



Obituary

Prof. Dr. Mirko Derganc

Prof. Dr. Mirko Derganc died suddenly on the 29th April, 1981, at the age of 67. He was one of the most prominent plastic surgeons in Yugoslavia and was internationally known for his contributions, particularly in the advancement of hand and burn surgery. He was initially a general surgeon and was fortunate to have had as his father an outstanding teacher and leading surgeon of the Vienna school. This gave him a very solid background and influenced his thinking and his basic approach to reconstructive surgery considerably.

Professor Lavrič, his chief in the Surgical Department of Ljubljana, charged him in the immediate post war period with the organization of a Plastic Surgery Unit. He went to England for the first time in 1949 and after spending 6 months with Mowlem, Gillies and other prominent teachers started a small Unit of reconstructive surgery, with a single assistant in the beginning. These were fine and hard working years, and as early as 1957 Professor Derganc presented the experiences collected by him and his small team in a symposium which was attended among other prominent plastic surgeons from neighbouring countries also by Frantisek Burian, Gillies and Tord Skoog. In order to meet the increasing workload the Department of Plastic Surgery and Burns was expanded gradually and found a new site in the Medical Center built in 1970. In 1974 the first properly organized Burns Unit in Yugoslavia was opened under his leadership. This was a significant event because it gave Professor Derganc and his team the opportunity to present the results of early surgical excision of

burns to a large international audience. His contributions in the field of burns received worldwide attention.

Professor Derganc was also a gifted teacher and he became a professor of the Medical Faculty of Ljubljana in 1962. He is perhaps best known for his book on "First Aid for Everybody", the first version of which he wrote in his early surgical career and which was revised and reprinted many times and is at present the basic textbook on First Aid translated into all Yugoslav languages. He travelled widely and took an active part in many important congresses in plastic surgery and was also an action committee member on Teaching Programmes of the I.S.B.I.

He published many articles both at home and abroad which made considerable impact, particularly because of his views that the burn wound should be treated by surgeons and not by the dermatologists and that burns should be treated by active surgery as soon as possible.

He took a very active part in the liberation war of his country. His merits achieved well deserved recognition by President Tito in the award of three important orders, based particularly on his contributions to the advancement of surgery.

Both colleagues and patients will miss him as a prominent surgeon and as a friend. He is survived by his wife, a daughter and a son.

Franjo Zdravič (Ljubljana)