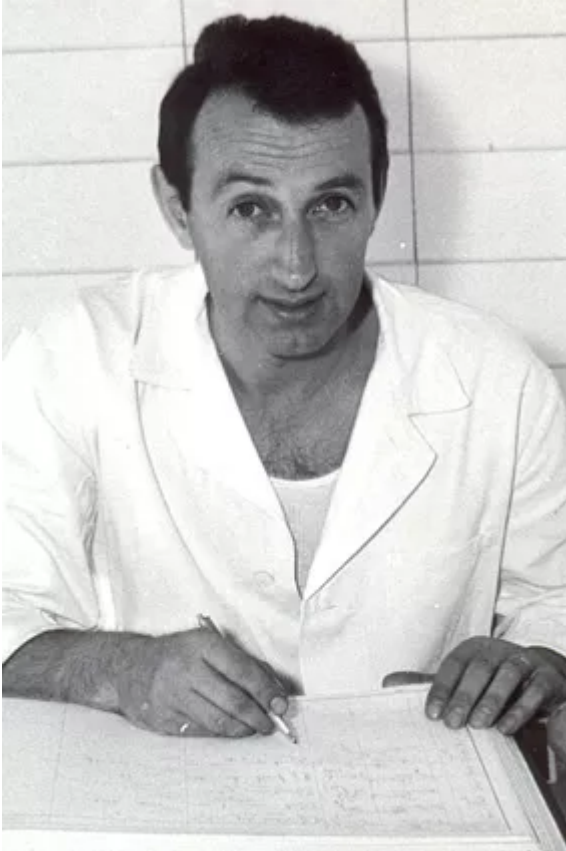


At The Outpatient Surgery



This photo shows me, Jan Hanak, at work - an outpatient surgery in Zilina in 1972.

My boss at the time, the surgeon Cerny, wanted to specialize us in various fields, and wanted to make a plastic surgeon out of me. In those days Cerny was a big name. Later he transferred to Bratislava, where he became the head of the Kramare Hospital. I liked his idea about the plastic surgery, but I'd have had to leave for three years to Bratislava, to study. I told him that I wasn't going. Instead of thinking up some excuse, like for example that my mother was ill, I told him the truth. I can't go. Who will coach my daughter? As a result of this, he wrote me off. He was of the opinion that a surgeon should be a fanatic for whom everything else takes a back seat. No mother, no daughter, not even tennis! Later, when I wanted to do further attestations, he didn't let me. He looked for various pretexts. That's why I worked at the outpatient clinic all my life.

In my daily life, I was a fervent anti-Communist. At the surgery, I had an operating day once a week. It was on Thursday. I'd enter the operating theater and greet the staff with Heil Hitler. Once they asked me why? I answered: "Same regime, same greeting." I didn't see any difference between Fascism and Communism. One was wore black and the other red. I think that I also hold the record for the shortest membership time in the Communist Party. I never attended any club meetings or gatherings. Nothing like that. During my studies they commented on it a couple of times, but I always made some excuse. I was an athletics coordinator, and did a whole lot more than the other "party members". Once, when I'd gone to play tennis, my classmates had a meeting. Upon my return everyone was smirking at me. They said that every club had the task of pushing someone into joining the Communist Party. The way it was back then was that in order to be promoted to a higher position, you had to have a certain amount of Party members below you.

It was the same in medicine. If someone wanted to be a chief physician, a certain percent of his staff had to be in the Party. It didn't matter if they were cleaning women, nurses or doctors. They told me to join too, to improve the percentage. I filled in the application in the hopes that they wouldn't take me. As a reason I filled in something in the spirit of that I'd been nominated, and the fact that I wanted to join should be an honor for the Communist Party. I remember that the party chairman at the Faculty of Medicine, a gynecologist, was enraged. He read my application at the regional meeting of party chairmen. How could such an application have made it to the regional committee for approval? In the end they accepted me. Before the end of sixth year, the gynecologist, Dr. Zvarik, summoned me. By the way, he was the older brother of the actor Frantisek Zvarik. He told me: "You know, we needed to create some party members, so we approved you at the membership meeting." He handed me an envelope with my registration, which I was supposed to hand in at my new place of employment. I of course didn't hand anything in. Alas, the regional committee in Martin sent a copy of my application form to my workplace. Everyone had an ID booklet, into which you had to paste a membership stamp once a month. At our work, a man that worked in the plaster room was in charge of the stamps. He'd always call me in to the plaster room. I'd give him ten crowns. That's how much a stamp cost. But I wouldn't glue it into the ID booklet, but onto the tiles in the plaster room. In 1968, the screening of all party members began. Whether they agreed with the entry of the allied troops, and so on. They never even summoned me to the screening. I got a piece of paper, which I have put away to this day. It says: "Due to the fact that you did not fulfill your responsibilities - though I don't know which ones - your membership in the Communist Party of Slovakia has been revoked." According to the dates on the document, a total of seven days had passed from my acceptance to my expulsion.