

Geotechnical Conference in Commemoration of the
Centenary of Birth of Dr József Jáky and of the Tenth
Anniversary of the Decease of Dr Árpád Kézdi
Budapest, 1993.

Commemoration

This year is that of commemoration to two leading personalities of geotechnique at home and abroad, representants lending dignity to our profession. Professor Dr József Jáky, worldfamous civil engineer, expert of soil mechanics, and foundations, was born July 15, 1893; his best pupil and successor Prof. Dr Árpád Kézdi, worthily continuing his master's activities, died October 20, 1983.

Both were internationally acknowledged, frontline scientists due to their scientific and professional literary activities.

Professor Jáky graduated as a civil engineer from the Technical University, started his career as assistant at the department headed by Prof. Szilárd Zielinski, and after a oneyear study tour in the USA, beside Terzaghi, in 1928 he established at the Technical University the first soil mechanics laboratory in Europe.

Considered by his pupils as very rigorous, but severe outstanding professor, in his practical expertizes he developed several new theories. His statements were later confirmed by facts. There is hardly a domain of theoretical and applied soil mechanics where he did not create something of new and permanent. After having been granted the Kossuth prize in 1948, in 1950 he was appointed ordinary member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences; but, alas, in the same year, he was ravished by death.

Professor Kézdi, his successor, was born in Komárom, in 1919. After having graduated as a civil engineer, he acted at the department of Jáky as an unpaid assistant research student, then as an assistant. After his master died, he became a reader, and appointed in 1953 head of department. His two ideals were learning and teaching. He devoted all his life, his marvellous working capacity to science. He was a man of knowledge, zeal, and assiduity.

In 1966 he was decorated with the State Prize. He was promoted – but he also promoted the society of engineers.

He was member of several scientific associations; European vicepresident of the International Association of Soil Mechanics and Foundations, honorary doctor of several universities abroad; after 1976, ordinary member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

He incessantly worked, taught, unsparing of his resources. There are great many engineering, civil engineering structures in this country, designed or constructed with the intermediary of his advices, opinions.

After an unswerving life spent in labour, he left us in October 1983.

Of course, extensive pages would not suffice to revoke the integrity of Professors Jáky and Kézdi, their lifework, achievements, performances at home and abroad, their humbleness in forwarding science and profession, their overall erudition.

Although lives of both of them flickered out untimely, they were complete with the pleasure of creation and reputation; while they left us a rich legacy, their instruction; to like work, profession. This conference organized in their commemoration reassembles papers by some actual geotechnicians, specialists of geotechnique as a proof that beyond paying the tribute of respect to their memories, we attempt to continue their work.

Dr József FARKAS