

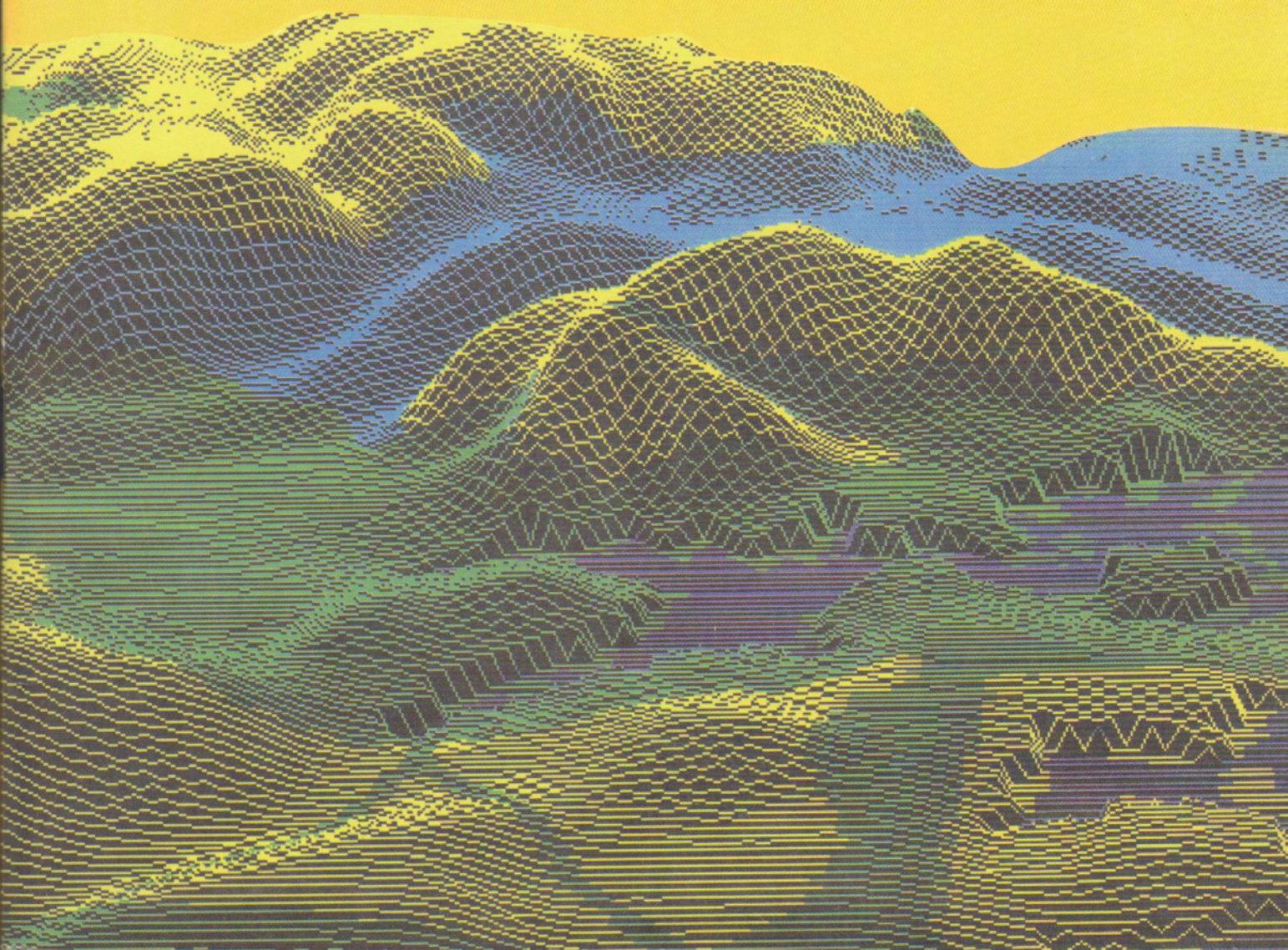
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MAILING ADDRESS

MGR, Institute of Geonics,
 P.O.Box 29, CZ-613 00 Brno,
 Czech Republic
 (fax) 42 5 578031

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PC-DIR, Ltd., CZ-616 69 Brno, Technická 2
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Policy and Practice of Environment

Antonín VAISHAR

Oldřich MIKULÍK

An international conference "Environmental Policy and Practice: Perspectives from East and West Europe" was organized in Pécs, Hungary by Transdanubian Research Institute, Hungarian Academy of Sciences in the days from 29 May to 1 June, 1994. The Conference was held jointly with a Working Group from Association of British Geographers and was financially supported by British Council, which was reflected in the structure of participants. There were 45 papers presented at the Conference, speakers being from Hungary (20), United Kingdom (22), Czech Republic (2), The Netherlands (1), Croatia (1), Austria (1), and U.S.A. (1).

As indicated by name of the Conference, and as it is usual on similar occasions, the scope of papers was considerably wide with the exception of the first plenary meeting which endeavoured for presenting a comprehensive survey on environment in Hungary. Despite traditional rural character, the situation of this Central European country is far from being favourable. Heavy industrialization and chemization of agricultural production during the years of socialism did what they did. The capital of Budapest ranks with the most environmentally afflicted cities in Europe and Hungarian population lives to be of the lowest age among all European nations.

From our point of view, interesting seems to be also the international aspect of environment in Hungary. The problem in question indicates that Hungarian environment is-to considerable extent-impaired by far reaching transport of pollutants, a.o. even from our country. This applies mainly to water because practically all important Hungarian water streams flow in from abroad. It is namely the water streams from Slovakia that cannot be distinguished by their cleanliness, and if we add the issue of Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros hydroengineering structure, which has become more-less a political issue at present, there is simply just one more reason to call the today's Hungarian-Slovakian relationships delicate.

The majority of other papers tackled general knowledge and generalized experience from management of environment. Only a few papers were focused on concrete regional problems, these including the contribution of O. MIKULÍK and A. VAISHAR "Economic Revitalization in Protected Landscape Areas", which utilized experience from a study made in Hornácko. Proceedings from the Conference will be published shortly.

The Conference was of high social standard and it was accompanied by several excursions and social programme. From this point of view, the only shortcoming appeared to be the fact that experts from Russia, Ukraine and Bulgaria, who had already been registered for the Conference, cancelled their attendance at the last moment.

Organizer of the Conference - Transdanubian Research Institute, Centre for Regional Studies, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Pécs is a very successful and efficient workplace. Professional contacts between its experts and Department of Environment from the former Institute of Geography, Czech Academy of Sciences have been lasting for more than fifteen years now. The workplace in Pécs has 18 scientific workers, which precisely corresponds to the capacity of the Brno Branch of the Institute of Geonics, Czech Academy of Sciences. Of those only 5 are geographers, however. Only 30% of research costs are being covered from budget of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Other receipts must be earned on the market by all branch offices.

Of institutional scientific programmes which are of any geographical importance we can mention the following ones:

- Regional development strategies and models in the Alps-Adria region
- The relationship of sub-national administration and regional development policy

- Regional problems of cross-border economic development
- Development of regional integration in Central Europe
- The effects of new information and communication technologies on regional and settlement development
- The geography of administration in Hungary
- Environmental impacts of economic restructuring of depressed areas
- The prospective role of rural tourism at socio-economic innovation of the country-side
- New factors of regional development.

A preliminary agreement on bilateral collaboration was only one of the results achieved by participants from the Brno Branch Office of the Institute of Geonics, Czech Academy of Sciences.



Pécs

Photo: O. Mikulík