
News from IGU National Committees

Nouvelles des Comités Nationaux de l'UGI

China

In Memoriam Huang Bingwei
1913 – 2000

The Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resources and Natural Research, Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) announces that Professor Huang Bingwei died at 11:48 a.m., Friday, December 8, 2000 at the age of 87 years.

As a pioneer of Chinese modern geography and a world famous geographer, Professor Huang Bingwei was the academician of CAS, the honorary



director of the institute, the honorary president of Geographical Society of China, the academician of Romanian Academic Sciences, the honorary corresponding member of British Royal Geographical Society, as well as the member of the Third Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and the member of the standing committee of the Fifth National People's Congress.

Cuba

In Memoriam Professor Antonio Núñez Jiménez 1923 - 1998

The National Committee of Cuba for the International Geographical Union announces with great regret the demise of Professor Antonio Núñez Jiménez, one of the outstanding geographers of Cuba who – at the same time – was a highly political personality.

Born April 20, 1923 in Alquizar, in the province of Havana, Antonio Núñez Jiménez obtained his Ph.D. in Letters and Philosophy from the University of Havana in 1951. His research, devoted to all fields of geography, was mainly focused on aspects of physical geography and especially on the Karst phenomena, for which his home country Cuba is so well known. He served as a professor of the Faculty of Geography and History at the Institute of the Vedado, Havana, as professor of geography and especially geomorphology at the University Marta Abreu of Las Villas, and he became the first President of the Speleological Society of Cuba in 1940. Further appointments

included the professorship of geography at the University of Havana, where he chaired the postgraduate courses and the Ph.D. programmes. His academic as well as scientific achievements were honoured by his appointment as Merit Professor of the Higher Pedagogical Institute Enrique José Varona and Merit teacher of the University Marta Abreu of the University of Las Villas. His scientific activities, besides his focus on Karst phenomena, included geographical studies in China, Africa, the Tortoise Islands, and Easter Island. One of his outstanding achievements was - in the spirit of Alexander von Humboldt - the canoe expedition from the Amazon to the Caribbean in 1987/1988, touching upon twenty countries in the basins of the Amazon, of the Orinoco and of the Sea of the Antillas.

Besides his research, Professor Antonio Núñez Jiménez also accepted Visiting Professorships and

lectured at various universities in the United Kingdom, France, the former Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic, as well as in Latin American states like Peru, Ecuador, Santo Domingo and others.

In 1962 he became the Founding President of the Sciences Academy of Cuba, a position which he held until 1972. After that, he embarked on a political career, which took him as Cuban Ambassador to Peru (1972-1978), made him Vice-Minister of Culture for a short period in the late 70s, and - amongst other positions - Deputy to the National Assembly from 1976 to 1993.

When he passed away on September 13th, 1998, in the province of Ciudad de La Habana, Professor Antonio Núñez Jiménez held positions as President of the National Monuments Commission, of the

Cuban Geography Society (which was the organizer of the 1995 IGU Regional Conference), of the Speleological Society of Cuba, and of the Foundation of 'Nature and Man', an institution that carries his name.

His countless publications are testimony to his tireless efforts as a geographer and a researcher of Cuba and of other parts of our globe. His canoe expedition as well as his participation in expeditions to the North Pole in 1972 and to Antarctica in 1982 characterized Professor Antonio Núñez Jiménez not only as an academic geographer, but also as an explorer.

At present, a 50-volume edition entitled "Cuba: the Nature and the Man", is being published. 10 volumes have already appeared. This publication will be testimony to Professor Antonio Núñez Jiménez' energetic work for and interest in geography.

Egypt

In Memoriam Professor Soliman Huzayyin May 1909 - December 1999

The passing away of Professor Soliman Huzayyin on 24th December 1999 was profoundly lamented by the Egyptian and Arab intelligentsia, the geographic and scientific communities in many parts of the world. He was one of the Arab World's most respected intellectuals, in addition to being acclaimed as the leading geographer of Egypt and the Arab World. Throughout his long journey he contributed effectively to establishing a well-defined identity of geographical research in Egypt and the Arab World.

He showed his unique geographical talent since his graduation from the Egyptian University in 1929 and continued to carry the banner of ascertaining the concepts of the close and interacting associations between history and geography. In 1930 the Egyptian University selected him to further his post-graduate studies in the United Kingdom where he was awarded the M.A. degree in geography from Liverpool University in 1933 and the Ph.D. degree from the University of Manchester in 1935. On his return to Egypt he held the post of Lecturer in geography at Cairo University and was promoted to the post of Assistant Professor in 1942. During that period the intelligent and supremely self-assured geographer left his mark as one of the most promi-

nent geographers of that period and was, therefore, chosen to establish the Egyptian Cultural Institutes in both London and Madrid. He was later assigned to establish a Geography Department at Alexandria University.

His talents and intellectual capabilities qualified him to leading posts in many governmental and Inter-Arab institutions. He also participated in many non-governmental activities through his leading role in many scientific and cultural societies, not only on the national level but also internationally. His interest in public and national issues introduced him to carry out one of his most impressive achievements, namely the establishment of Asuit University, and he became its Rector throughout a whole decade (1955-1965). Such achievements led to his appointment as Minister of Culture in acknowledgement of his creativity and intellectual capabilities.

The Egyptian Geographical Society indeed had the privilege not only of having Professor Huzayyin as its President for almost three consecutive decades, but also as the staunchest advocate of the utilitarianism of geography as a development-oriented discipline. His chairmanship of the Cairo Demographic Center (1968-1980) and the "Institut

d'Egypte" – which lasted until his death – brought him widely acknowledged international fame.

Professor Huzayyin was one of the firmest supporters of Arab integration. His relentless efforts in calling for the inevitability of the organic historical relationship between Egypt and the Sudan through the Nile artery introduced him to decision-making circles. He participated therefore in many of the political meetings and international conferences dealing with Egypto-Sudanese relations.

Professor Huzayyin contributed immensely to the overall cultural and scientific renaissance in Egypt in the 20th century. His extensive publications covered many spheres of geographical research. Many of them were published in English and French in scientific periodicals and in proceedings of international conferences. His invaluable contributions to Quaternary Geography and his original postulations of new theories concerning environmental and climatic changes during the Pleistocene gave him international renown. His epic-making work entitled "The place of Egypt in prehistory" is still considered to be one of the primary sources of the prehistoric cultures of Egypt, particularly as regards their origin and diffusion. Coupled with this, his enlightening and original research entitled "Arabia and the Far East" rectified many erroneous ideas which aimed at minimizing or even ignoring the role of the Arabs as conductors of civilization. Professor Huzayyin's scientific heritage reflects his adherence to the concepts of geography as a pivot of world history, the importance of both spatial and temporal factors in shaping history, the role of the human factors in environmental adjustment.....and many other salient ideas which represented the core of his geographical approach. In his most illuminating and brilliant exposé on "The influence of environment

and location on Egyptian history" (1942) Professor Huzayyin interpreted the sequence of historical events and Egypt's spatial relationships as governed by both environment and location. However, he was not deterministic in his approach but rather humanistic. This is particularly portrayed in his widely adopted slogan of "Egypt being veritably the gift of the Egyptians, the founders of the oldest civilization on earth".

Professor Huzayyin was a strong advocate of Pan-Arabism and simultaneously a fanatic nationalist. His brilliant literary skill penetrated his profound scientific studies, thus combining science with literature in a remarkable and outstanding way. His unique command of many foreign languages led to his extensive following up of the latest in scientific and literary achievements.

Professor Huzayyin's fame superseded national frontiers and extended to many parts of the world, and he became internationally acclaimed as the father of the modern Egyptian school of geography. He was granted many decorations of the highest order from Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, France, and Greece in addition to obtaining the State Award in social sciences in 1971.

The name of Professor Huzayyin and his memory will always stay deep in the hearts and souls of all who knew him, and his immortal works will always remain as a never-ending source of knowledge and wisdom. He will always be considered as one of the most prominent pioneers of art and culture in Egypt throughout the Twentieth Century, and his legacy will never fade away.

Prof. M.S. Abulezz
President of the Egyptian Geographical
Society

New Member: Saudi Arabia

The Secretariat is happy to announce the application of Saudi Arabia as a full national member of IGU in Cat. I, starting with the year 2000.

The adhering body is the Saudi Geographical Society (SGS), and the Chairman of the Board of SGS is Professor Abdulaziz A. Alshaikh.

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