BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE

Ass. Prof. Ing. Jaroslav Polák, DrSc. – sexagenarian

By the end of January we celebrated the sixtieth birthday of one of the Czech leading research scientists in plant pathology – virologist Ass. Prof. Ing. J. Polák, DrSc., the Director of the Plant Medicine Division of the Research Institute of Crop Production in Prague-Ruzyně.

The everybody who knows him as an executive man full of energy, scientific and organising invention, with busy contacts both in the framework of international scientific cooperation and applications in national agricultural practice, it was hard to believe that he is already of sixty and joined the Institute 36 years ago.

Jaroslav Polák was born on January 25 in Hořice v Podkrkonoší. He studied at the Agricultural University in Prague with honors and graduated after the defence of his diploma work "Occurrence of virus diseases in fruit tree nurseries of district Jičín". After his university studies he became the agronomist, worked at two cooperative farms and made acquinted with the agricultural practice. In 1966 he joined RICP and started to work in virology at the Department of Virology of the Division of Plant Protection. From 1969 till 1971 he passed his external graduated studies at the Institute of Experimental Botany CAS and defended successfully his PhD. thesis "Biological and serological differenciation of the five strains of B*eet yellows virus* occurring in the territory of the Czechoslovakia".

He deepened and enlarged his scientific knowledge and technical experience in diagnosis of plant viruses abroad – during his four months lasting stay at the Phytopathological Institute in Aschersleben, Germany, and at other prominent foreign institutions. At that time his experimental activities were focused at the studies of injurious effects and spread of sugar beet viruses, at the purification procedures of viruses of potato, sugar beet and legumes. Obtained results were the necessary basis which speeded up the introduction of new serological methods into the diagnosis of economically important viruses not only in RICP but also in Potato Research, Sugar Beet Research and other specialised institutes in our country. Ing. Polák and his colleague Ing. L. Albrechtová were the first in the Czechoslovakia who started to optimise the immunoenzymatic determination of plant viruses (ELISA). Later Ing. Polák iniciated production of diagnostic antisera against selected economically important viruses. His intention was realised in the framework of the Vegetable Reseach Institute in Olomouc.

In 1983 he obtained a stipend to work at the Research Institute at Wellesbourne, Great Britain. Later in 1988 The Netherlands government granted his one year stay at the Research Institute of Plant Protection in Wageningen where he solved the problems of diagnosis of *Strawberry mottle virus*. In 1989 he submitted doctor of sciences thesis "Purification of plant viruses, preparation of antisera and usage of antibodies in plant virology and plant protection". After successful defence at the Mendel University of Agriculture and Forestry in Brno he obtained the scientific degree doctor of agricultural and forestry sciences. Since early ninetieth he was aimed at the research of viruses of fruit trees and hop. As far as stone fruits are concerned he concentrated his effort to elucidate diagnosis and epidemiology of *Plum pox virus*. Results of this very extensive and productive work appeared in many scientific contributions both in national and foreign journals and were presented at international scientific meetings. In 1999 he was admitted for a university lecturer after defence of his inaugural dissertation "Occurrence, spread and diagnosis of *Plum pox virus*, determination of resistance of apricots and peaches to the sharka disease" and obtained the pedagogical degree associated professor.

By the end of the ninetieth he iniciated and deserved well of obligatory certification of health condition of planting material (especially fruit trees, grapevine and hop). The basis of the system – the technical isolators for primary sources, pre-basic and basic plant material – were constructed in the RICP in Prague-Ruzyně, as well as in the Research and Breeding Institute of Pomology at Holovousy, in the Faculty of Horticultureg at Lednice na Moravě and in Hop Institute at Žatec.

Ing. Polák is internationally recognized scientist. He is the head of the international team of specialists established for investigation of the sharka disease, the member of international scientific organizations (ISHS, EFPP), the scientific advisor of the International Foundation for Science (IFS) and the chief organizer of many scientific meetings, conferences and workshops. Recently he was invited by the U.S. and Canadian institutions for presentation of his results. He published 163 original papers in scientific journals and many contributions in professional journals.

In the framework of the RICP Ing. Polák coordinates and solves number of research projects as well as projects of the National Programme of Protection of the Genetic Resources of Economically Important Microorganisms and Small Animals. He is engaged in specialized committees and scientific advisory boards of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Environment of the Czech Republic. For a long time he is the member of editorial board of the scientific journal Plant Protection Science and nember of managing committees of the Czech Academy of Agriculture, the Czech Phytopathological Society and the European Foundation for Plant Pathology and takes part in education of young generation of scientific workers. He cooperates closely with the State Phytosanitary Administration also as a lecturer in postgradual and other educative courses.

Very fruitful is his cooperation with the Faculty of Horticulture at Lednice na Moravě in a joint projects concerning studies of the sharka disease.

Ing. Polák as the Head of the Department of Virology was in 1993 appointed the director of the Division of Phytomedicine of the RICP in Prague-Ruzyně.

After all it is also necessary to remind and appreciate his outstanding human qualities and emphasise his diligence and assiduity. Despite he is strict and requires to fulfill the duties in time and exactly he is frank, optimistic and has positive relation to anyone. That is why he is in favour and respected.

We wish him lots of health and many success both in professional and personal life. The credo of his life is the old Latin saying – *per aspera ad astra*.

JIŘÍ CHOD (Prague)

AN ABITUARY NOTICE

Dr. Cyprian Paulech
(27. 11. 1929–28. 12. 2001)

On December 28, 2001 in Bratislava died one of the outstanding Slovak phytopathologists Dr. Cyprián Paulech.

He was born on November 27, 1929 in Modrova, nearby the famous Slovak spa Piešťany. Professional education was obtained by him at the University of Agriculture in Prague, where he decided to specialise on plant protection. During his university years he took the advantage of studying in seminars of such celebrities in the field of phytopathology as Prof. Smolák, Dr. Zakopal, Dr. Novak and others. In 1954 he graduated from the university as a fresh phytopathologist.

He began his career at the Plant Breeding Station in Pstruša, where he started publishing his first scientific works, devoted at that time to wheat dwarf smut (*Tilletia controversa*) – a plant disease, not known before in Czechoslovakia. In 1963 he entered services of Slovak Academy of Sciences at the former Biological Institute. There he continued education at postgraduate level. His PhD. work was objected on the study of the host-pathogen relationship of powdery mildew on barley as a host plant, where he identified those stages of the primary infection cycle in which the morphogenesis of the fungus is slowing down by the resistant host plant. Later on, this knowledge on the course of pathogenesis and the fungus response to the host resistant genes was used in great number of further physiological studies, not only by his colleagues at his native department of pathological physiology of plants, but by other domestic and foreign scientists as well. The results of this research were highly appraised – he and his fellow colleagues were rewarded with the Slovak Academy of Sciences Award for the brilliant scientific study.

Later he has started with morphogenetic studies of the parasitic fungus *Erysiphe graminis* on barley. This work, alongside many others to come, markedly contributed to the general knowledge of the host-pathogen interactions and disturbances in the plant physiological functions in course of pathogenesis. Obtained knowledge enlarged and deepened our view on the host-pathogen relationship and the environment role in this system.

During his remarkable scientific life he addressed many fields of phytopathologic mycology. His pioneer works were related with a hyperparasitic fungus *Tuberculina ustilaginum*, not known in Slovakia at that time. He also enriched our knowledge, having discovered that the fungus *Pseudomonas siringae* not only participates, but is the cause of die-back of fruit stone trees. He identified and described *Botrytis antophylla* – a parasite fungus of field clover. All objects of his interest could be barely mentioned here.

Though, we cannot miss his fundamental studies of micromycetes in Slovakia. He explored almost all regions of Slovakia in terms of variety of *Erysiphe* species. This long-term work led to publication of his fundamental publication "*Erysiphales* of Slovakia" edited by SAS in 1995. 108 phytopathogenic micromycetes hosted by 714 species of host plants of 64 genders are described there. The majority of them, including their host plants, were identified for the first time.

During his scientific life he had published more than 250 original scientific works, participating as a co-author in edition of 6 books. He was a member of many scientific and editorial bodies: the editorial board of the all-Czechoslovak scientific journal "Ochrana rostlin – Plant Protection", scientific societies of Slovak and Czechoslovak Academies of Sciences, of the relevant examination commissions for candidates applied to the doctor's degree, etc. Moreover, several generations of undergraduate and postgraduate students shall remember him as an extremely helpful and experienced teacher.

Till his retirement he worked at the Department of Pathological Physiology of Plants of the SAS Botanical Institute, the only department of such kind in the Central European post-socialist countries, where his scientific team was preparing the ground for development of plant mycology in Slovakia.

We are immensely proud of his many achievements. He will be missed beyond words.

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