



## Jacques Crozemarie: One Man and his Foundation

Paris—When the French gather around the family television set for a session of after-dinner viewing, they can be reasonably sure to hear from Jacques Crozemarie before the evening is over. But this bald, stocky man of 66 doesn't host a game show, read the news, or predict the weather. Nor does he display much media presence. He just stands awkwardly in front of the camera, looks up shyly, and asks for money for science.

And he gets it. In 1990 alone, Crozemarie and the private charity he heads—the Association for Research on Cancer (ARC)—raised more than \$60 million for cancer research and prevention programs, money that provides partial support for 2000 research groups across France. That makes ARC the largest single source of funds for cancer research in the country—bigger than any French government agency (see chart, p. 1118). It also makes Crozemarie, an electrical engineer by training, one of the most powerful figures on the French research scene.

Some say too powerful. For a few months in 1988, ARC weathered a barrage of unfavorable publicity when a French government agency auditing the Gustave Roussy Institute, a major cancer research center in the Paris suburb of Villejuif that receives large amounts of money from ARC, accused Crozemarie of running his organization in a “quasi-theocratic manner.” Although the storm blew over after leading French scientists, including Pierre Chambon and Leon Schwarzenberg, rushed to his defense, there is no doubt that Crozemarie is a man used to getting his way, even if it means twisting a few arms in the process. In one near-legendary episode, the Finance Ministry tried to tax the money collected by ARC and other charities. After Crozemarie wrote to every legislator in the country, the idea was dropped.

In person, Crozemarie's manner is far from that of a power-hungry theocrat. He seems warmer and more relaxed than in his television appearances, and his office at ARC's headquarters in Villejuif, though comfortably large, is functional and simply furnished. “I don't understand what people mean when they say that I have too much power,” he told *Science* in a recent interview. “I find that idea completely ridiculous. I have put all my energies into working for a day when our children will not fall victim to cancer. If I am powerful, it is to fight effectively against this disease.”

While Crozemarie's tight grip on ARC may have drawn questions about his imperial status, his drive is disputed by no one. He has never married and lives less than a mile from his workplace at the organization's headquarters. “Often I get up at 5 a.m. and work until I go to bed at midnight,” he claims. His total dedication even led the French daily *Le Monde* to dub him “Jacques of ARC,” a whimsical comparison to St. Joan.

Early in life, there was little sign that young Jacques would end up becoming the patron saint of French cancer research. He was born in Paris, earned a degree from a French school of radio-electrical engineering, and went to work as an administrator for the National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS). His links with biomedical research began in 1958 when he was made responsible for coordinating activities at the research institutes

taking shape on a new campus at Villejuif.

Then, Crozemarie explains, he was struck by a personal tragedy that was to have a profound effect on the course of his life. “I had met a Scandinavian woman, and we were going to get married,” he says. “But she developed a brain tumor, and died at the age of 26.”

At the same time, Crozemarie was becoming increasingly disturbed by the low level of funds available for cancer research at Villejuif. He decided to set up a new organization to raise money. Ten years later, 2000 people had joined ARC and it was providing a significant supplement to the research budget at Villejuif. But it wasn't enough for Crozemarie. He decided to learn from the mass-marketing methods then being used in the United States and cranked out a series of high-powered direct-mail appeals.

Success came quickly. Soon, a parade of celebrities, including Brigitte Bardot and Pablo Picasso, were endorsing the work of ARC. Crozemarie even persuaded Ryan O'Neal and Barbra Streisand to come to France and donate the revenues from the French premieres of *Love Story* and *Hello Dolly* to the organization. By 1975 ARC was raising so much money that it was able to start supporting cancer research throughout France.

As ARC grew, Crozemarie became more confident, backing new projects that the more conservative government agencies were often slow to adopt. Since 1987, the organization has built several new cancer laboratories and opened an

\$8-million laser center for early cancer detection—the first of its kind in France—at the Stell Hospital in Rueil-Malmaison, which is located near Paris.

Now as the organization Crozemarie founded enters its fourth decade, its still undisputed commander seems more determined than ever to stay ahead of the game. In a major campaign just announced for 1992, Crozemarie has made cancer prevention ARC's number one priority for the coming years.

“We are going to create centers for evaluating research methods into early detection and prevention,” he says. The centers will be established in major French cities and will operate in collaboration with already existing research institutions. But the move is one step too fast for the government, which has reacted coolly to the idea. “The people who run our national insurance program understand that if we can catch cancer at an early stage, we will save money later,” says Crozemarie. “But the other members of the government, those who are charged with the budget—I'm not sure that they understand yet.”

Educating the government is one job that Crozemarie feels he must do as the custodian of donations from the 3 million people who come up with the minimum \$10 a year needed to join ARC. But he also feels the heavy responsibility he has acquired by making cancer research in France so dependent on his organization. “If by some misfortune ARC were to disappear, a lot of laboratories would close,” says Crozemarie. “It gives me no pleasure to say that, because it means that we are condemned to succeed.”

■ MICHAEL BALTER



Jacques Crozemarie