

CHRONICLE

Hungarian Geographical Bulletin 59 (3) (2010) pp. 333–341.

György Enyedi 80



György ENYEDI the world famous Hungarian geographer celebrates his 80th birthday this year. He was born in Budapest on the 28th of August 1930. After graduating from the Budapest University of Economics in 1953 he became a lecturer in his mother school, later he moved to the University of Agriculture in Gödöllő where he was assistant professor until 1960. In the first part of his academic career he concentrated mostly on regional problems of Hungarian and world agriculture. In 1960 he became researcher at the Geographical Research Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and was appointed Deputy Director in 1962. With the change his research gained a new dimension in that socio-economic issues of the development of rural areas became the centre of his interest. His studies revealed many of the negative consequences of socialist modernisation in the Hungarian settlement system and more specifically in rural space.

This was also the period when his work became internationally known and renowned. György ENYEDI played an outstanding role in connecting Hungarian geography with the international mainstream of our discipline. In 1966 he spent a year in Berkeley (US) with the scholarship of the Ford Foundation. Between 1972 and 1984 he was chairman of the Commission of Rural Development of the International Geographical Union (IGU). He organised and attended several international conferences and published a great number of papers in top quality scientific journals. In 1984 the Union's General Assembly elected him – against the candidate nominated by the Hungarian National Committee – Vice President of the IGU and he served two terms until 1992. In August 2008 at the 31st Congress of the International Geographical Union in Tunis he received the highest recognition by the IGU the *Laureat d'Honneur*. Ron ABLER president of the Union summarised the recognition in the following way: "For decades Prof. György ENYEDI has been the voice and the face of Hungarian geography in the worldwide community of geographers. This position was built first and foremost on the quality of his own work, but also on his skills at team building. Secondly, because of his untiring efforts at maintaining international academic contacts, he

has brought many colleagues from abroad in contact with their Hungarian counterparts and this cross-pollination has born rich fruit." Indeed, he built wide range of scientific contacts in geography and beyond all around the world, and he helped and encouraged his younger colleagues to set up international relationships with the same enthusiasm. Both as a colleague and as a mentor he has touched the professional lives of many colleagues across the world of geography.

The 1980s brought new challenges for Professor ENYEDI. In 1984 he founded an interdisciplinary research institute specialised in regional science, the Centre for Regional Studies of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Pécs. Working together with economists, sociologists, geographers, lawyers and representatives of other disciplines he proved again his extraordinary capacities and skills in team building. As director of the Centre he played a decisive role in the long-term development of regional science as an independent and integrative discipline. Most recently his scientific research focused mainly on the socio-spatial aspects of urbanisation and urban development at the global and national level. He left his imprint on the academic literature of urban geography forever.

During his creative and successful career Professor ENYEDI has authored 18 and edited 26 scientific books, and published over 300 scientific papers. He was editor-in-chief of the Series Geography of World Agriculture (nine volumes between 1972 and 1984). He founded the journal *Tér és Társadalom* (Space and Society) in 1987 and he has been the chairman of its editorial board ever since. He was editor in chief of the journal *Magyar Tudomány* (Hungarian Science) and he is honorary editor-in-chief of Hungarian Geographical Bulletin. His versatile scientific work received a lot of recognitions and awards. György ENYEDI is honorary member of seven geographical societies, member of the Academia Europaea in London. He became corresponding member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1982 and full member in 1990. He was Vice-President of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1999–2002.

Professor ENYEDI lived most of his life throughout the exciting but otherwise troublesome 20th century, with world war, revolutions, oppression and systemic changes. What helped him to cope with all the difficulties in his professional and personal life was his extraordinary sense of humour. Recently he recalled his first visit to Paris in a friendly talk in this way: *"I planned to attend an IGU conference in Paris in late 1962. In those years very few were allowed in Hungary to travel to the West on official business. If permit was given by the authorities we were obliged to fly by the Hungarian Airlines (Malév). With the help of my doctor I managed to arrange that instead of flying to Paris I could take the train and travel through the continent, visit several cities and meet colleagues. Once I arrived to Paris I went to my hotel. The portiere in the hotel was shocked when I turned up. He informed me that the flight I was originally supposed to arrive crashed. In that very moment I decided not to take any flight in the future that would crash. This is the secret of long-life"*.

In the name of all colleagues in Hungary and abroad who know him personally we wish Professor ENYEDI on this special occasion light-hearted optimism and good health for the coming years:

*Walk on, walk on, with hope in your heart,
And you'll never walk alone...*

Zoltán Kovács