



PROFESSOR DR. IMRE HORVÁTH

1926—1979

A startling news had gone round Hungary and, even, a part of the world. The head of the Department of Botany and the Botanical Gardens of the Attila József University, the chairman of the Tisza-Research Executive Committee, the member of the governing bodies of several university-, academic and public organizations, the ardent environment protector and nature preserver deceased after a prolonged illness.

Beyond the circle of this family proper and of his relatives, the loss of Professor HORVÁTH has been mourned the most keenly by those who were his closest collaborators, the more than fifty members of the Tisza Researchers.

Professor Dr. IMRE HORVÁTH was born fifty-three years ago in Hódmezővásárhely, a town situated 25 km from Szeged. There he had completed his primary and secondary studies; then he enrolled himself at the Faculty of Sciences of Szeged University as a student, a future teacher, studying natural history and geography.

His professors soon took notice of his eminence, of the more than ordinary love that he developed for his profession at an early date and of his zeal. Even before taking his degree, he was allowed to start work as an undergraduate research assistant at the Department of Botany, where he joined in the xylotomy researches, in progress there.

His gift for organizing qualified him, after graduation, for the position of secretary at the Biology Section of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

Having taken his candidate's degree at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, he was active as teacher and educator at the Department of Botany of the University

for Agricultural Sciences in Gödöllő. His researches were plant-aut-ecology-oriented. He was the first scientist in Hungary to work out the methodology of the phytotron, and he carried out researches into how to put this into practice.

In 1965, he was appointed head to the Department of Botany and the Botanical Gardens of the Attila József University in Szeged, as the post had fallen vacant by the retirement of the previous chair-holder. On submitting and defending his thesis entitled "The causes of fir samplings' getting bowed" he was awarded a doctor's degree in biological sciences by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and he was appointed full university professor.

After coming to Szeged, he took over the chairmanship of the Tisza-Research Working Committee, without head after the death of Professor KOLOSVÁRY. The new chairman, who was remarkably experienced in organizing, worked out a detailed plan for specialists in hydrology, botany, and zoology, in cooperation with the team heads in each special field, and the plan was approved and even backed financially by the Biology Section of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. He imposed and laid down, both for instruments and for laboratory equipment, the primary conditions of the extended researches launched over a wide range.

Of the members of the Working Committee, several young researchers took positions as teachers of biology, specialists in museum work, hydrologists and microbiologists at water conservancies in the towns along the Tisza. Many of these researchers were given home study grants in order to promote their further professional training. This meant that they were able to enrich their knowledge and experience in various Hungarian institutions under researchers of wide professional experience.

Professor HORVÁTH focussed the researches that took on a complex character upon the most exposed stretches of the river Tisza, important for practical purposes, as well. Therefore, he worked out a detailed plan for a minute investigation into the reaches affected, or to be affected in the near future, of the Tisza II river barrage. While these researches were in progress, the staff of the Tisza II Laboratory also joined the Working Committee.

Another set of research tasks was the detailed and complex survey of the nature reserve area along the Tisza, ranging from the living world of slack-waters to that of the forests. As owing to the advancement of anthropogenic impact and that if the ever intensifying practical activity upon the areas of the Tisza valley, the living world of the river and the surrounding country-side got more and more changed, it became desirable to restore along certain stretches of the river at least a part of the original living world which could be recovered. Professor HORVÁTH became aware of the significance, of the vital importance of this idea both for the present and for the future. As a prerequisite of realizing this end, he set up a work team to make plans. The implementation of the plans broken down by years has already started, and the researches are in progress.

It is owing to Professor HORVÁTH's organizing activity, that on the site which is best for the implementation of the plans to restore living world, on the Körtvélyes island, level with Hódmezővásárhely, a base building for research purposes has been set up.

The plans made by the Tisza-Research Working Committee include, among others, that the area in Csongrád district, which is going to be submerged when the next river barrage opens up, should be investigated in detail. Thus he had another base building constructed there.

In order to help and to facilitate the work of the research team made up of

hydrologists and botanists analysing the water of the river, he made arrangements that two motor boats be bought: one rather large, the other smaller. These conveniences offer opportunities for a complex analysis of the longitudinal section of the river water.

Hungarian and even foreign institutions have taken notice of the activity of the Working Committee headed by Professor HORVÁTH and of the success his work has met with, which can be tested by the matter given as lecture courses at the annually organized Tisza Research Conferences, and can also be evaluated by reading through the papers contributed to the annual publications of Tiscia, having appeared for more than ten years. First, the State University of Novi Sad (Yugoslavia), then the heads and researchers of the biological departments of the State University of Uzhorod (trans-Carpathian territory, USSR) joined in the Tisza research. It was due to Professor HORVÁTH above all that cooperation at international level could be achieved.

The head of the Working Committee in his full prime, able to inspiring his Committee to do valuable work, was carried away by death but every member of his Working Committee wants to follow, with undiminished energy, the course staked out by him, and to implement the long-term plans in the spirit of his intellectual legacy. We shall keep for ever the memory of our beloved chairman.

DR. GYÖRGY BODROGKÖZY