maša’s colleagues in the inter-war Women’s movement¹¹. While studying medicine in Vienna, Maša was a member of several associations which gathered students according to their profession (the association of students of medicine), or those of Southern Slavic origin (Zora, Zvonimir, Rad). Students went on trips together into the area around Vienna, listened together to various lectures (she mentioned Pero Slijepčević¹² and “his entrancing lectures on Maeterlinck, Ibsen, German art, music, lectures of Pero Mijatović and his associates etc.”) (38).

No doubt Dr Julius Tandler had a major impact on Maša’s entire work in the field of medicine, but also on her engagement in the struggle for social justice, the care and protection of mothers and children, and finally her engagement in social medicine (39), and she received her academic degree from him.

After the First World War, and having settled in Sarajevo for work, as early as September 10 1919, Maša Živanović took part in establishing the *Society for Education of Women and Protection of their Rights*, which was later included in the *Alliance of Women’s Movements in the Kingdom od SCS*, and the *Women’s Movement*. Unlike other predominantly humanitarian or educational women’s associations, the *Society* was feminist, aimed at struggling for the political, economic and legal equality of women and men, and dealing with the specific needs and problems of women. In the *Society*, Maša was engaged primarily in the field of health and social protection, as observed at the *Second Assembly of the Yugoslav Women*, held in Zagreb in July 1920. “That finally in our country the role of women doctors in the health of children and the entire nation, for their cultural influence on the environment, for the education of society in general, will be properly understood, Dr. Maša Živanović from Sarajevo gave us the greatest hope at the assembly in Zagreb. With her colleagues in the Society for Education of Women she developed the widest range of activities, the results of which will have to be seen in the shortest time” (40).

The first activities of the Society were courses in hygiene, and the very first course *About Infants* was run by Maša Živanović. Courses run by Dr. Staka Bokonjić, Dr. Pero Stjepanović and others followed, and were held in Sarajevo, as well as in the surrounding towns and villages. One of the results of the Society’s work was the opening of the *Maternity Home for Pregnant Women, Mothers and Children* in Pofalići on December 1, 1919. The Society took care of this home until the end of 1920 (41), when the funding was taken over by the State Protection of Children and Youth. Supervision of the home’s hygiene was carried out voluntarily by the doctors Mara Kurtović, Staka Bokonjić, Maša Živanović

and Katica Jakšić (42). In the spring of the following year, the Association took part in opening a kindergarten for the children of working mothers, organized lectures for members of the scout movement, etc. (43). Maša Živanović was the President of the Society for many years (and later when the *Society* was transformed into the *Women's Movement*), being elected unanimously several times.

Women's Movement was very active, reacting to many phenomena and changes that took place in the young state. When the Ministry of Education made a decision in 1927 to limit enrolment in secondary schools, introduce the *numerus clausus* and other restrictive measures, *Women's Movement* reacted, and “Dr. Maša Živanović condemned this kind of educational policy that ‘limits the humanistic education of young people by closing schools when they do not open any equivalents’, which “affected the interests of young women in particular” (44). She advocated the abolition of regulated prostitution and the introduction of an anti-venereal law. With this aim, being a representative of the *Alliance of Women's Movements* (not as a doctor!), at the Congress of Venereologists in Zagreb in 1927, she presented her views on the anti-venereal laws and the abolition of regulated prostitution (45). As the president of the *Women's Movement*,

she also reacted when the Law on Child Protection was amended, proposing a change in the attitude towards illegitimate children, that is, seeking an equal attitude towards children born both in and out of wedlock (46). As the subject Hygiene was introduced into the school curriculum in 1928/1929, Maša Živanović was among the doctors who held lectures at the Women's Teacher Training School for 3 hours a week (47).

As the president of the *Women's Movement* in Sarajevo, she participated in international feminist gatherings. *The Little Women's Entente* was founded as a transnational association at the International Woman Suffrage Alliance Conference in Rome in 1923. It brought together women's organizations from Yugoslavia, Romania, Greece, Czechoslovakia and Poland. It was inspired by the interstate political organization *Little Entente* (which consisted of Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Romania). Maša Živanović took part in the conferences of the *Little Women's Entente* in Athens (1925) (Picture 12), Prague (1927) and Warsaw (1929).

As the representative of the Yugoslav women's movement, Maša Živanović participated in the *10th Congress of the International Alliance of Women* in Paris in 1926. The cooperation of the *Alliance* with the League of Nations was established and the commission was chaired by Ruth Morgan. The president of the Alliance was Margery Corbett Ashby. Both of these prominent feminists were in the Alliance delegation that visited Yugoslavia in May 1931. After the main meeting held in Belgrade, they visited Sarajevo. The programme of their work presented in the journal *Women's Movement* (*Ženski pokret*) included the following topics: “The question of peace, disarmament, economic cooperation of countries in connection with the creation of a European Union (!)” (48). Their presentations were organized by the *Women's Movement* from Sarajevo, and were accompanied by articles in the press (12).



Picture 12. Maša Živanović (first from the left, standing) in Athens at the Congress of Little Women's Entente (1925). Archives of Maša Živanović, with permission of the family.

During the 1930'ies, anti-war themes and pacifism were increasingly present in the *Women's Movement*. When the Peace Academy was held in Sarajevo in February 1932, Maša Živanović spoke about the need for peaceful ways to resolve disputes as one of the goals of the women's movement (49). At that time, the Youth Section was formed under the auspices of the *Women's Movement* in Sarajevo. As one of the members remembered, Maša gave a speech entitled "For equal work - equal pay". Due to the increasing activity of young members, mostly communists, Smiljana Kršić and Maša Živanović were called to account. Threats by the police to ban the *Women's Movement* were realized in 1937 and the movement ceased to exist (6).

At a time, when a new world war was looming over Europe, the *Yugoslav Union for the Protection of Children* (founded in 1935 under the patronage of Queen Marija Karađorđević) dealt with plans for the care of children in a wartime environment. In 1939, when the *Society for the Care of Unprotected Children and Youth in the Drina banovina* was founded, Maša was on the steering committee of the *Society* (47). Having returned to Sarajevo after World War II, she joined the *Anti-Fascist Women's Front* (AFŽ) and devoted herself to the health and social protection of women and children, the fight against prostitution, and other social and medical issues which occupied her all her life.

Živanović's Publishing Activities

Almost all of Dr. Maša Živanović's articles, whether she wrote as a doctor writing articles in medical journals or as a feminist activist writing articles in newspapers and social journals, were imbued, in a direct or indirect way, with a health-educational character, full of current medical knowledge, aiming to enlighten the entire readership public in Bosnia and Herzegovina. She knew very well that the realisation of various women's rights would have a significant impact on society in general and, thus, also on the health education of women, especially when they became pregnant and mothers, and that their acquisition of new knowledge would prevent many childhood diseases and enable children to grow up normally.

On the other hand, by writing articles for medical journals, she wanted to point out, on the basis of evidence, the real state of children's health care, to refresh or improve the knowledge of health workers about current children's pathologies, and thus help sick children. In all of this, she had visible success, thanks above all to her temperament, general education, her knowledge of foreign languages and education abroad, and the use of contemporary foreign paediatric literature.

It is not possible to write a complete overview of her journalistic activity for the time being, because no fundamental research into her writing work, which would enable the writing of an overall bibliography of her written work, has yet been undertaken. However, brief reviews of some of the available publications can best represent her writing work.

The article *The Weaknesses of Health Care of Preschool Children* by Dr. Maša Živanović, published in the journal *Socijalno-medicinski pregled* (Social Medical Review) in 1938, provides an overview of the work of pre-school institutions in Sarajevo at the time (50). The author states that the same text can reflect the work of similar institutions in other places in Bosnia and Herzegovina: "Because all these institutions have one evil in common: they do not have a system based on an anatomical, physiological, and psychological knowledge of the child with the aim of raising a healthy, valuable, and better person, but their child is a tool for propaganda and profit."

The research was done from the 1932–33 school year until June 1937. An examination of children, an inspection of the hygiene of playgrounds and schools, their environment, and surveys of the competent state and religious authorities, parents, and official staff were carried out by a doctor and a nurse. The survey is not presented in the paper, but in the presentation of the results, it is easy to see the questions whose answers should reflect the environment in which such a sensitive population resided every day. The results presented, although not very well systematized, indicate that the time spent by preschool children in these children's institutions had a negative impact on their physical and mental health.

Of particular interest are her health education articles: *Children's Infectious Diseases* (51), *On Children's Diarrhoea* (52), *Tuberculosis in Children* (53), *Gonorrhoea and Newborns* (54), *Syphilis, the Mother and her Child* (55), *Tuberculosis of Infants and Small Children* (56), and *Collection Points for Mother's Milk* (57), dedicated to the current health problems of children, and published in the journal *Život i Zdravlje*¹³ (Life and Health) after the Second World War, from 1946 to 1949. The articles are written in a simple style with an understandable vocabulary, and are clearly and precisely systematised in relation to the characteristics of the problems described.

Along with a series of articles on medical topics¹⁴, Dr. Maša Živanović also wrote about the health care of mothers and children, hygiene and health education. She wrote about motherhood, marriage and the ethics of marriage, women's right to education and employment, and women's economic independence, in several popular magazines and journals. She published more than twenty articles in the *Women's Movement, the organ of the Society for the Enlightenment of Women and the Protection of Her Rights* alone (58). One of the topics that she considered "the most feminist" was prostitution and the abolition of regulated prostitution. Dr. Živanović also wrote about the position of Muslim women in Bosnia (59).

In *Ženski pokret* (Women's Movement) in 1930 (60), a polemic on sexual ethics flared up between Živanović and the prominent writer and feminist Julka Chlapec Đorđević from Prague. However, this was no obstacle to Dr Živanović inviting Ms Chlapec to Sarajevo three years later, where the *Women's Movement* discussed birth control issues. The same journal published biographical articles by Dr. Živanović about two prominent women who worked in Bosnia and Herzegovina – Adeline Irby (61) and Teodora Krajewska (62). Dr. Živanović also wrote for *Žena danas* (Woman today) and took part in a special issue of this journal (no. 24) for 1939, dedicated to the women of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In *Pregled* (Overview), a journal for political and cultural life in Sarajevo, she wrote about the

history of feminism and current feminist events and gatherings. This magazine also published her report from the *Little Entente of Women* meeting in Prague in 1927, and also texts on the education of female youth, on the care of young people, as well as reviews of several books (63). Her many shorter articles written for the widest audience, with advice for caring for children, hygiene, and the treatment of certain individual diseases etc. should not be forgotten.

Concluding Remarks

Dr. Maša Živanović (1890–1960), one of the first paediatricians and a prominent social worker in Bosnia and Herzegovina, was equally dedicated to her medical profession as to her engagement in the Women's Rights Movement. Immediately after the end of the First World War, she was a follower of the then new concept of comprehensive paediatrics which, besides treating sick children, took care of their health from their very conception. This concept included prevention by eliminating social factors of disease, while at the same time creating favourable conditions for growth and development. For more than three decades, Maša Živanović was the head of the first social and paediatric institution in Sarajevo, founded in 1924 under the name the Dispensary for Mothers and Children. Under her leadership, this institution grew into the Institute for Maternal and Child Health Care in 1931, which was also a centre for the professional training of young paediatricians in BH. She managed the work of the Institute until 1958, excluding only the period of the Second World War. She successfully connected her medical mission with the mission as an activist for women's emancipation. She was one of the founders and long-time president of the *Women's Movement* in Sarajevo (1919–1937). In the newsletter of the Association, she published health and educational articles on child care, on the necessity of women's education for motherhood, and the legal protection of motherhood, on marriage and the family, and others. She was an advocate for birth control, the equality of women's and men's labour rights,

but also the abolition of regulated prostitution which she considered the “most feminist topic”. As a delegate of the *Women’s Movement*, she participated in international feminist gatherings. On the eve of the Second World War, she worked on the dissemination of pacifist ideas, and after the end of the war, through her work in the Women’s Anti-Fascist Front (AFŽ), she was still engaged in solving the issues of the health and social protection of women and children, to which she had devoted her entire life.

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

Notes

- ¹ Teofil Skopczynski (?? ?? –Jan 12, 1855.– Zagreb, Aug 18, 1942). Construction engineer of Gospić and Brod na Savi districts; royal chief engineer of Požega County; „construction consultant“ in the Royal Construction Office in Osijek. Lecturer at the School for Art Education, which was founded in Osijek in 1925.
- ² Otilija Polak (18??–Osijek 1919) She graduated from teacher training school but did not work as a teacher. She was a housewife and a caring mother who educated and raised her children from early childhood.
- ³ The Provisional Women’s High School was the first female eight-year state high school in Croatia. It was founded on October 10, 1898, in Zagreb. In the upper grades, there were three majors: pedagogy, Latin, and English. In addition to general high school subjects, special attention was paid to learning foreign languages, appropriate upbringing, spiritual and physical development, work, fostering education, and commitment to noble skills. [cited 2022 Dec 9]. Available from: <https://blog.hsmuzej.hr/2022/09/20/obrazo-vanjemka-emancipaciji-130-obljetnica-osnutka-zenskog-liceja-u-zagrebu-i-prve-gimnazijske-maturantice-u-hrvatskoj/>
- ⁴ Teodor Živanović (Tuzla Jun 14, 1891—Split, Dec 10, 1973). He enrolled in medical studies in October 1909 in Vienna and finished in Lausanne in 1916. He was the head of the Institute for Tuberculosis in Sarajevo for many years until 1961, when he retired. Due to illness, he moved to Split in 1966, where he lived until his death in 1973.
- ⁵ During her studies at the Lyceum, she wrote about her “determination.” “Among us there were Serbs and Croats, but there were more ‘undecideds’ like me (children from marriages of Austro-Hungarian citizens of various nationalities)”. Manuscript MŽ undated. Family archive.
- ⁶ Maša Živanović’s bequest, owned by the family, Belgrade. Hannah M. Stone to Maša Živanović, April 13, 1936, New York.

- ⁷ Marion Shulevitz. Hannah Mayer Stone, 1893–1941. Jewish Women’s Archive [cited 2023 Jan 12]; Available from: <https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/stone-hannah-meyer>
- ⁸ Mara Kurtović (Belgrade, July 12, 1892–Sarajevo, Oct 17, 1979). She was the first expert in school hygiene in Bosnia and Herzegovina. She was the head of the School Polyclinic at the Institute for Maternal and Child Health Care on Skerlić Street in Sarajevo and befriended Dr. Maša Živanović.
- ⁹ Her son, too, was living in Zagreb at the time. Despite being married to a Croatian woman, he had to live in secret and hide from the Ustaša authorities.
- ¹⁰ Nedo Zec (Mostar, July 12, 1899–Mostar, November 18, 1971). He graduated from the Faculty of Medicine in Vienna in 1927. He was the first Minister of Public Health of the People’s Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Head of the Department of Neuropsychiatry at the Faculty of Medicine in Sarajevo, and an Academician of the Academy of Sciences and Arts of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- ¹¹ She was later the president of the *Women’s Movement* in Zagreb.
- ¹² Pero Slijepčević (1888–1964), historian of literature, German scholar, university professor. One of the prominent members of the *Mlada Bosna* movement.
- ¹³ At that time, Dr. Maša Živanović was a member of the wider editorial board of the magazine *Život i zdravlje* (Life and health.)
- ¹⁴ Creating a bibliography of Dr. Maša Živanović’s papers, which are scattered throughout numerous newspapers and journals, would allow for a more comprehensive understanding of her contribution to social and medical issues.

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