

Reprint from TRANSACTIONS OF THIRD COMMISSION OF INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF SOIL SCIENCE, New Brunswick, N. J. (U. S. A., 1939, Vol. A, pp. 1-3)

BIBLIOTHEEK  
INSTITUUT VOOR  
BODEMVRUCHTBAARHEID  
GRONINGEN  
SEPARAAT  
No. 12042

061.2  
631.4  
92

JACOB GOODALE LIPMAN  
AND THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY  
OF SOIL SCIENCE

A TRIBUTE

DR. D. J. HISSINK

*Acting President and Honorary General Secretary of the International Society  
of Soil Science, Groningen, Holland*

IN APRIL 1922, on the occasion of the Third International Conference of Soil Science at Prague, I first made Lipman's acquaintance. This Conference was the first at which workers in the same branch of science and from all parts of the world forgathered after the war; the Third International Conference of Soil Science was the first post-war gathering which was really international.

The United States had delegated to Prague two of its greatest soil scientists, Lipman and Marbut. Obviously, both of them put their stamps on the discussions in Prague and on the resolutions passed there, and thus on the course of international cooperation in the field of soil science. There can be no doubt that it was the great influence of these two which led at the time to the idea of holding a meeting of soil scientists in the United States as soon as possible.

In May 1924, at the Fourth International Conference of Soil Science at Rome, both of these colleagues were again present. As is well known, at the end of this Conference, on May 19, 1924, the International Society of Soil Science was founded. It was further resolved to hold the First International Congress of Soil Science at Washington, D. C., U. S. A., in 1927. This latter resolution entailed the choice of the first president of the Society from among the American members. It was a difficult decision that the meeting then had to make. It was a question of either Lipman or Marbut, both eminent soil scientists, both of an absolutely honorable and upright character, both enjoying the regard and affection of their colleagues. The choice, I repeat, was a difficult one; it eventually fell upon Lipman. The decisive factor was doubtless Lipman's great talent for organization. Our young Society had to cut a good figure at its first Congress in 1927, both from the scientific and from the social point of view. On this first step much depended, and in Rome we considered that this could best be achieved under Lipman's leadership.

From 1924 to 1927 Lipman prepared for the First International Congress of Soil Science. He had the cooperation of all his colleagues and of all the public bodies concerned, both in the United States and in Canada; these he united into one large Organizing Committee. He found Marbut ready to undertake the management of the great excursion through the United States and Canada. In all this work he placed himself as little as possible in the foreground; the Chairman and the Secretary of the Organizing Committee were Schreiner and McCall, and, as already mentioned, Marbut was entrusted with the management of the excursion. Lipman and these formed "The Big Four" of 1927. Lipman's great organizing talent was best shown by the fact that all, without exception, gladly worked together under his leadership.

It is obvious that in the organization of the Congress and the excursion not only the scientific and the technical, but also the financial aspect played a great part. Many colleagues outside America, who were anxious to take part in the Congress and excursion, were held back by financial considerations. Lipman was able to arrange for the expenses of the entire excursion through the United States and Canada, which lasted from June 22 to July 22, 1927, for all foreign participants, to be paid out of private funds. This fact contributed very largely to the success of the First Congress.

The results and benefits of the First Congress were briefly summarized, as follows, by Alexius A. J. de'Sigmond:<sup>1</sup> (1) a large number of American scientists became interested in the Society, whereas previously few had participated in the conferences of soil science; (2) the delegation of 20 soil experts from Russia had the opportunity to develop in detail the results of the Modern Russian school of soil science; (3) membership in the Society reached the unprecedented number of 934. Among the members were scientists from all parts of the world where soil science was receiving consideration.

Lipman's bearing was invariably characterized by great simplicity; he was averse to all ostentation. I experienced this immediately on his first appearance as President of the International Society of Soil Science, on April 8, 1926, when he presided over the first meeting of the General Committee of our Society at Groningen.<sup>2</sup> I had expected that he would take this opportunity to make a more or less formal opening speech, in which he would expound the aims of the young Society. Nothing of the kind. "The meeting is opened; please, Dr. Hissink, what is the first point on the agenda?" That was all. And later, at the numerous meetings which he conducted in Washington in 1927, the same simplicity was noticeable.

Lipman always evinced a keen interest in our Society. In the last few years he zealously urged the holding of a Conference, if possible even an

<sup>1</sup> *Soil Sci.*, 40: 85.

<sup>2</sup> *Mitt. Internat. Bodenk. Gesell.*, I/II (1925/26): 200.

International Congress, in one of the countries of South America. Our last correspondence was on this point.

Lipman was well known not only for his work on behalf of the International Society of Soil Science, but also as Dean and Director of the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station. In the midst of this busy career he found time not only to pursue his research activities, but also to serve as editor-in-chief of *Soil Science*, a journal which he founded in 1916.

And now Lipman has left us. Since the days at Prague many have preceded him. I think of Ramann, Frosterus, Glinka, Gedroiz, Wiegner, and others. Perhaps I may best conclude this tribute to Lipman by repeating the words of A. G. McCall in *Science*:<sup>8</sup> "Those of us who were fortunate enough to obtain glimpses of his wholesome and well-balanced philosophy of life at various times and under different circumstances are fortunate. A young scientist who has not had the friendship of a man of Dr. Lipman's type is spared the grief that comes with his loss, but his life is lacking one of its greatest joys and the satisfaction that comes out of such associations."

<sup>8</sup> *Science*, 89: 378-379, 1939.