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# From foundation to 1989

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Ideas to expand the number of Czechoslovak universities and decentralise our higher education were already taking shape before World War II. The aim was both to reach the level of some advanced European countries and to create the conditions for the intellectual potential of university faculties to bring the spiritual, social and moral outlook necessary for the progress of the nation to the widest possible environment.

After the end of World War II, these ideas were updated; the fact that there was a shortage of university-educated professionals in the Czech Republic after the closure of Czech universities for several years contributed to this. In a speech at the East Bohemian Radio on 25 July 1945, Assoc. Prof. Jan Bedrna stated, among other things, that in Belgium, Hungary and Italy, for example, there was one medical faculty for every two to two and a half million inhabitants. Similarly, the President of the Czechoslovakia, Dr. Edvard Beneš, when receiving the Hradec Králové delegation on 10 August 1945, welcomed the idea of establishing a medical faculty in Hradec Králové, expressed his conviction that we should have one university for every two million inhabitants in the republic.

## Why Hradec?

The Hradec Králové branch of the Faculty of Medicine was the first newly established Czechoslovak university after the end of World War II. The question of why Hradec Králové was chosen is dealt with in detail in a separate chapter in the publication "Faculty of Medicine of Charles University in Hradec Králové - 1945 - 1995", published to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the school. Briefly, it can be said that the high scientific level of the heads of the then General Public District Hospital in Hradec Králové, the support of the citizens of the town and the whole of East Bohemia and the understanding of the administrative authorities and representatives of Charles University were all conveniently involved. The rector of Charles University, Prof. Jan Bělehrádek, fully identified with President Beneš's idea to decentralise Czechoslovak higher education and, moreover, he had already known the Hradec Králové hospital and some of its leaders (Jan Bedrna, Jan Maršálek) during the war. Prof. Josef Čančík, then Dean of the Faculty of Medicine in Prague, also made great efforts to establish a branch of the Faculty of Medicine in Hradec Králové.

## Founders and first teachers of the Hradec Králové Medical Faculty

In 1945, the Hradec Králové district hospital had nine primaries and was thus one of the most modern hospitals outside Prague, not only in terms of construction but also in terms of differentiation of medical care. It was also quite extraordinary that, thanks to the enlightened attitude of the district council in the 1930s, there were six associate professors, and only the occupation delayed the habilitation of the seventh. The habilitated chiefs of the Hradec Králové hospital became co-founders of the new faculty and its first teachers. They were surgeon Assoc. Prof. MUDr. Jan Bedrna, pathologist Assoc. Prof. MUDr. Antonín Fingerland, internist Assoc. Prof. MUDr. Pavel Lukl, gynaecologist and obstetrician Assoc. Prof. MUDr. Jan Maršálek, orthopedist Assoc. Prof. MUDr. Jaroslav Vavřda and dermatologist MUDr. Břetislav Janoušek. The teaching staff of the branch was then supplemented according to the proposal of the professorial staff of the parent Faculty of Medicine of Charles University.

The immense work of the above-mentioned founders of the Hradec Králové Faculty, especially the dedicated organizer, scientist and outstanding surgeon, later academician Jan Bedrna, and the uncompromising guardian of the scientificity of medical work, pathologist Prof. MUDr. Antonín Fingerland, DrSc., is explained in detail in the publication "Faculty of Medicine of Charles University in Hradec Králové - 1945 - 1995".

The Faculty of Medicine in Hradec Králové was originally established as a branch of the Faculty of Medicine of Charles University in Prague by a decree of the President of the Czechoslovak Republic, Dr. Edvard Beneš, on 13 October 1945.

The first year of activity of the Hradec Králové Medical Faculty was successful, although in the unfavourable post-revolutionary times. In November 1945, the following were appointed to the teaching staff: Assoc. Prof. MUDr. Jan Bedrna for the field of surgery, Assoc. Prof. MUDr. Vladimír Dvořák for the field of hygiene, Assoc. Prof. MUDr. Antonín Fingerland for pathological anatomy, MUDr. Libuše Fučíková for normal anatomy, Assoc. Prof. MUDr. Břetislav Janoušek for dermatology and venerology, MUDr. Eduard Knobloch for forensic medicine, extraordinary professor MUDr. Zdeněk Köcher for pharmacology and pharmacognosy, Assoc. Prof. MUDr. RNDr. Bohumil Krajník for the field of general medical biology, Assoc. Prof. MUDr. Pavel Lukl for internal medicine, Assoc. Prof. MUDr. Jan Maršálek for obstetrics and women's diseases, Assoc. Prof. MUDr. Karel Měšťan for the field of dentistry, full professor MUDr. František Smetánka for the field

of physiology, Assoc. Prof. MUDr. MrPh. Stanislav Škramovský for medical chemistry, Assoc. Prof. MUDr. Jan Vanýsek for the field of ophthalmology and Assoc. Prof. MUDr. Rudolf Vávra for the field of general and experimental pathology.

The management of the psychiatric clinic was entrusted to Assoc. Prof. MUDr. Stanislav Krákora. The children's clinic was headed by MUDr. Božena Vávrová from 22nd January 1946, after her resignation, the management of the clinic was entrusted to Assoc. Prof. MUDr. Jiří Blecha. Social medicine was headed from 25 February 1946 by Assoc. Prof. MUDr. Alois Guttwirth. For the field of orthopaedics Assoc. Prof. MUDr. Jaroslav Vavřda. Professor MVDr. RNDr. Vlastimil Vrtiš was appointed head of histology and embryology on 25 September 1946.

The first years of the existence of the Hradec Králové branch of the Faculty of Medicine of Charles University were characterised by the fact that in addition to teaching, scientific work and medical activities, all heads of departments and heads of clinics had to devote themselves to demanding organisational activities. In addition, there were also tasks arising from the need to rebuild the health care system in the region and educational and awareness-raising activities. Nevertheless, the pedagogical and scientific activities of the branch were developing successfully, and at the end of 1948 the Prof.sorial staff asked the Minister of Education to finally resolve the legal status of the branch, either by establishing a university in Hradec Králové or a separate medical faculty, or by changing the branch into a regular faculty of Charles University.

## Conversion of the branch to the Military Medical Academy

However, instead of fulfilling this request, the branch was transformed into the Military Medical Academy (VLA) by order of the President of the Republic on 15 August 1951. Even with the passage of time, it is not easy to evaluate the VLA era, which lasted until 1958, objectively. There was greater material support for the school, and this was reflected in the possibilities and results of scientific work. But on the other hand, the military-political, totalitarian management of the school, with the help of Soviet advisors, was certainly not conducive to the university spirit.

### The years 1945-1958 in a chronological overview:

- May 1945 - Assoc. Prof. Jan Maršálek and Assoc. Prof. Jan Bedrna negotiate in Prague with the rector of Charles University Prof. Jan Bělehrádek.
- 8 June 1945 - The Revolutionary City National Committee in Hradec Králové unanimously approved the proposal to build a medical faculty.
- July 3, 1945 - The founding protocol was signed by representatives of the Ministry of Education, Charles University, MNV and ONV in Hradec Králové.
- September 14, 1945 - during the university rally the Society for Building a University in Hradec Králové is established.
- 13 October 1945 - the President of the Czechoslovak Republic Dr. Edvard Beneš signed a decree on the establishment of a branch of the Faculty of Medicine of Charles University in Hradec Králové.
- November 7, 1945 - the faculty activity is started, the Medical Association is established
- 25 November 1945 - the branch of the Faculty of Medicine of the Charles University in Hradec Králové is inaugurated with the participation of representatives of all Czechoslovak universities.
- 26 November 1945 - school lectures begin. 15 April 1946 - the first graduation ceremony takes place. 30 June 1946 - the branch is visited by the President of the Republic Dr. Edvard Beneš.
- August 14, 1947 - the President of the Republic appoints 11 full and 8 extraordinary Prof.sors.
- November 25, 1948 - the management of the branch asks the Minister of Education to settle the legal status of the school (transformation of the branch into a faculty).
- 1 August 1951 - by order of the President of the Republic, the branch is transformed into the Military Medical Academy.
- 31 August 1958 - by order of the Minister of National Defence, the VLA is abolished and from 1 September 1958 - the school becomes a faculty of Charles University.

## Again in the volume of Charles University

On 31 August 1958 the VLA was abolished and the school became one of the faculties of Charles University. Simultaneously with the civilisation of the Faculty of Medicine, the Jan Ev. Purkyně Military Medical Research and Training Institute - VLVDÚ JEP, after November 1989 transformed into the Jan Ev. Purkyně - VLA JEP. It must be said that the close scientific cooperation between the schools - the Medical Faculty of Charles University, the VLA, the VLVDÚ JEP and the VLA JEP was beneficial.

On September 1, 1958, a new period in the history of the Faculty began with the re-establishment of the Faculty of Medicine of Charles University in Hradec Kralove as one of the independent faculties of Charles University. Further development of scientific and medical activities took place. Since 1958, Prof. MUDr. J. Procházka, DrSc. performed heart surgery using extracorporeal circulation. Under the leadership of Prof. MUDr. R. Petr, the creator of our modern neurosurgery and later academician, the work of the neurosurgical clinic was successfully developed, which later resulted in the construction of a new, state-of-the-art pavilion. Priority results were achieved thanks to the merit of Assoc. Prof. MUDr. J. Erben, CSc. in haemodialysis treatment. At the end of the 1960s, a successful kidney transplantation was performed in Hradec Králové.

## 70s and 80s

The 1970s and 1980s were a period of normalisation. The saddest aspect of this period was the fact that as a result of the normalisation measures, four Prof.sors were deprived of their positions as heads of departments, and most of the fifteen associate Prof.sors were reassigned to the positions of assistant Prof.sors or researchers. Many former teachers were banned from teaching and publishing.

The results achieved in the 1960s were followed by teaching, research and treatment activities in the 1970s and 1980s. It was not an easy time for the school's activities, but fortunately, even in those years, the Faculty of Medicine of the Charles University in Hradec Králové had enough staff in its ranks who did not allow the creative activity to be deformed into a routine. The Surgical Clinic, headed by Prof. Procházka, was constantly expanding the repertoire of cardiac operations, and in the field of radiology and radiology, along with improving diagnostics, therapeutic methods were also developed (e.g. the removal of part of the bloodstream before kidney surgery or targeted vascular perfusion of diseased organs with cytostatics). Diagnostic imaging methods have included ultrasound and computed tomography, and endoscopic examination of the digestive tract using fibre-optic devices has expanded, etc.

After previous diplomatic negotiations, 12 members of the Faculty of Medicine and the University Hospital Hradec Králové were sent to Kuwait by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health of the Czechoslovak Republic at the direct request of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Health of Kuwait. They were the first doctors from the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic who worked in Kuwait and significantly contributed to the development of Kuwaiti health care and teaching at the newly established medical faculty. The cooperation started in 1968 and is still highly appreciated.