

## DISTINGUISHED FIGURES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF DENTAL CARE IN CROATIAN LITTORAL AND THE FOUNDATION OF A DENTIST ASSOCIATION IN RIJEKA

ZASLUŽNE OSOBE ZA RAZVOJ STOMATOLOŠKE  
STRUKE U HRVATSKOM PRIMORJU I OSNIVANJE  
STALEŠKOG UDRUŽENJA STOMATOLOGA U RIJECI

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### SUMMARY

*Until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, dental illnesses in the Croatian Littoral were treated by barbers and quacks. Mid 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the first seasonal dentists come from Vienna, Graz, and Trieste, and the first local dentists started to work full-time in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Dr Frano Dabrović, Dr Niko Gjivović, Dr Dezider Dalma, and Dr Edmund Krausz were the first promoters of the profession, research, and education in dental hygiene of the local population. To further improve their profession, the dentists of Rijeka established a Society of the Littoral on 16 January 1909.*

*There were other dentists outside Rijeka, such as Dr Ljudevit Korewa who ran his office in Senj, and Dr Hans Pichler who worked in the Navy Hospital of Pula during the First World War. The first teacher of dental medicine at the Zagreb University School of Medicine was professor Eduard Radošević, and the first dean of the Zagreb University School of Dental Medicine was professor Živko Bolf, both born in Gorski kotar ( an inland region with close ties with Rijeka).*

**Key words:** *history of dental medicine, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, dental associations, Rijeka, Croatian Littoral, Croatia*

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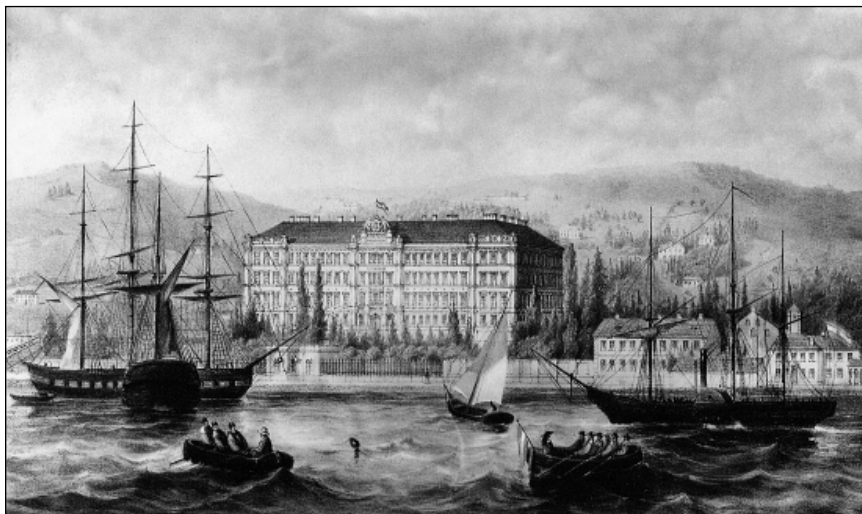
## PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF DENTISTRY IN KVARNER REGION

During the 18<sup>th</sup> and at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, treating patients suffering from oral cavity diseases in these parts was mostly in the hands of barbers and quacks. Their work mostly consisted of giving first aid by pulling out teeth or by alleviating pain using a multitude of traditional recipes [1].

In addition to such witchcraft practice, simple medicines were sometimes used and hence it says “infected tissue surrounding the teeth should be rubbed with the powder of rosemary leaves and nettle roots, and the juice from the grape vine leaves with honey should be used to treat rotten tissue surrounding the teeth”.

However, it was already in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century that seasonal dental practitioners started to visit our parts. They stayed in certain larger towns for 2-3 weeks and used this opportunity to treat teeth and make prosthetic replacements. Back then, this kind of work was very expensive and it made considerable profit to the physicians.

According to demographics, Rijeka had a population of 25,837 in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (1869). In those times healthcare was pretty much neglected in our parts.



Naval Academy in Rijeka and the lazaret  
*Vojno-pomorska akademija u Rijeci i riječki lazaret*

Back then Rijeka was also visited by dental practitioners from other parts: Dr. Harvalik from Vienna, Dr. Lavoslav Tauzer from Graz and Dr. Fuchs, Dr. Muttak and Dr. Lamprecht from Trieste.

In addition to numerous prominent figures from cultural, public, scientific, education and other circles, Rijeka also welcomed dental practitioners. Owing to their expertise and dental practices, these dentists made their significant contribution to the development of dental medicine in our parts.

Special attention should be given to Dr. Mate and Niko Gjivović.

In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (1873) **Dr. Mate Gjivović** came from Dubrovnik to practice dental work in Rijeka at the Military and Marine Academy (now KBC building in Rijeka). He was a personal physician for some members of the Austrian Royal House. Before World War I, two dentists worked in his dentist's office. Back then they obtained their diploma at the higher schools of dentistry in Germany, Switzerland and U.S.A., upon finishing a medical college.

The other distinguished figure was **Dr. Niko Gjivović**, born in a prestigious Dubrovnik family (on April 12, 1866). He was the nephew of Dr. Mate Gjivović. He obtained a diploma of Dental Surgery Doctor (*Doctor Chirurgiae Dentariae*) in San Francisco (USA).

When he returned to his homeland, he performed dental work with his uncle for a while. Aspiring to further improve his expertise, he went to England (1899), where he stayed for five years. There he achieved success in the field of dental surgery diagnostics and therapy, as well as dental prosthetics. Upon his return from England, Dr. Niko Gjivović went back to live in Rijeka (where he practiced dentistry on 2/I Via della Sanità, working every day from 8 to 12 AM and 3 to 6 PM). In the beginning, he did dental prosthetic work himself. But later on, he



Dr. Niko Gjivović (1866-1933)



Advertisement by Dr. Niko Gjivović

*Reklama dr. Nike Gjivovića*

did not have time for laboratory work because of a growing patient load and because Đuro Savinović, a technician for gold fillings, came to his assistance from Dubrovnik.

Even though there are no reliable data, this dental laboratory was probably owned by Dr. Mato and Niko Gjivović. To be specific, the time this laboratory was advertised in the then first number of Rijeka's "Novi list" from 1900 corresponds with the time when Dr. Niko Gjivović worked in Rijeka. This is only an assumption, since the owner of the laboratory is not mentioned in the ad.

Dr. Niko Gjivović participated in the work of the Natural Sciences Club as well, and here he can be found with other colleagues in this field such as Dr. Dezider Dalma and Dr. Edmund Krausz. He stayed in Rijeka till 1904, when he moved to Split and opened a dentist's office.

Dr. Niko Gjivović was a person of prominence, not only because of his numerous and select clientele (royal members of the Austrian Royal House came to see him), but also for his professional skills.

**Dr. Dezider Dalma** is especially responsible for the development of dentistry in Rijeka and the Croatian Littoral. The official gazette of the contemporary Natural Sciences Club in Rijeka issued a brief overview of Dr. Dalma's notable appearance on March 5, 1896 when he spoke about "The causes for tooth diseases in general, with special attention given to Rijeka".

In the introductory part of his lecture he gave a short overview of the background of tooth diseases, saying that the public still believes that wormholes from the teeth or gums lead to dental tissue decay, and providing data on possible etiological factors leading to tooth diseases. Additionally, Dr. Dalma presented his observations on the causes for dental caries in Rijeka, listing poor hygienic practices in general, inadequate

housing situation (his example: the Old Town of Rijeka), chronic and hereditary diseases and poor general physical fitness. In addition, he underlined that dental caries progression is induced by mechanical, thermal or chemical stimuli, and especially poor mineral contents in fresh water obtained from the “Zvir” well, where Rijeka’s water supplies partially come from today. The postulates Dr. Dalma presented on the causes of dental caries in Rijeka show that he had been up to date reading specialized literature because the first and the basic theory on caries development was Muller’s chemical and bacteriological (parasitic) theory proposed in 1899.

Dr. Dalma participated in other activities of the Natural Sciences Club in Rijeka, and he made a donation to buy the first X-ray machine. Later on, when the “Society of Dentists for the Littoral” was founded, he became its administrative assistant.

Dr. Dalma practiced dentistry on 3/I Ciotta street (today called Barčićeva street) every day from 9 to 12 AM and 2 to 6 PM.

Another interesting person in terms of dentistry at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was **Dr. Edmund Krausz**. He was the president of the “Society of Dentists for the Littoral”. He also worked as a teacher at All

**Techničko - Zubarski Atelier**  
 Trg Srpa, **Rijeka-Fiume** br. 5. kat II.

Umjetni zubi i nizovi zuba sasvim nalike **naravnim**, ne razlikujuć se u ničem od vlastitih, za griskanje posve sposobnih uz jamstvo od punih 10 godina, nasmještaju se, a da se ne ne osjeća bol, niti je nužno izvući korena,

**Umjetne krune**  
 zuba učvršćenih i animiranih, **bez podloge** od zlata ili inog materijala, izvratne kakvoće uz najumjerenije cene.

**Popravci od 1 for. dalje kroz jedan sat.**  
 Zubi od 2 for. dalje.

**Podpunl nizovi zuba uz cene umanjene.**

**Sivomasi plaćaju polovicu.**

Gleda tačne izvedbe jamči moje **25 godišnje izkustvo**. Svaki dan od 9 sati rade do 5 sati posle podne.  
 Nedjeljom i blagdanom samo do podne.

Advertisement by Techničko-zubarski atelier. Novi list, January 2, 1900.

Reklama Tehničko-zubarskog atelierera. Novi list, 2. siječnja 1900.

Girls' College in Rijeka (located on Via Clotilde superiore street; current Ulica Frana Kurelca, the building of the First Croatian High School in Rijeka).

His interest in social work could be seen in the activities of the Natural Sciences Club where he gave lectures not only from his major field of work, but from other fields as well. He spoke "On tobacco, its origin and the effect it has on the human body". He joined the action to raise money for purchasing X-ray machines.

Other centres with scientific institutes such as Zagreb, Budapest, Baden-Baden, Vienna, Graz, Reichenbach, Sarajevo, Trieste, etc. were familiar with the work of the Natural Sciences Club in Rijeka the members of which were dentists as well because the Club had close connections with those institutes.

(Dr. Edmund Krausz lived on 22/II Via del Coreo. As was the case with other dentists of the time, he saw patients daily from 9 to 12 AM and 2 to 6 PM.)



Dental office of Dr Ljudevit Korewa  
*Stomatološka ordinacija dr. Ljudevita Korewe*

Outside of Rijeka there were also other agile dentists who contributed greatly to the development of dentistry in these parts. Special thought must be given to the efforts of **Dr. Ljudevit Korewa** who was Senj's town doctor, and who tried to open the first dental treatment centre in Croatia.

The text of the printed brochure from 1902 issued for the occasion says that the scope of dental work included jaw fractures, soft and hard palate defects, correction of irregularly aligned teeth, etc., and that only patients with oral cavity diseases will be received.

A family collection owned by Paula Domazetović, the daughter of Dr. Korewa, includes a photograph of the dentist's office taken between 1900 and 1905, showing how well-equipped it was for such early times. Next to the dental chair (assistant in the dentist's office, Dr. Altmann from Berlin, is seated next to it) there is a fountain, foot operated and electric swivel arm. On the instrument tray there are upper- and lower-jaw plaster casts in the occludator and a cabinet with other instruments. There is a framed picture on the wall with sketches of individual teeth, casts of upper (partially toothless) jaw, sectional view of a tooth, etc. This illustration was intended to explain to patients the kind of services and procedures they may be exposed to and the kind of dental and prosthetic practices that may be performed. It could be considered as a useful tool for improving patients' knowledge.

The brochure mentioned earlier stated that the dental treatment centre was to be opened on July 1, 1902, but it never worked because Dr. Altmann went away and the owners were experiencing financial troubles. Nevertheless, it was a worthy attempt because such Croatian first treatment centre was to offer unparallel professional services including multi-disciplinary dental procedures from oral and maxillofacial surgery, orthodontics, oral and tooth diseases and dental prosthetics [2].

It is interesting to mention people from Istria and Gorski kotar to whom we owe the development of dentistry.

During World War I, in Istria, at the Marine Hospital in Pula, **Dr. Hans Pichler** [3,4] worked as a dentist. He was born in Vienna; he completed medical college, and then dentistry practice in Chicago. After World War I he returned to Vienna where he founded a surgery clinic. He wrote numerous scientific papers and books in the field of jaw surgery, translated Black's standard work "Conservative dentistry" from English and thus presented to Europe the principles of conservative tooth treatment from

the classical American school, which became an integral part of that, but also later periods. Pichler was first made a part-time professor at the University of Vienna and in 1930 he became a full-time professor [4,5].

Prof. Dr. **Eduard Radošević** (1884-1939) was born in Gorski kotar, Mrkoplje. He graduated from medical college in Vienna; he is the founder of the Department of Dentistry of the University of Zagreb. He later became the first professor of dentistry at the Faculty of Medicine in Zagreb. His life's work is "Physiology and Pathology of Teeth" [4-6].

Dr. **Živko Bolf** (1894-1982) was also born in Gorski kotar, in Delnice. After graduating from medical college in Vienna, he specialized in orthodontics, worked in a private practice on Sušak, and then in Zagreb. He founded the Department of jaw and teeth alignment, later orthodontics. He was the first dean of the Faculty of Dentistry in Zagreb [4-7,8].

#### GUILD OF DENTISTS IN RIJEKA AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

Guild of physicians in Croatia was founded on February 28, 1874 in the form of **Assembly of Physicians**. In the first few years upon its establishment, the assembly included dentists such as Josip Hafner and Ivan Matković.

Later on, there was an increase in the number of dentists in Croatia, and seven of them were included in the list of members of the Assembly of Physicians from 1899.

In Zagreb, on December 20, 1903, the **Association of Croatian Dentists** was founded. Its members could only be general practitioners performing dental work. The purpose of the dentists' association was to explain the importance of oral hygiene in the lectures and publications for the public, the manufacture of tried and specially made tooth and oral cavity hygiene products and to provide free dental treatment for the poor, especially for school children.

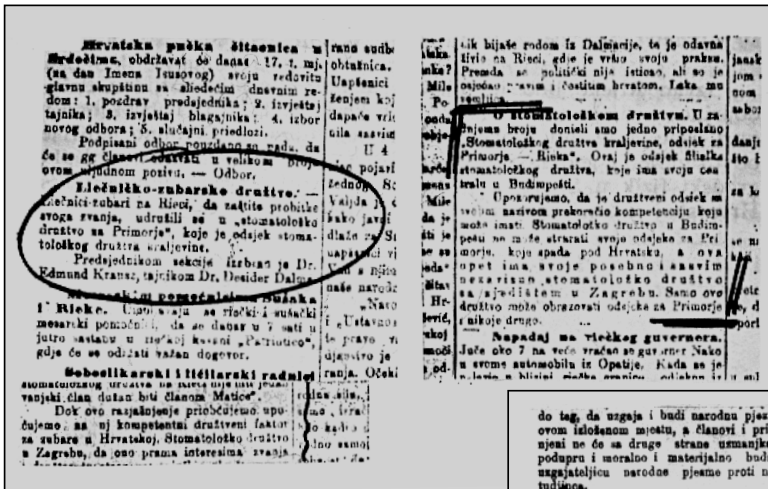
The association played a mayor role at the time. Specifically, dental treatment was not covered by insurance and this was the only way to provide dental care to all levels of society. Association's work also exerted some influence on improving awareness of the public on the social role of the dentists as well as on the development of dentistry.

Six years later, on January 16, 1909, the **Society of Dentists for the Littoral** was founded. This was covered by the current newspapers "Riječki



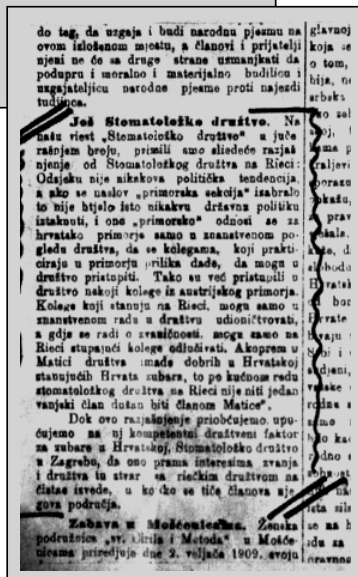
novi list” on January 17, 1909 under the headline “Society of physicians and dentists”: “Dental doctors in Rijeka, to protect the interests of their vocation, have formed a ‘Society of Dentists for the Littoral’, as a section of the society of dentists in the Monarchy. Dr. Edmund Krausz was elected section president and Dr. Dezider Dalma its administration officer.”

Two days later, on January 19, 1909, there was a new headline, “On the Society of Dentists”: “In our last issue we presented a letter sent by the Society of Dentists in the Monarchy, Littoral-Rijeka Section. This section is a branch of the Society of Dentists seated in Budapest. A word of caution to the social section which has, in terms of its title, overstepped its boundaries with regard to the competence it may have. The Society of Dentists in Budapest cannot form sec-



Report about the establishment of dental society

Novinske obavijesti o osnutku stomatološkog društva



*tions for the Croatian Littoral, which is a part of Croatia, and the Littoral has its unique and wholly independent association of dentists seated in Zagreb. Only this association may educate the sections for the Croatian Littoral and no other body whatsoever."*

Therefore, the then professional association of dentists wouldn't validate the Budapest headquarters and at the same time they were pointing out that it couldn't form their own sections for the Croatian Littoral; this could only be done by the Society of Dentists seated in Zagreb.

The press at that time, one of editors of which was a prominent politician Frano Supilo, illustrated not only the situation of the trade but the political situation as well. This was the period after the so-called Rijeka Resolution (October 3, 1905) representing accordance of Croatian opposition members on the basic directions Croatian politics was heading. Croatian representatives considered that the tendency of the Kingdom of Hungary to be an independent state was justified, because every people has the right to decide its own destiny freely and independently. The writers of the Resolution felt that the alliance of Croats and Hungarians is a joint defence against the Austrian-German invasion, and they imposed several conditions to this alliance: annexation of Dalmatia to Croatia, introducing full constitutional freedom, ensuring all democratic, civil and political liberties and changing current relations of Croatia toward Austria and the Kingdom of Hungary, to provide independent, cultural, political and economical survival and progress to the Croatian people."

Next day, on January 20, 1909, "Riječki Novi list" reported on the matter again under the headline "Still Society of Dentists", presenting some of the goals of the association as well as the rights of its members:

*„In the response to our 'Society of Dentists' piece in yesterday's paper, we have received the following explanation from the 'Society of Dentists' in Rijeka. The section does not have any political tendencies, and if we chose to call ourselves 'the Littoral Section', this does not have any government policy in mind, and the adjective 'littoral' refers solely to the society's scientific aspect, to give the opportunity to our colleagues practicing in the Croatian Littoral to join the society. Thus, several of our colleagues from the Austrian Littoral joined the society as well. The colleagues living in Rijeka can participate only in the scientific work of the Society, while only the colleagues working in Rijeka may decide on the formal matters. Even though there are good Croatian dentists who live in Croatia, according to the house rules of the society of dentists in Rijeka, no outside members are obligated to be members of Matica. By issuing this explanation we would*

*like to encourage the body competent in these matters of dentistry in Croatia, the society of dentists in Zagreb, to get to the bottom of things according to the interest of the trade and the society if it concerns the members of its scope.“*

These several pieces published by Rijeka's newspapers indicate that the management of the Society of Dentists at the time had shown special nationalist feelings and their connection to the trade society in Zagreb, denying any jurisdiction and authority to Budapest headquarters. Members in the society of dentists gathered to work on scientific improvement of the dentist practice, for the general welfare of the population in this part of Croatia [9].

The progress of dentistry today is significant and fast. Owing to the fathers of this profession and all of us who further improve it with our specialised and scientific work, dentistry has become a prominent branch of science.

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## SAŽETAK

Do početka XIX. stoljeća u Hrvatskom primorju liječenje zubnih bolesti bilo je u domeni brijaća i šarlatana. Sredinom XIX. stoljeća dolaze sezonski zubni liječnici iz Beča, Graza i Trsta, a od druge polovice XIX. stoljeća javljaju se i prvi domaći zubni liječnici. Dr. Frano Dabrović, dr. Niko Gjivović, dr. Dezider Dalma i dr. Edmund Krausz nositelji su struke, znanstvenog unapređenja i stomatološkog prosvjeđivanja stanovništva ovoga kraja. Poradi daljnjeg napretka stomatologije, riječki zubni liječnici udružili su se i 16. siječnja 1909. osnovali Stomatološko društvo za Primorje.

Izvan Rijeke, u Senju, dr. Ljudevit Korewa vodio je stomatološku ordinaciju, a u Puli je u Mornaričkoj bolnici u vrijeme Prvoga svjetskog rata, radio dr. Hans Pichler. Podrijetlom iz Gorskog kotara su prof. dr. Eduard Radošević, prvi profesor stomatologije Medicinskog fakulteta u Zagrebu, i prof. dr. Živko Bolf, prvi dekan Stomatološkog fakulteta u Zagrebu.

**Ključne riječi:** povijest stomatologije, XIX. i XX. stoljeće, stomatološke staleške udruge, Rijeka, Hrvatsko primorje, Hrvatska