

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HUNGARIAN SOCIETY FOR MICROBIOLOGY

The Hungarian Society for Microbiology (HSM) was founded under the aegis of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (HAS) in 1951 by the leading microbiologist members of the Academy. In the course of the following years, HSM had worked under the supervision of the HAS. The predecessor of the *Acta Microbiologica et Immunologica Hungarica* (AMIH), the *Acta Microbiologica Acad. Sci. Hung.* Was founded in 1954 by the HAS, – mainly on the initiative of the same members of the HAS mentioned above – as an official journal of the Medical Section of HAS. In the first years, the Presidents of HSM and those of the Editorial Board of the *Acta Microbiologica* had been the same scientists, namely A. Havas then G. Ivánovics, so the cooperation between the two organizations was self-evident.

In 1966, the HSM separated from HAS and joined the Federation of the Hungarian Medical Societies, which is under the supervision of the Ministry of Health, because more than half of its members are physicians. Although AMIH remained the journal of the HAS, the close scientific collaboration did not change between the two organizations. The abstracts of the presentation and many lectures on the many different – national and international – scientific meetings organized by the HSM have been published in the AMIH. Members of the HSM and Council of HSM exerted an intense activity in the Editorial Board of AMIH and mutually, the members of the Editorial Board of AMIH also took part in the work of the Council of HSM. On the basis of these good relations, the Editorial Board and the Council of HSM, as well as their co-workers were invited for commemorial publications. The efforts of the colleagues sending papers to this jubilee issue are highly appreciated. In addition to the scientific publications, a short history of HSM is published and also commemorations of several famous late Hungarian microbiologists without any demand of completeness.

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the HSM, we express our highest regard for its successful activity in promoting the development of the different fields of microbiology in Hungary and wish all the best to its future work.

István Nász
Editor-In-Chief of AMIH

Lajos Gergely
President of HSM

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HUNGARIAN SOCIETY
FOR MICROBIOLOGY (H.S.M.)
(A SHORT HISTORY)*

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In the late forties of the last century the microbiologist members of the then newly re-organized Hungarian Academy of Sciences, namely, *R. Manninger*, *G. Ivánovics* and *A. Havas* (*D. Fehér* joined them somewhat later) and the parasitologist academician *S. Kotlán* agreed in the necessity of founding a society of experts working in different fields of microbiology. Thus, the *Hungarian Society for Microbiology (H.S.M.)* was founded under the aegis of the *Hungarian Academy of Sciences* in 1951. According to the first constitution of the *H.S.M.* its main task was to advance the following branches of microbiological sciences: general microbiology, virology, bacteriology, immunology, helminthology, acar-entomology and epidemiology. For this purpose, experts in the fields of human medicine, veterinary medicine, soil research, nutrition research and industry were united in a society (*H.S.M.*) in order to deepen their knowledge and promote the interchange of their experiences and experimental results. Helminthology and acar-entomology was ruled out in 1964, when the Society of Hungarian Parasitologists was founded.

It was a great advantage for the *H.S.M.* that the first president, *A. Havas*, was at the same time director-general of the *National Institute for Hygiene (O.K.I.)*; the institution that has played a central role in the organization of the medical application of microbiology in Hungary. *O.K.I.* (and its successor since 1998, the *National Center for Epidemiology, O.E.K.*) has intensively supported the activities of the *H.S.M.* during

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the past 50 years. *H.S.M.* has been organizing National Microbiological Conferences every year in one of the cities of Hungary and in every fourth year a Microbiological Congress in Budapest with international character. In each of these Congresses 20 or more foreign participants were guests of the *H.S.M.* attempting to return the great hospitality our members enjoyed when they participated as guests in congresses abroad, most frequently in neighbouring countries. The number of participants from abroad has been growing, there were 94 guests from foreign countries at the *13th International Congress of the H.S.M.* organized in 1999 at the *Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest*, by *K. Márialigeti*. In all of these scientific meetings all disciplines of microbiology have been represented and the abstracts of the presentations have been published in the journal *Acta Microbiologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* (1954–1982), *Acta Microbiologica Hungarica* (1983–1993) and *Acta Microbiologica et Immunologica Hungarica* (from 1994).

The *H.S.M.* joined the *International Association of Microbiological Societies* in 1966 and delegated members into its committees. In 1971, based on the initiative of *I. Dömök* and *E. Farkas*, the *Virology Division* of this Association held the *2nd International Congress for Virology* in Budapest. *G. Berencsi*, *E. Farkas*, *S. Koch*, *I. Hollós*, *E. Molnár*, *G. Nagy* and *P. Ruzicska* made a significant contribution to the organization of this congress. The *International Association of Microbiological Societies* (affiliated to the *International Union of Biological Sciences* as a Division) acquired independence in 1980 and became a Union Member (as the *International Union of Microbiological Societies, IUMS*) of the *International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU)*. *I. Joó* has been elected as member of the *Council of the International Association of Biological Standardization*, a Committee of *IUMS*.

The *H.S.M.* has also been a member of the *European Society against Viral Diseases* (former name: *European Society against Poliomyelitis*). *I. Dömök* has been member of the presidium of this Society. From 1958 until the elimination of poliomyelitis in Europe, *H.S.M.* had a *Poliomyelitis Committee*, which took part, in cooperation with the mentioned European Society in the organization of the highly successful fight against poliomyelitis in Hungary. The *European Society against Viral Diseases* and the *European Group for Rapid Viral Diagnosis* merged in 1997 and formed a new society, the *European Society for Clinical Virology (ESCV)*. *ESCV* held its *3rd Annual Meeting* in 1999 in Budapest. *G. Berencsi* had the lion's share in the organization of this meeting.

H.S.M. is a national society of *FEMS*, the *Federation of European Microbiological Societies*. Established in 1974, *FEMS* is a Charity and also a Company Limited by Guarantee. *FEMS* provides its journals free of charge for several libraries in Hungary and supports the organization of microbiological congresses and meetings

(Young Scientist Grants, Meeting Support Grants, Workshop Support Grants, Start-Up Funds). It also provides short-term fellowships for young scientists to work in European laboratories and visiting scientist grants to cover travelling costs of senior scientists.

H.S.M. has organized a considerable number of symposia and conferences in which recommendations have been issued in some topics of microbiological nature, having nation-wide importance.

Presidents of the H.S.M.: A. Havas (1951–1954), G. Ivánovics (1954–1958 and 1967–1975), R. Manninger (1958–1967), L. Váczi (1975–1983), J. Mészáros (1983–1993), L. Gergely (1993–present).

Secretary generals of the H.S.M.: E. Farkas (1951–1959 and 1966–1975), G. Weiszfeiler (1959–1966), F. Fornosi (1975–1983), I. Dömök (1983–1988), G. Berencsi (1988–1993), J. Minárovits (1993–present).

In addition to the president and the secretary general, the Presidium of the *H.S.M.* includes the vice presidents (at present I. Béládi and J. Mészáros), the treasurer (I. Lontai at present) and the secretary (at present G. Szűcs), the chairpersons of the Sections (see below) and the chairman of the Controlling Committee of the Society (L. Emődý, from 1998–2003). During the last election (Miskolc, 1998) the General Assembly of the *H.S.M.* elected altogether 41 members and substitute members of the Board and the Control Committee. The Board Meeting held immediately thereafter elected the members of the Presidium.

In the course of years, several scientific sections of *H.S.M.* have been formed. At present, there are 6 sections, namely, *Section of Agricultural and Food Microbiology* (chairmen J. Farkas and M. Kecskés), *Section of Bacteriology* (chairman, L. Emődý), *Section of Immunology* (chairman, S. Tuboly), *Section of Industrial Microbiology* (chairman, A. Szentirmai), *Section of Mycology* (chairperson, A. Maráz), *Section of Virology* (chairman, G. Berencsi).

Among the Sections, the *Section of Immunology* has been the most active. Its activity extended to all fields of immunology (initially even allergology) till 1971. Then the *Hungarian Society for Immunology* was founded, and since then the activities of the Section of Immunology have only covered immunity against infectious diseases, problems of vaccinations and standardization of immunological procedures.

H.S.M. had worked under the supervision of the *Hungarian Academy of Sciences* until 1966. Then *H.S.M.* joined the *Federation of the Hungarian Medical Societies* (MOTESZ), which is under the supervision of the *Ministry of Health*. This change was carried out, because somewhat more than half of our members are physicians. Of course, microbiologists of other professions, among them veterinarians, biologists and engineers, are always represented in our presidium and committees. The

constitution of *H.S.M.* has been modified several times (the latest change was in 1989) and *H.S.M.* was registered as a social organization in 1989 (Budapest Court registration No. 590).

Members of the *H.S.M.* exerted an intense activity in the Editorial board of *Acta Microbiologica Acad. Sci. Hun.*, *Acta Microbiologica Hungarica* and *Acta Microbiologica et Immunologica Hungarica*. Editors-in-chief: A. Havas (1954), G. Ivánovics (1955–1976), B. Lányi (1976–1981), and I. Nász (1982–present).

H.S.M. has always supported microbiologists to attend scientific meetings in this country and abroad. In order to facilitate the achievement of this goal and to facilitate the development of research in microbiology in Hungary, the *Foundation of the Hungarian Society for Microbiology* was created in 1989. The *Foundation* was registered in the same year (Budapest Court registration No. 460). The deed of foundation of the *Foundation of the H.S.M.* was modified in 1997 to include a statement that the *Foundation* is independent of political parties, it does not receive support from them and neither nominates nor supports candidates for Parliament.

It became a tradition of our *Society* that it offers prizes for the best presentations held by young scientists at our yearly conferences, congresses. In addition, *H.S.M.* founded the “*Manninger Rezső Award*” in 1974 for outstanding members of the *Society* having internationally acknowledged scientific activities and being active in the life of our *Society*.

List of members with Manninger Award

	Name	Profession	Date
1.	György Ivánovics	physician	1974
2.	Béla Johan	physician	1974
3.	János Köves	veterinarian	1974
4.	István Nyirédy	veterinarian	1974
5.	Zoltán Alföldi	physician	1974
6.	Gyula Weiszfeiler	physician	1974
7.	Elek Farkas	physician	1975
8.	Károly Rauss	physician	1975
9.	László Erdős	physician	1976
10.	György Habán	physician	1976
11.	Lajos Váczi	physician	1977
12.	Tamás Szent-Iványi	veterinarian	1978
13.	Gyula Takátsy	physician	1979

14.	Károly Vas	chemical engineer	1980
15.	Ferenc Fornosi	physician	1980
16.	János Mészáros	veterinarian	1981
17.	István Joó	physician	1981
18.	István Nász	physician	1982
19.	Zoltán Klement	agricultural engineer	1982
20.	István Földes	physician	1983
21.	István Szabó	physician	1983
22.	Iván Kétyi	physician	1983
23.	Ilona Béládi	physician	1984
24.	Béla Lányi	physician	1984
25.	Adorján Bartha	veterinarian	1985
26.	Ferenc Kemenes	veterinarian	1986
27.	Mihály Kecskés	biologist	1986
28.	József Szita	physician	1987
29.	Ilona Szeri	physician	1987
30.	István Kiss	chemical engineer	1988
31.	Mrs Nyerges Gáborné	physician	1988
32.	Lajos Ferenczy	biologist	1989
33.	István Dömök	physician	1989
34.	Lajos Alföldi	physician	1990
35.	László Stipkovits	veterinarian	1990
36.	Tibor Deák	biologist	1991
37.	Sándor Tuboly	veterinarian	1991
38.	Hedda Milch	physician	1992
39.	Attila Szentirmai	biologist	1992
40.	József Farkas	chemical engineer	1993
41.	Erzsébet Molnár	physician	1993
42.	Ervin Novák	biologist	1993
43.	György Berencsi	physician	1994
44.	Béla Nagy	veterinarian	1994
45.	Erzsébet Nagy	physician	1995
46.	József Molnár	physician	1996
47.	László Hornok	biologist	1997
48.	Rozália Pusztai	physician	1997
49.	Ferenc D. Tóth	physician	1998
50.	Levente Emődy	physician	1998
51.	János Varga	veterinarian	1998

52.	József Földes	physician	1999
53.	Anna Maráz	biologist	2000
54.	Yvette Mándi	physician	2000
55.	Éva Ádám	pharmacist	2001
56.	Éva Gönczöl	physician	2001

For promoting the international relationships of the *Society* a number of distinguished foreign microbiologists were chosen to honorary members of *H.S.M.* This honorary membership was given to microbiologists, who had strong working relations with some of our microbiological institutions and have made efforts to participate in the activities of our Society.

Summarizing the results of the last 50 years, we are of the opinion that the *Hungarian Society for Microbiology* fulfilled its main task and was successful in promoting the development of microbiology in Hungary. This is the more important, as sciences (including and especially microbiology) did develop in such a fantastic tempo, that has been never witnessed in the history of mankind. Thus, we are looking forward with curiosity to new scientific challenges and we are optimistic about the coming of the next 50 years.

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A TRIBUTE TO THE FIRST FOUR PRESIDENTS OF THE HUNGARIAN SOCIETY FOR MICROBIOLOGY*

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" Knowledge itself is power "
(Francis Bacon)

The Hungarian Society for Microbiology is currently celebrating the 50th anniversary of its foundation. On this occasion, we remember the first four Presidents of the Society, whose activities led to the Society becoming a thriving community covering all branches of microbiology.

Three of the first four Presidents of the Hungarian Society for Microbiology, András Havas, György Ivánovics and Rezső Manninger, were elected Members of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. This did not mean only that they were recognized as outstanding microbiologists in Hungary: the support provided by the Academy furnished them with an opportunity to increase the level of research and diagnostic work and education in microbiology, a possibility which was not generally available during the 1950s and 1960s. One of the first four Presidents, Lajos Váczi, was not elected Member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, his credits, however, greatly contributed to the relatively rapid development of microbiology during the post-war years in the politically and economically depressed Hungary. President Lajos Váczi was involved in the organization of the microbial laboratory work in the country after the Second World War. His unquestionable merit in the education of young microbiologists is proved by the fact that, at present, three of his disciples occupy the chairs at the Departments of Microbiology at three of the four Medical Universities in Hungary.

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The first President of the Society was András Havas, from 1950 to 1954. **András Havas** (1891–1954) was born in Debrecen. He obtained his medical diploma at the University of Kolozsvár. After the First World War he emigrated first to Austria and then to the Soviet Union because of the political situation. From 1927 to 1946, he worked at the Central Research Institute for Tuberculosis in Moscow, where he was awarded his C.Sc. for studies on *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* in 1938.

He returned to Hungary in 1946 and joined the staff of the National Institute of Hygiene in Budapest. He became chairman of the Department of Tuberculosis and his main interest then turned to the organization of BCG vaccination in Hungary. From 1949 until his death, he was Director of the National Institute of Hygiene. In this position he continued his activities relating to BCG vaccination. His intention was to introduce the BCG vaccination of neonates in Hungary. He spared no efforts to create the personal and objective conditions for diagnostic and experimental work in his Institute. He was an openhearted person with deep social concerns. He was elected a Corresponding Member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1949. He was an active member of the Medical Section of the Academy and a member of many societies dealing with medicine and public health. The Hungarian Society for Microbiology was created on his initiation and he was keen to found the *Acta Microbiologica* edited by the Publishing House of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences where Hungarian microbiologists would have the possibility to publish their results. Different state awards acknowledged his outstanding activities in public health.

György Ivánovics was President of the Hungarian Society for Microbiology from 1954 to 1958 and then again from 1967 to 1975. **György Ivánovics** (1904–1980) was born in Budapest. He received his medical training at Péter Pázmány University in Budapest and was awarded his medical diploma in 1928. He was appointed chairman of the Institute of Microbiology at the Medical University of Szeged in 1940, and he remained in that position until 1974. He spent several longer periods abroad. He was the first biotechnologist in Hungary to introduce tissue culture work in his Institute, in the early 1950s.

With his chemist colleague Győző Bruckner, he discovered that the antiphagocytic capsule of *Bacillus anthracis* is composed of poly-D-glutamic acid. He made many basic observations concerning megacin, the bacteriocin of *B. megaterium*. His major interest was and remained until his retirement the lysogenicity of *B. megaterium*. He was elected a Corresponding Member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1945. He created the "Ivánovics school" in microbiology in Hungary: of his close students or colleagues, two became Members of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, four professors in microbiology, and two chief doctors in laboratories at hospitals in Hungary. He was a member of many Hungarian and foreign scientific

societies. He was one of the founders of the Hungarian Society for Microbiology. He authored or co-authored more than 200 publications, most of which appeared in internationally recognized journals. He received a number of honors, among them the Kossuth Prize twice (1948 and 1952). His influence was pervasive. Because of his energetic and unflagging devotion to the advancement of microbiological research in Hungary, he was greatly respected and admired by his disciples and colleagues. Those who trained, worked and served with him warmly remember his unrelaxing enthusiasm for research work and his great appetite for life.

Rezső Manninger was President of the Hungarian Society for Microbiology from 1958 to 1967. **Rezső Manninger** (1890–1970) was born and attended school in Sopron. He then studied at the Veterinary College in Budapest, where he graduated in 1912. He next took up a position on the staff of the Institute of Epidemiology at the Veterinary College, chaired by the internationally recognized Professor Ferenc Hutyra. For more than 50 years, Dr. Manninger was working in this Institute, and from 1927 until 1963 he served as chairman there. In 1927 he was elected a Corresponding Member, and in 1935 a Member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

He devoted his whole life to Hungarian veterinary medicine. He was keen to develop veterinary practice, education and science to the European level. He was the first veterinary doctor to serve as Vice-President of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. By virtue of his extraordinary professional knowledge and very human personality, he was President of the Hungarian Society for Microbiology for 10 years. Everybody liked him and he may be stated to have had not even one enemy. He retired from the Institute of Epidemiology in 1963. He was an honorary member of many foreign Academies and Honoris Causa doctor of many foreign Veterinary Universities and Colleges. He received a number of honors among them the Kossuth Prize twice. He published 272 papers and was author or co-author of 26 books dealing with veterinary medical problems. His textbook (F. Hutyra, J. Marek und R. Manninger: *Spezielle Pathologie und Therapie der Haustiere*, Gustav Fischer Verlag, Jena, 1938) was internationally recognized and translated into English, Italian, Russian, Polish and Chinese. He had a charming personality and charisma. He will be remembered as a person whom everybody liked, and no one was respected and admired with greater consistency than he was.

Lajos Váczi was President of the Hungarian Society for Microbiology from 1975 until 1983. **Lajos Váczi** (1917–2000) was born in Komádi. He graduated from the Medical University of Debrecen in 1942, "Sub auspiciis gubernatoris". He worked in the Institute of Hygiene at the Medical University of Debrecen until 1944. From 1945 to 1958 he was in Budapest, first as head of the Professional Teaching Department at the Ministry of Health. From 1951 he became a member of the

Department of Bacteriology at the National Institute of Hygiene, and between 1956 and 1958 he was head of this Department. In 1958 he was appointed chairman professor at the Institute of Microbiology of the Medical University of Debrecen. He received his D.Sc. from the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1968. He was author or co-author of 206 scientific papers. His textbook was an interesting experiment for the introduction of "organ-specific microbiology" into medical education. He was one of the founders of the Hungarian Society for Microbiology. He was an honorary member of many foreign universities and international societies. He initiated the professional career of several young talented microbiologists. It is due to him that research in virology started in the Institute of Microbiology in Debrecen. The topics of study were human herpes viruses and, for the first time in Hungary, tumor-causing viruses. His disciples continue to work with human herpesviruses and papillomaviruses and their activities are internationally recognized.