

To mark the 100th anniversary of the birth of academician Teodor Wikerhauser – veterinarian, parasitologist, a scientist with an international reputation*

AUTHOR:

JOSIP MADIĆ

In remembering the life and work of academician Teodor Wikerhauser on the 100th anniversary of his birth (Zemun, 28th August, 1922 - Zagreb, 12th June 2018), it must be said that he was a scientist and expert with an extremely rich scientific body of work, whose scientific and professional career was enriched by many study visits around the world, to whom the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) entrusted the development of the parasitological profession and research work in Nigeria, and who made a significant contribution to the development of Croatian veterinary parasitology and its recognition in the world.

He began his studies in veterinary medicine at the Veterinary Faculty in Belgrade in 1940, but already in 1941 he transferred to the Veterinary Faculty of the University of Zagreb. In his graduate year in 1945 he was chosen to be demonstrator at the Department of Infectious Diseases of the Veterinary Faculty of the University of Zagreb. He was included in work to combat equine glanders and coital exanthema. In the autumn of 1948 he fell ill and was forced to interrupt his studies. He underwent treatment for several months in Zagreb and then went for further treatment to Leysin in Switzerland. Following his recovery he continued his studies at the Veterinary Faculty in Bern, where he graduated and then completed his PhD in 1950 with the thesis *Contribution à l'étude des leptospiroses bovines en Suisse. Recherches sérologiques*. After his PhD, from 1951 – 1953 he worked at Laboratoires de Leysin in Leysin, Switzerland. He then returned to the Veterinary Faculty of the University of Zagreb, where in 1954 he began his academic career at the Department of Parasitology and Invasive Diseases. He spent his entire working life there until he retired in 1987, advancing from assistant to full professor. He was head of the department from 1977 – 1984.

He was elected to be an associate member of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts in the Department of Medical Sciences in 1975, and a full member in 1991.

Academician Teodor Wikerhauser targeted his research work at studying various aspects of animal parasites, especially parasitic zoonoses. He published many scientific and professional papers and gave more than 40 conference addresses. For the needs of teaching and the profession he wrote or participated in writing about 15 books, lecture notes and chapters in books. With Prof. Janez Brglez, PhD, from the Veterinary Faculty in Ljubljana, he prepared the *Atlas parazita uzročnika zoonoza u Hrvatskoj i Sloveniji* (Atlas of Parasitic Zoonoses in Croatia and Slovenia). With Prof. Viktorija Kutičić, PhD, he published the book *Parazitske bolesti mačaka* (Parasitic Diseases of Cats). He took part in many scien-



Figure 1. Photograph of Academician Teodor Wikerhauser.

tific conferences and/or study visits in most European countries, the USA, Canada, Thailand, Australia, Iran and New Zealand.

His scientific interest focused on immunobiological diagnostics and immunoprophylaxis, especially of fasciolosis, cysticercosis, echinococcosis and toxoplasmosis, and other diseases caused by parasitic worms. He paid great attention to researching the effectiveness of anti-parasitics, such as vermizym for ascarides in dogs and pigs, piperazine for ascarides in dogs, calves, horses and pigs, cyanoacetohydrazide in the treatment of dictiocaulosis in sheep and metastrongylosis of pigs, iron arsenate and copper sulphate for treating tapeworm in sheep, scolaban against *E. granulosus* in dogs, tetramisol against metastrongylidae in piglets, tenedot, sulfoxines and amprolium for coccidiosis in hens, halamid against *T. saginatae* eggs, fenbendazole for gastro-intestinal roundworms in cattle, terenol against *P. microbothrium*, praziquantel against *E. granulosus* tapeworms and muscle cysticercosis in calves, nitroxinil for *F. hepatica* liver fluke etc. His work researching the effect of γ -radiation on various parasites comprised a separate series.

Academician Wikerhauser went on about ten study visits abroad. We

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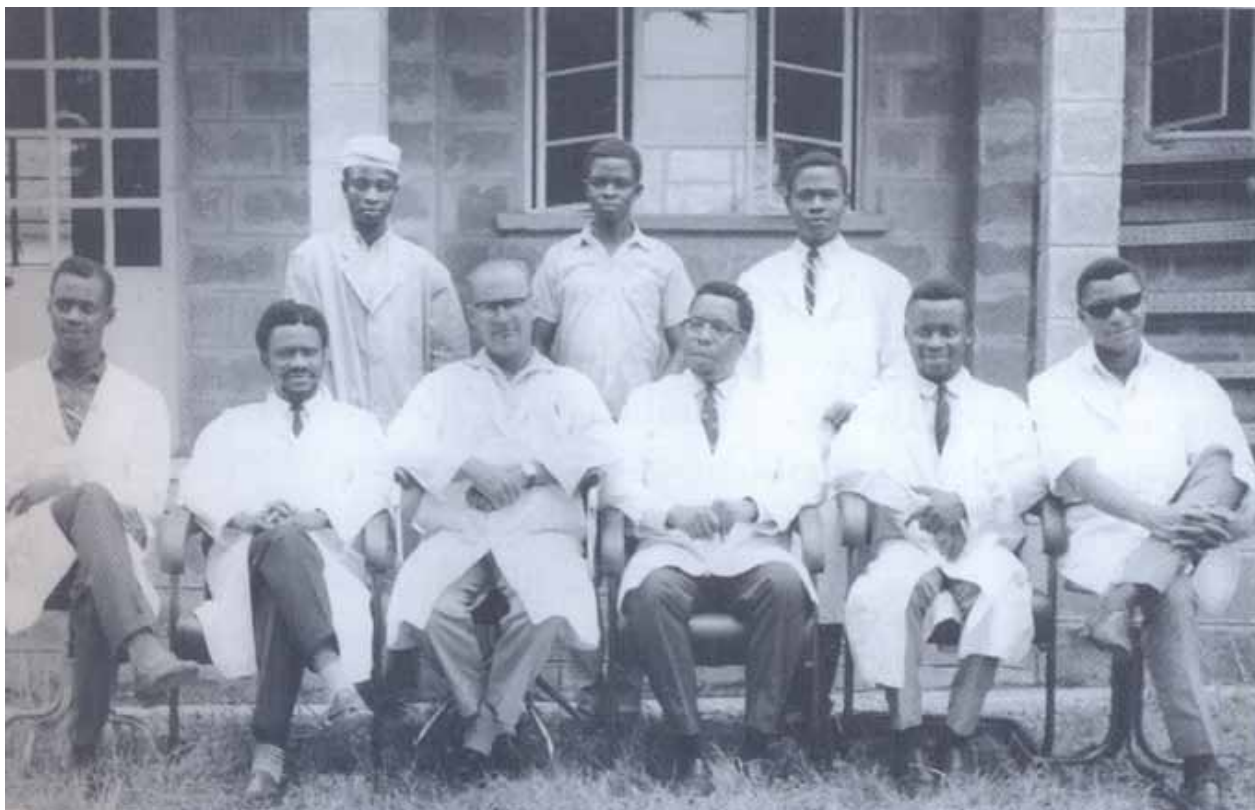


Figure 2. Academician Teodor Wikerhauser with parasitological section in Vom in Nigeria, April 1966.

will only mention here that as a guest of the British Royal Society he stayed in London (*Wellcome Museum of Medical Science* and the *Institute of Zoology*), St. Albans (*Commonwealth Institute of Parasitology*), Liverpool (*Clinical Department of Veterinary School*), Edinburgh (*Centre for Tropical Veterinary Medicine University of Edinburgh*) and Berkhamsted (*Entomology Department Wellcome Foundation*). He also studied at the Parasitology Department of Cambridge Veterinary Faculty, the Central Veterinary Laboratory in Weybridge, and the Parasitology Department of the Veterinary Faculty in Glasgow. He spent time at the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna, and in the Entomology Department of the International Atomic Energy Agency laboratories in Seibersdorf in Austria.

He was section president at the International Congress of Parasitology (ICOPA III), Munich, 1974, and the International Congress of Parasitology (ICOPA IV), Warsaw, 1978.

He was especially dedicated to teaching higher year graduate and post-graduate students at his home Faculty. For teaching African and Asian students from non-aligned countries he launched a new course entitled *Tropical Parasitic Diseases* where he made great use of his rich experience gained from his field work in Nigeria.

As the FAO expert for veterinary parasitology, he spent time at the Federal Veterinary Research Laboratory in Vom, Nigeria, on two missions of six months each, in 1962/1963 and 1965/1966. There he researched the parasitofauna of domestic animals and immunobiological diagnostics of fasciolosis in zebu cattle, and taught classes at the Federal Veterinary School. He left a record of this in which he wrote that in Nigeria, “a country where the population consists of more than 250 different ethnic groups, with about the same number of languages and dialects, a country with a large number of livestock and wild animals, with many problems arising

from the enormous amount of livestock, in 1962 there was a total of only 60 graduate veterinary doctors”. In his report he concluded that: “Nigeria will not be able to resolve all the veterinary problems with its own resources for some time, and it will seek the assistance of veterinarians from developed countries.”

He was the editor-in-chief of the scientific journal *Acta parasitologica Jugoslavica* from 1969 to 1980. He was a member of the editorial board of the journal *Periodicum biologorum* and the editorial board and advisory board of the journal *Veterinarski arhiv*.

As a passionate amateur photographer, Teodor Wikerhauser often took his camera with him and took pictures which were of interest for his profession and also other interesting sights. He could also draw very well, which helped him to create clear images of the microscopic details of parasites. He also tried his hand at caricatures. He received the Ruder Bošković Award of the Republic of Croatia for Science (1987) and the Croatian National Science Award and Life Achievement Award (1998) and the Portuguese Medical Association award.

LITERATURE

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