Tetrahedron Vol. 38, No. 15, pp. 2223 to 2224, 1982
Printed in Great Britain.

0040-4020/82/152223-02$03.00/0
Pergamon Press Ltd.

IN MEMORIAM

F. ŠORM, 28 February 1913–18 November 1980

The late Professor F. Šorm together with Lord Alexander Todd and the late Professor R. B. Woodward.

Frantisek Šorm, the founder and former Director of the Institute of Organic Chemistry and Biochemistry of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, past President of the Academy, and a most active and talented internationally known chemist will be long remembered as "the great man in Czech Chemistry". He was the creator of major schools of natural products chemistry (alkaloids, terpenoids, steroids, nucleosides and insect hormones) and of biochemistry (especially protein structure and peptide synthesis).

His name is closely linked to that of his best co-workers, who directed very active research teams: Sicher in organic chemistry, Herout in terpene chemistry, Czerny and Fajkos in steroid synthesis, Rudinger in peptide synthesis and Keil in protein chemistry. An ardent defender of the "Spring of Prague" in 1968, Professor Šorm was successively stripped of all his functions. Thus, he became one of the tragic vitims of historical events, which were unrelated to his scientific work, but which nevertheless made it impossible for him to continue, at the same rhythm as before, an amazingly productive scientific career.

Born in Prague, F. Šorm graduated in 1936 from the Prague Polytechnic Institute. He then started to work in industry on the chemistry of explosives. After his military service he was engaged in the pharmaceutical industry. He was appointed Professor Organic Chemistry and Technology of Explosives at the Polytechnic Institute in Prague in 1946 and in 1950, Professor of Organic Chemistry at the Charles University in Prague.

In 1952 he played an important role in the organization of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences—of which he was one of the first members. He became eventually the director of the Institute of Organic Chemistry and Biochemistry of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences. He was president of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences from 1962 until 1969. Under his chairmanship the Academy became an internationally renowned scientific center consisting of a large number of scientific institutions.

Šorm's main research activity was in the field of chemistry of natural products. After several fundamental studies on *azulenes* (in particular chamazulene, the blue pigment and main active principle of camomile) he made major contributions to the chemistry of important natural *sesquiterpene lactones* (guaianolides, germacranolides and eremophylanolides) and discovered medium-sized 9, 10 and 11-membered carbon rings in natural compounds such as caryophyllene, germacrone, and humulene.

Towards the end of his scientific activity Šorm was involved in the study of synthetic analogues of the insect juvenile hormone. He and his co-workers prepared hundreds of such analogues, some of which show high specific activity against insect pests.

Šorm's scientific work was honoured both at home and abroad. He was a member of 12 academies, among them the National Academy of Sciences, and the Soviet Academy of Sciences. He received honorary doctorates from the Universities of Brussels and Moscow, and was an honorary member of many scientific societies.

Academician Šorm was awarded the Fritzsche Award of the American Chemical Society, The Max Planck Gold Medal of the German Academy of Sciences (GDR), the gold medal "for merits in science and for mankind" of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, and the gold medal of the Ciba Foundation (London).

He is survived by his wife Zora Šormova, Professor of Microbiology at the University of Prague and their two children.

In order to honour Professor Šorm the Editorial Board of Tetrahedron Publications invites authors submitting papers, letters or reports to dedicate in one or two lines their manuscript to the memory of this very distinguished scientist who did so much for Organic Chemistry and for International Relations.

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