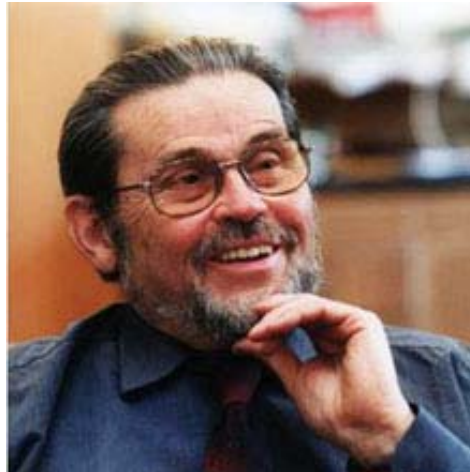


## Ladislav Janský – a friend and colleague

By Joachim Roth



Ladislav Janský. Photo courtesy of Eugen Zeisberger

When I joined Eugen Zeisberger's group at the Medical School of the Justus-Liebig University in Giessen as a doctoral student and started to work on thermoregulation, the first paper, which I received to read, was one of Janský's famous review articles<sup>1</sup>. In my first papers dealing with thermogenesis and thermoregulation I carefully considered this review in the "Introduction" and "Discussion" sections<sup>2, 3</sup>. At this time Eugen frequently told us about his time at the Faculty of Science of the Charles University in Prague, where Ladislav Janský was his boss and colleague, and where a friendship developed between the two of them. Their fruitful work during this period resulted in a number of acknowledged papers, one of them even published in *Nature*<sup>4</sup>.

During the years 1966 – 1968, Eugen Zeisberger worked as a visiting scientist in Marburg, Germany, to compare methods to measure the extent of nonshivering thermogenesis<sup>5</sup>. And by chance he was able to emigrate from Czechoslovakia with his family during the political developments in Prague in spring of 1968. Due to the fact that Janský, in spite of increasing difficulties because of the political situation at that time, succeeded to keep up the scientific contacts with scientists abroad including those in Germany, both of them stayed in close contact. During this period Janský organized two international symposia in Prague, in 1970 and 1980.

Along with the political changes during the end of the 80s, Eugen was allowed to return to Prague. As a part of a program of a regional meeting of the International Union of Physiological Sciences held in Prague in 1990, Janský organized a symposium on Thermal Physiology. Eugen and myself attended this conference; I gave a lecture which was published later on<sup>6</sup>. During this conference I had the first opportunity to talk with Janský personally. As far as his duties as an organizer of an international symposium left some free capacities, Janský (whom I called "Lad" since that time) and Eugen showed me some parts of Prague, namely some pubs where they had the famous black beer as students. Lad used the opportunities of the political changes for several research visits to Bad Nauheim at the Kerckhoff-Institute of the Max-Planck-Society close to

Giessen, where he worked with Eckhart Simon, Karl-Friedrich Pierau and Herbert Schmid<sup>7</sup>. Before and during this time he developed strong interest in research on modulation of hypothalamic thermoregulatory structures by neuropeptides<sup>8</sup>, changes of thermoregulatory characteristics during fever<sup>9</sup>, and on the putative role of cytokines in the initiation of fever. Janský was fascinated by the idea that thermoregulatory responses, which accompany fever (i.e. skin vasoconstriction), might occur prior to the appearance of “endogenous pyrogens” (cytokines) in the systemic circulation or in the brain. He succeeded to obtain a grant from the European Community to conduct a study on this topic, which was performed in Giessen. That was the time when I had the opportunity to perform experimental work together with him and his colleague, Stan Vybíral, in our laboratory. During the experiments and in the evenings, which we frequently spent in the beer gardens of Giessen, we had long discussions about science, politics and life in general. Thus, a good and strong friendship developed, which we maintained over the following years until his death. The outcome of this project was published in *Neuroendocrinology*, a paper which reached almost 100 citations up to now and which still is cited regularly<sup>10</sup>. While preparing and writing this manuscript we had again some nice opportunities for personal contacts, the best of them taking place before and during the Ninth International Symposium on the Pharmacology of Thermoregulation in Giessen during the summer of 1994. Ladislav came with all his colleagues from Prague, who brought guitars and other music instruments, and all of us had a great time here in Giessen.

After their retirement Ladislav and Eugen joined again at the University of South Bohemia in Budweis, where they helped to establish a new faculty of Biological Sciences. We made plans to exchange students for research projects and we came together to write another paper on endogenous antipyretics<sup>11</sup>. Janský's important contribution to this topic related to the fact that he and his co-workers characterized the real thermoregulatory modifications, the thresholds of thermoregulatory effector responses, after central administration of neuropeptides that block fever<sup>12</sup>.

My last personal contact with Lad took place in 2004 in Rhodes during the First Integrated Symposium on Physiology and Pharmacology of Temperature Regulation, when he invited me to come to Budweis for some teaching at the University of South Bohemia. Three years later I received the sad news of his unexpected death. I will keep him in my memory as a very friendly and open-minded person, a friend and colleague, who was dedicated to science. His enormous contribution to the field of thermoregulation<sup>13</sup> was highly acknowledged; all “thermophysicologists” in the broader sense, who had the pleasure to know him, will keep him in mind.

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