

In memoriam György Enyedi (1930–2012)



Professor György ENYEDI, aged 82, member and former vice-president of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, distinguished scholar of the community of geographers passed away on 10 September 2012. György ENYEDI was one of the most influential Hungarian geographers of the last half a century. He has been the voice and the face of Hungarian geography in the worldwide community of geographers for many decades due to the quality of his own work, but also on his untiring efforts at maintaining wide-range of international academic contacts.

Born in Budapest on 28th of August 1930, he graduated from the Budapest University of Economics in 1953. He was one of those few students in economics who could specialise in economic geography and regional development. After graduating he got a lecturer position at his university which was followed by a post at the University of Agriculture in Gödöllő where he was assistant professor until 1960. In the first part of his academic career his scientific

interest focused mostly on regional problems of Hungarian and world agriculture. In 1960 he became researcher of the Geographical Research Institute, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, where he 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 state-socialist modernisation in the Hungarian settlement system and more specifically in rural areas.

He was always an 'integral' geographer who followed and integrated the results of other social sciences. This helped him to become the 'father' of Hungarian regional science in the 1980s. In this capacity he founded an interdisciplinary research institute specialised in regional science, the Centre for Regional Studies, Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1984. He was the director of the institute until 1991. Working together with economists, sociologists, geographers, lawyers and representatives of other disciplines he proved again his extraordinary capacities and skills in team building. During the last two decades his scientific interest turned towards the socio-spatial aspects of urbanisation and urban development at the global and local scale.

ENYEDI's intellectual legacy extends well beyond geography also through his writings. During his academic career he was the author of nearly 700 scientific publications, authored and edited 45 books, among them *Hungary – an economic geography*. Boulder,

Westview (1976); *The effect of modern agriculture on rural development*. New York, Pergamon (1982); *Environmental policies in East and West*. London, Taylor Graham (1987); *Budapest – a Central European Capital*. London, Belhaven, (1992, with Viktória SZIRMAI); *Social changes and urban restructuring in Central Europe*. Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó (1998). He was editor-in-chief of the Series Geography of World Agriculture (9 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 acted as editor in chief of the journal *Magyar Tudomány* (Hungarian Science) and he was honorary editor-in-chief of our journal, the *Hungarian Geographical Bulletin*. He left his imprint on the academic literature of human geography and regional science forever.

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 great number of papers in top quality scientific journals. This was the period when his work became internationally known and renowned. 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*. During his creative and successful career he built wide range of scientific contacts in geography and beyond all around the world, and he helped and encouraged his younger colleagues for international collaborations. Both as a colleague and as a mentor he has touched the professional lives of many geographers across the world. He was always able to see the forest even when engaged in among the trees, in this respect he became the ideal for many of us.

ENYEDI'S wide-ranging scientific work and accomplishment received a lot of recognitions and awards at home and abroad. 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 between 1999 and 2002. He became member of the *Academia Europaea* in London in 1990. ENYEDI was elected Honorary Member of the Finnish Geographical Society (1978), the Polish Geographical Society (1981), the French Geographical Society (1982), the Royal Geographical Society, London (1983), the Hungarian Geographical Society (1985), and the Croatian Geographical Society (1995).

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. He was always able to cheer up his surrounding, even in the middle of the most boring committee meetings. Despite his influential positions he never behaved pompous and self-important manner. Typical of him, we were never allowed to address him Professor, or even György, but simply Gyurka, what was his well-known nickname among Hungarian geographers and social scientist independently from age or position.

The Hungarian human geography lost its outstanding representative who gained worldwide acknowledgements and who formed the view of generations of Hungarian geographers. With his work Professor ENYEDI made an indelible contribution to the development of Hungarian human geography and the international recognition of our discipline. We geographers lost an extraordinary colleague and a great friend.

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