

*A. Trýb and the department of dermatology in Brno**

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S U M M A R Y

The article describes the founding of the Masaryk University in Brno, and its Department of Dermatovenereology. Professor Antonín Trýb both founded and led the new department. He was also co-founder of the Czechoslovak Dermatological Society in 1922. He promoted international cooperation including the Association of Slav Dermatologists. F. Kogoj spent two years in the Brno Department of dermatovenereology and was promoted to assistant professor at the Brno Medical Faculty. The article was prepared in order to honor the 120th anniversary of the birth of A. Trýb and the 110th anniversary of the birth of F. Kogoj.

K E Y W O R D S

**A. Trýb,
F. Kogoj,
dermatology,
Brno**

The Second Czech University in Brno was founded in December 1920 following the legal investiture signed by T. G. Masaryk, the first President of the Czechoslovak Republic. The act included both the Medical Faculty and the Department for Skin and Venereal Diseases. Outstanding scientists from the Czechoslovak Republic were invited to collaborate to create a new scientific centre. Antonín Trýb (8.3.1884 - 3.9.1960), a former assistant at the Prague Department of Skin and Venereal Diseases (-Professor V. Janovský) was elected to professorship and assigned responsibility as the new head of department. He started immediately to organise a modern department comprising specialised services and a histopathologic laboratory. Previously, while working in Hamburg under Professor Unna he had obtained

a training in histopathology and he pioneered this new method in the young Republic. In addition, he advocated new methods in topical treatment such as the so-called "open treatment" in lieu of bandaging lesional skin, the application of coal tar in various forms such as paste, he encouraged the use of bismuth and arsenic (Salvarsan) for treatment of syphilis, what was then the frequent venereal disease (1,2,3,4).

His lectures and publications made frequent mention of the social and psychological problems of prostitution, and the importance of legislative measures as well as sexual education.

His many publications and activities laid the foundation for what became, in 1948, the Czechoslovak Scien-

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tific Sexological Society. In collaboration with others he wrote one of the first Czech dermatological textbooks: "Practical Dermatology". It became the basic manual of dermatology and venereology for several generations of Czech and Slovak medical students and physicians. The book was revised and republished six times.

At the same time that he founded the new department he started to promote professional contacts with foreign specialists.

It is worth noting that in 1924, Professor Levaditi from the Pasteur Institute in Paris lectured on "Bismuth and Syphilis", and in the same year, Professor Ehrmann from Vienna gave a lecture on "Neurodermitis". Professor Trýb also visited a number of dermatological centres in France, Italy, England, Germany and Austria.

The foundation of the "*Czechoslovak Dermatovenereological Society*" was a historical event. The constitutive session was held on December 30, 1922 in Professor Trýb's study at the Department for Skin and Venereal Diseases in Brno. The first regular meeting of the newly founded society took place on March 23 in 1923 in the lecture-hall of the Department for Skin and Venereal Diseases in Prague. Among those present were Assistant Professor P. Šavnik and his co-worker F. Kogoj, and the occasion marked their elevation to full membership of the Society (vide infra).

One of Trýb's preferred strategies was the promotion of professional contact and scientific cooperation with colleagues from Slav countries: with Poland and in particular with the southern Slavic states of Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. He maintained direct contact with a number of famous dermatologists.

Franjo Kogoj (13.10.1894 -30.09.1983) was born in Kranjska Gora (Slovenija) and graduated as doctor of medicine in 1920 from the Charles University in Prague. After one year of work at Professor Šamberger's Department in Prague he continued his dermatological education at the Dermatological department in Brno as a non-paid assistant (May 1922 – July 1923). During his stay in Brno, Kogoj was working on his thesis "Sclerodermas and Atrophodermas." On March 5 1925, he successfully defended his thesis and was promoted to an assistant professorship at the Brno Medical Faculty (5). After Professor Šavnik's death, Kogoj was appointed interim Head of Department, and in 1926, after a successful period in Brno, as acting Head of the University Department of Dermatology in Zagreb.

From 1925 – 1927 he continued his teaching activities at the Brno Medical Faculty as visiting professor.

He later became one of the most famous dermatologists in the world. He often made mention of the significant support that his professional development received in Brno under the guidance of professor A. Trýb.

In the 1920s, on the initiative of the Czechoslovak dermatological society, the many efforts made to



Figure 1. Professor A. Trýb as the Dean of the Medical Faculty Brno University.

organise international co-operation between dermatologists from Slav countries met with little success. Professor A. Trýb personally encouraged professional and scientifically stimulating contacts with South-Slav dermatologists. Using the Societies of French and German speaking dermatologists as an example, the foundation of a similar society was envisaged and eventually the *Association of Slav Dermatologists* was established in Warsaw in 1927, and went on to organise three international congresses: in Warsaw in 1929, in Belgrade in 1931 and in Prague in 1934. The 2nd Congress of Slav Dermatologists in Belgrade was organised by Professor Dj. Djordjevič. The chairman of the 3rd Congress in Prague was Professor Šamberger, and the co-presidents were Professors Lj. Popoff (Bulgaria), F. Kogoj (Yugoslavia) and Leszynski (Poland). In the late 30s, however, the unfavourable economic and political situation in Europe conspired to extinguish the activities of the Association of Slav Dermatologists.

In addition to his professional activities, Professor A. Trýb was also known and appreciated as a writer. His most significant novel was *The Emperor of the Poor*. Inspired by his stay in Split in 1931, he became fascinated by the Roman excavations and a number of dis-

cussions with the famous archaeologist Frano Bulić, then the custodian of the Salona museum. In his novel he described the historic role of the Emperor Diocletianus in the struggle between the vanishing ancient culture and the new Christian ideology.

The broad professional interests of Professor Trýb included veterinary dermatology, and together with Professor F. Král from the Veterinary Faculty in Brno, they initiated a new professional field, the *Veterinary Dermatology*, that was further developed by F. Král during his stay in the USA (6,7).

Professor Trýb was succeeded by Professors J. Horáček (1956 – 1982) and J. Záhajský (1982 – 1996), and the current chairlady is Professor Vera Semrádová.

The authors would like to conclude that their aim in presenting this paper is to remind a younger generation of the merits of two great dermatologists and outstanding personalities, those of A. Trýb and F. Kogoj. They both made an essential contribution both to the development of dermatovenereology in general and to international contact and co-operation between Slav countries.

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