

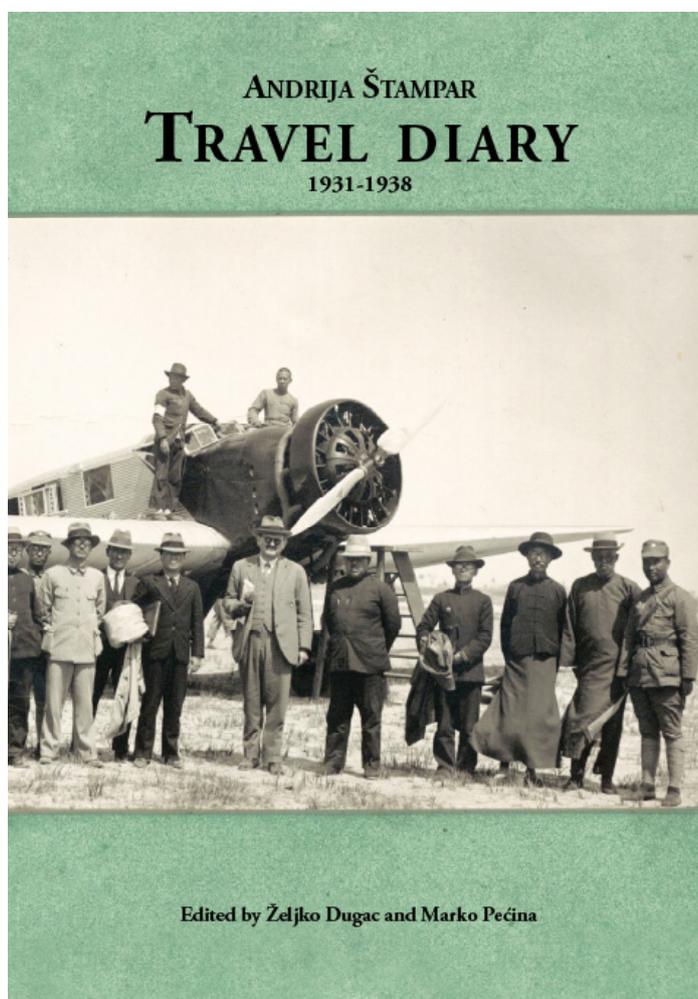
Book review: Andrija Štampar travel diary 1931-1938

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It is hard not to reflect on the unusual coincidence, that the book containing travel diaries of one of the heroes of modern medicine and humanitarianism, Andrija Štampar, was published amid a global pandemic of COVID-19. Such were the circumstances, that, due to the epidemiological restrictions, the book didn't even receive a proper promotion. The book itself is a translation of Štampar's diary published in 2008. This, english edition, was copublished by the Croataian Academy of Sciences and Arts, School of Medicine, University of Zagreb, Andrija Štampar School of Public Health and Srednja Europa d.o .o. This collaboration seems fitting, since Štampar served as president, dean and founder of these institutions. His diary was edited by prof. Željko Dugac and academician Marko Pećina, and translated by Boris Blažina. Andrija Štampar undertook these travels as an expert working for the League of Nations Health Organization, the Rockefeller Foundation, Chinese government of Chiang Kai-shek and invited lecturer at numerous universities. He was primarily preoccupied with advancing public, especially rural health, a task he began in his homeland and pursued his entire life. The travels are organised into nine chapters, namely: Journey to the USA and Canada, Firs journey to the Far East, Journey to Turkey and Bulgaria, From the Journey Through Spain, Second Journey to the Far East, Third Journey to the Far East, In the USSR, Another Journey Through Europe, and In America. From today's perspective it is interesting to compare the world of 1930s with present. At the onset of 2020 COVID-19 pandemic the world was amazed by the speed of Chinese buiders who managed to construct and fully equip the Houshenshan hospital in Wuhan in just 15 days. This stands in stark contrast to the dire circumstances in China from the time of Štampar's journeys, when he encountered mostly substandardly built, underequipped and understaffed hospitals and unsanitary living conditions of the large share of the population. This was by no means new for him, as he came from a background with rural hygiene not much better than that of the Chinese countryside. Born into a teacher's family in a



small village of Drenovac on the outskirts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, he experienced all the misery brought upon his neighbours by poverty, lack of education and public health and resolved to change it. His life and work demonstrates how drastically things can improve in a single lifetime. However, his job is not done as millions of people in the 21st century still wait for decent sanitary infrastructure and basic health care. Therefore let this book serve as an inspiration to those looking to continue in Štampar's footsteps in making this world a better place.