IN MEMORIAM - ĽUBOR KRESÁK

After Jan Štohl, another dear friend from Slovakia has left us : Ľubor Kresák died on 20 January 1994, in Bratislava, Slovakia, not long after the end of ACM 93 meeting; only one and a half years before, many of the participants of the Belgirate meeting had attended the International Symposium on Meteors and their Parent Bodies, held in Smolenice, Slovakia, to celebrate Ľubor's 65^{th} anniversary.

He was born on 23 August 1927, in Topolčany, Slovakia, and studied at Charles University, in Prague, becoming RNDr. in 1951, with the thesis "Structure, mass and age of the comet Halley meteoroid stream". He started as External Lecturer of Astronomy at Comenius University in Bratislava in 1956, and was then affiliated to the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences in 1957, with the CSc. title; afterwards, he became Docent at Comenius University in 1962, DrSc. in 1967, Corresponding

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Member of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in 1968 and of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences in 1989, Associated Member of the Royal Astronomical Society in 1987, and finally Professor at Charles University in Prague in 1992. Asteroid 1849 Kresák is named after him, in recognition of his achievements. He married Margita, also astronomer, in 1954, and leaves a daughter, Katka.

Very deep was his involvement in the international activities : he was Acting President of IAU Commission 22 (Meteors and Meteorites) in 1961; became Vice-President, and then President, of IAU Commission 20 (Position and Motion of Minor Planets, Comets and Satellites) in 1970-1973 and 1973-1976; was Vice-President of the IAU in 1979, until 1985; was Vice-President, and then President, of the IAU Commission 15 (Physical Studies of Comets, Minor Planets and Meteorites) in 1982-1985 and 1985-1988.

Ľubor Kresák has worked mainly in the field of solar system minor bodies; he was also a very skilled observer. In 1946, at the Skalnaté Pleso Observatory, while he was still a student, he observed an exceptional outburst in activity of the Giacobinids. In 1951, at the start of his scientific career, he returned at that observatory and stayed there until 1955, hunting for comets. The search was successful, since in 1954 he discovered P/Tuttle-Giacobini-Kresák and Kresák-Peltier. After that period he moved to the Astronomical Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava.

The work done by him on small solar system bodies, especially comets and meteoroids, has been very influential. Among the many fields, related to minor bodies, to which he gave outstanding contributions let us recall just a few, such as : dynamics of short-period comets, interrelations between comets and asteroids, observational biases, ensemble of available observations and general conclusions on their statistical significance. He had the special ability to treat equally successfully both the observational and the dynamical aspects of the problems, so as to get the most from the observations and, at the same time, make clear to himself and the rest of the astronomical community what were the limits beyond which the conclusions could not be pushed. He worked at several important catalogues concerning short-period comets, namely the one in cooperation with the Institute for Theoretical Astronomy in Leningrad, on orbital evolution and observational circumstances, that in cooperation with the Istituto di Astrofisica Spaziale in Roma, on orbital evolution over a longer time-span, and that in cooperation with his wife Margita, on absolute magnitudes.

But as important as his scientific contributions to astronomy have been his personal qualities : he was a friendly person and an excellent teacher, and educated practically all astronomers in Slovakia. He was always ready to help and advice younger astronomers, and we know this well, since in the last fifteen years we have had the unique opportunity to work in very close cooperation with him : we owe to Ľubor most, if not all, we know about cometary dynamics, and will always, as for sure many others, miss our dear friend.

Andrea Carusi and Giovanni Valsecchi