

**Stubbe, H.: Geschichte des Instituts für Kulturpflanzenforschung der Deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin (1943–1968). Studien zur Geschichte der Akademie der Wissenschaften der DDR, Bd. 10.** Berlin: Akademie-Verlag 1982. 428 pp., 20 figs., 35 tabs, 6 graphs.

Nobody can describe the history of a scientific institution better than its founder and first director. Thus, we must thank Dr. Stubbe for a most informative report on his fascinating venture: the establishment of a breeding institute in Central Europe during the last months of a lost war and during the first days of a liberated country. The "Institute for Cultivated Plants" is descended from a Kaiser-Wilhelm-Institute originally founded in 1943 at Vienna. It collected most of the plant breeding know-how in Germany. It was an ingenious step by Dr. Hans Stubbe in two aspects: first, to find the patronage of the Soviet military administration, and second to select a rural part of a huge estate with at least a few undamaged farm houses. This meant that the supply of food was guaranteed for scientists, ignorant of the ways of the world, who step by step returned to scientific work, after returning home from army and captivity. They were displaced people in the sense that they had lost their ideals, but not their knowledge, willing to start again. And Stubbe appeared to be able to give them a new faith in the future and confidence in a science which served man, especially in the form of supplying food for the world, food which was urgently needed at that time.

Stubbe was also able to attract in a nearly magical way the younger generation of scientists, giving the PhD students their chance to conduct experiments, and created a stimulating environment for self-development. Invited lecturers, visiting scientists, guest workers and various cultural activities, all together in a rural area with excellent facilities for agricultural work, helped create a sort of agricultural university with sometimes more than 700 collaborators. Stubbe created not only the scientific environment, but also took care of the necessities of life and, as well, built houses, laboratories, green houses and stables. Moreover, he encouraged botanical gardens, special collections, experimental gardens, apiaries and tried to build up local small industries, such as a sugar

factory. A scientific library was started from the ground-floor, colloquia and lecture series were organized, collection expeditions to far continents were planned and financed, congresses and workshops held.

Stubbe was a great and successful organizer. His accomplishments can also be counted in the field of scientific journals, and TAG is one of the first journals that he revitalized after the war – in an unconditionally surrendered country. He knew that moral reconstruction was only possible with international help and interaction. As a die-hard socialist he knew about the power of internationality. And he believed in the cooperation of the scientific community of the world for moral regeneration.

The book reports in great details the internal and external history of the institute, with a strong emphasis on interdisciplinary cooperation. But it is a pity that most of the 1161 scientific articles published by this institute during the last quarter century have been, one could say, lost to the body of researchers in plant breeding because they were published mainly in the German language. Yet the broad spectrum of productivity is impressive: not only plant breeding, but also phytopathology, plant biochemistry, cytology and cytogenetics, forest science, microbiology and molecular biology belonged to the fields of activity, some of which later became independent institutes or university chairs.

Hans Stubbe was a steadfast fighter for Mendelisms during the period of the most dangerous Lyssenkoism-Mitschurinism controversy. At no moment did he waver in his scientific conviction. With experiments and publications he contributed considerably in erasing a pseudoscientific, opportunistic hobgoblin. In doing so, he liberated a whole generation of geneticists in the socialist countries.

Stubbe's history of this institute is at the same time the report of a life devoted to plant breeding science. Being more than a local history it reflects a bit of the situation of life science in Europe after the war. It is the saga of a life devoted to human society and inspired by the belief in science.

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