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OPENING ADDRESS

VÁCLAV DUPAČ

Ladies and gentlemen,

Jaroslav Hájek's scientific work will be the subject of forthcoming talks, given by highly competent speakers. I will confine myself to a few comments on Hájek's personality and his professional carrier.

Let me mention first that Hájek did not study mathematics at the Charles University. He attended the Technical University of Prague, leaving with the degree of a statistical engineer. Only after that he became a PhD student in the Mathematical Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences. Thus his mathematical education was similar to the American educational system, that devotes lower years of study to a more general curriculum and only after that returns to rigorous mathematics. I guess that this type of education has helped to develop Hájek's admirable statistical intuition.

After finishing his PhD studies, Hájek worked in the Mathematical Institute of the Academy as a senior researcher. Here, he achieved essential results in statistical inference in stochastic processes, published during the years 1958–1962. A handicap of those times was a poor scientific communication between Eastern and Western countries. Some of Hájek's results published in Czechoslovak or Soviet journals were thus obtained independently by other authors at approximately the same time, and are more known under their names (the Dichotomy Theorem on Gaussian processes, e.g.).

During the sixties, contacts between scholars in East and West became easier. Hájek visited the United States several times and especially his visits at Berkeley and his collaboration with Lucien LeCam there were very fruitful. Hájek was able to transform LeCam's general concepts into useful tools for solving concrete problems of statistical inference, especially in nonparametrics. At the same time, Hájek made also a big step in the general theory itself – the remarkable Convolution Theorem on regular estimates.

An important event in Hájek's life was his appointment as Head of the Department of Probability and Statistics at the Charles University, in 1964. Hájek enjoyed a great authority here and he was able to transform curricula of probability and statistics to a higher level according to his own ideas. He also succeeded in finding out talented young people and in tutoring them into his collaborators. Under his

10 years' guidance, the Department became actually a reputable scientific group in mathematical statistics. Let me mention Professors Anděl, Hušková, Jurečková, Štěpán among others, who all started their carriers as Hájek's students, but who were soon able to proceed in their own way, in research in random processes, statistical inference or probability theory. Hájek was also the initiator of Prague Symposia on Asymptotic Statistics, held regularly each 5 years since 1973. Regrettably, he could open only the first of them.

Hájek contributed also to nontrivial applications of statistics, he collaborated with physicians and dentists, he did a lot of consulting work in economic or governmental statistics, especially with respect to sample surveys. Theory of sample surveys was Hájek's favourite topic; in addition to several theoretical papers and to a monograph in English, Hájek wrote also a more practically oriented book on sampling in Czech.

Hájek always emphasized the importance of statistical thinking for a modern man. Hence, he made an effort to improve the level of teaching probability and statistics at high schools. He disagreed with restricting high school probability only to combinatorial examples and he recommended to teach probabilistic notions parallelly with their statistical counterparts. He himself wrote chapters on probability and statistics for high school mathematical textbooks.

Ladies and gentlemen,

twenty years after Jaroslav Hájek's untimely death, his name and his ideas are still present in nowadays statistical papers, journals and books. Moreover, the memory of Hájek's personality still lives in minds of people, who got into closer contact with him. We remember his personal features, his immense diligence, his ability of full concentration, his strict daily time-schedule, his tactful approach to students; we remember him also as a sportsman, a musician and a good-humoured companion. The large attendance at this minisymposium is an evidence for that. Thank you for coming.