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Prof. Dr. med. vet. habil. Dr. h.c. mult. Theodor Hiepe

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“1st Vice President” of WAAVP, 1987-1993
An Appraisal on the Occasion of his 90th Birthday



Theodor Hiepe was born on the 3rd of July 1929 in Weimar (Thuringia/Germany) and grew up on the parental farm in a small Thuringian village. He is one of the outstanding personalities in the field of veterinary parasitology. His scientific works gained world-wide recognition.

Th. Hiepe studied veterinary medicine and obtained his doctoral degree from Leipzig University. In 1953, he started his academic career as assistant and in 1958 as lecturer of internal veterinary medicine (including pathophysiology and forensic veterinary medicine) and as chief veterinarian of the Leipzig Zoo. In this period, he gained experience with diseases of sheep in which he remained interested throughout his professional life. In 1960, at a young age of 31, he was appointed as director and professor to the Chair of Parasitology and Veterinary Zoology at the Humboldt-University of Berlin (HU) (formerly East Berlin/ GDR). After the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunion of Germany he became professor of parasitology at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Free University Berlin (formerly West Berlin) from 1993 until his retirement in 1995. After that and until today he continues his professional activities as guest professor or senior scientist at the Chair of Molecular Parasitology of the HU. He was one of the driving forces behind the establishment of this innovative institute in 1995.

During the early years in Berlin Th. Hiepe managed to transform parasitology from a mainly taxonomically and morphologically descriptive science to an applied subject. Starting in 1960, agricultural reforms in Eastern Germany led to the formation of large farms and the aggregation of high numbers of farm animals. This caused a number of parasitological issues that veterinarians had to face. Under the given

conditions, specific control strategies for parasite control had to be developed and implemented. One of the major problems was cattle hypodermosis which, under Hiepe's guidance, was eradicated in the former GDR within 4 years. Based on this positive experience a research laboratory for the control of ectoparasites in farm animals in the Mongol People Republic was founded at his institute in Berlin with the goal of scientific cooperation and transfer of technology.

Aspects of parasite control with special consideration of parasitoses in sheep were among Th. Hiepe's main areas of work. However, the field of his scientific interests was much wider. The nature of parasitism and parasitism as a lifeform, parasitic zoonoses, immunoparasitology, alternative methods to animal experimentation and disinfectants against exogenous stages of parasites were other topics that accompanied him over the years, also after his retirement.

Th. Hiepe was a demanding but encouraging university professor. His wealth of experience is based on his own experience of major parasitoses in practice, and thus, he was in the position to present lectures in a lively way and enthuse listeners for his subject. With great enthusiasm he was committed to both teaching and continuous education. Indicators for these activities are his books: *Schafkrankheiten (Diseases of Sheep)*, 1970 and further editions; *Lehrbuch der Parasitologie (Textbook of Parasitology)*, 1981-1985, published in four volumes together with the veterinarians R. Ribbeck and R. Jungmann and the biologists R. Buchwalder and S. Nickel; *Allgemeine Parasitologie (General Parasitology)* 2006, Th. Hiepe, with R. Lucius and B. Gottstein as co-editors and numerous contributors (translated to Spanish); *Klinik der Schaf- und Ziegenkrankheiten (Diseases of Sheep and Goats)*, 2019, editors: H. Bostedt, M. Ganter, Th. Hiepe.

Th. Hiepe is author and co-author of about 320 scientific papers and more than 80 book contributions. Furthermore, the assignment of graduation theses created possibilities to extend the knowledge on parasites and parasitoses. By supervising 11 habilitation candidates and inaugurating more than 200 doctoral and 143 diploma theses Th. Hiepe was a very successful university teacher in his field.

Th. Hiepe was also an exceptionally active member of the academic community. For many years he acted as president of the Parasitological Society of the GDR (1965-1990), and he was called into numerous scientific boards and panels. Between 1990 and 1993 he was Dean of the Veterinary Faculty and member of the Academic Senate of the

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Humboldt-University of Berlin during a very critical and demanding phase of transition after the re-unification of Germany. From 1983-1987 Th. Hiepe was one of the five directors of the WAAVP, and between 1987 and 1993 its 1st Vice president. As chairman of the scientific and organizing committees he had full responsibility for holding the 13th WAAVP conference in Berlin in 1989 - then still divided by the Wall - in a politically and economically difficult situation. However, he and his team managed to make the meeting a complete success.

In recognition of his great achievements, Th. Hiepe received many honors, of which only a selection can be listed here:

Honorary doctor's degree of the Veterinary University of Vienna (1984) and of the Leipzig University (2001).

Member of the prestigious and internationally recognized German Academy of Natural Scientists Leopoldina (since 2008 German National Academy of Sciences) (1980); Academy of Science of the GDR (1988); Academy for Nonprofit Sciences, Erfurt (1991); and Berlin-

Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften (foundation member) (1992).

K.I. Skrjabin medal (Academy of Sciences, USSR, 1983); Karl Asmund Rudolphi medal (Parasitological Society of the GDR, 1989); Rudolf Leuckart medal (German Society of Parasitology, 2000); Medal of Merit (Leopoldina, 2001).

Honorary membership: in various scientific associations, including the Russian Society of Helminthology (1992), WAAVP (1997), and the German Society of Parasitology (2012).

We know Th. Hiepe as an impressive, open-minded, basically optimistic personality, deeply committed to science and the veterinary profession, with a remarkable ability to motivate people and bring them together. We gratefully acknowledge his great achievements and his friendship and wish him many more years of good health and creative energy, enjoyment and recreation within the family circle.