

PERSONALITIES FROM THE MERIDIANS OF THE ENGINEERING UNIVERSE



Pop Liviu Emil was born on 10 December 1919 in Dragu commune, Cluj county (nowadays Sălaj county), situated in the Someșan Plateau.

Unfortunately, it so happened that he lost his father at

the age of 4. In order to bring up her two children – Liviu Emil and Veturia Elvira – their widowed mother, Lucreția Pop, started to make clothes for the villagers by using a sewing machine. Furthermore, she also received the job of a substitute teacher at the village school. Liviu Pop attended the primary school in his native village. As a child, he actually used to enjoy participating in the field work. In the autumn of 1930, he was enrolled as a pupil at “*Emanoil Gojdu*” High School for boys, in Oradea, and he lived in the Greek-Catholic boarding-school where orphan children were offered a reduction in the livelihood taxes and where, owing to the strict discipline imposed on the students, he acquired the ability to efficiently organise his activity.

For health reasons, starting with the autumn of 1935, he moved to “*Simion Bărnuțiu*” High School for boys, in Șimleul Silvaniei. In 1938 he graduated and took the school-leaving examination in Oradea. At that time, the baccalaureat diploma offered the young people the opportunity to hold any position, and the admission to a number of faculties was gained on the basis of this diploma only. Liviu Pop easily decided to enrol in the Faculty of Agronomy in Cluj owing to the talks he had had with students of this faculty during their practical work, but also owing to the fact that his mother had obtained a bursar job and even accommodation at the teacher training school in Cluj.

Student at the Faculty of Agricultural Science in Cluj

Admission was attained on the basis of a contest, the result of which allowed him to receive a scholarship. He had the illustrious Iuliu Prodan as professor of Vegetable Systematics, Anatomy and Physiology and Alexandru Buia as assistant

lecturer, the one who was later to become the rector of the Agronomical Institute in Craiova. He attended the third year in Timișoara, where the faculty in Cluj had moved to as a consequence of the Vienna Dictate through which Romania was forced to cede the north of Ardeal province. He took the graduation examination on 25 February 1943 and obtained the agricultural engineer diploma no. 230 on 20 April 1943, released by the Polytechnic School of Timișoara, being the second best of his series of graduates.

Assistant lecturer in Timișoara and Cluj.

Immediately after taking the diploma examination, he was summoned to resume his military training until 15 November 1943, at the Military Section of the Polytechnic School in Timișoara. At the same period, professor Amilcar Vasiliu proposed him a post of assistant lecturer at the chair of Agrology and beginning with 1 July 1944, Liviu Pop was appointed to this post by the Minister through Decision 132592/1943. The procedure in use at that time required that an assistant lecturer should have a three-year-period of probation, during which he was supposed to attend the course and the practical work, learn a foreign language and prepare a synthesis report on a given subject.

The subject prepared by Liviu Pop was “*Controversy about classification of soils*” depending on the content of sands, clay and argil. It was the first paper published by Liviu Pop in the Annals of the Faculty of Agricultural Science in Cluj, 1946, vol. 11. In the autumn of 1945, the Faculty of Agricultural Science returned to Cluj and Liviu Pop continued his activity of assistant lecturer. He assisted professor Amilcar Vasiliu in lithographing the course “*Soil research through physical methods*”. As laboratories were not provided with the necessary equipment, the teaching staff engaged in creating laboratory apparatus by themselves. Liviu Pop designed and produced a sieves system for ascertaining the stability of soil aggregates under water influence and a device for determining the resistance of soil aggregates under pressure, called Pop balance. In October 1948 he won by contest a position of lecturer. He was involved in several subjects of research among which “*The influence of crop rotations and agricultural work on the soil structure*”, “*The influence of the cultivator, the*

harrow and the hoeing machine on the lacunary space in the soil", "*The influence of drought on cultivated plants*". The results of the research were published by the end of the year 1949 in 8 scientific studies, 2 articles of technical guiding, 38 articles of scientific popularization, 35 articles of technical guiding, published in papers and in scientific journals such as "*The Annals of the Faculty of Agricultural Science in Cluj*", "*Agriculture*", "*Agricultural Problems*", "*Sciences Journal*".

Professor at the Agronomical Institute and the University of Craiova

On 25 April 1947 the University of Craiova was set up, which also included the Faculty of Agricultural Science. On 8 April 1949 Aurel Moraru, the Rector of the Agronomical Institute in Craiova sent Liviu Pop the following telegram: "*Through ministerial Decision no. 134/31/03/1949 you are appointed as professor at the Chair of Pedology. You are requested to present yourself there urgently*". The Superior Commission for diplomas within the Ministry of Education and Training, gathered on 2 March 1963, confirmed his professor status, the decision being set forth through the Order no. 191/21.03.1963.

Through the period of the years 1957-1967 he also worked as part time researcher at the Agricultural Station in Șimnic, being head of the Agrotechnics laboratory. In 1955 he took part in the setting up of Tâmburești Center of Research on turning the sandy soils to good account. It was the beginning of a long period of successful pioneer research activity conducted on the sandy soils of south western Oltenia, an activity which he carried out until his retirement and which resulted in many scientific papers. In his capacity as scientific Secretary of the Teaching council, he looked after the publishing of the scientific papers elaborated by the teaching staff. So, in 1957 the first issue of "*The Annual of the Scientific Papers of the Agronomical Institute in Craiova*" appeared, then, since 1958, "*Scientific Bulletin*" and since 1963 "*The Annals of the University of Craiova. Biology-Agronomy and Horticulture Series*" for which the General Management of Press and Printed Work gave the authorization no. 837.

On 1 October 1967 he was appointed Head of the Chair of Agrophytotechnics through the official letter no. 100587/1967 of the Ministry of Education. During 1968-1970 he was scientific Secretary of the Senate of the University in Craiova. On 1 March 1967, by Order no. 2571 of the Ministry of Education, he was appointed to the

office of Dean of the Faculty of Agricultural Science which he held up to 15 May 1972.

In 1981, through the Order no. 6923 of 13.06.1981 the Ministry of Education and Training awarded him the title of "*Distinguished professor*". In 1991 he was designated as titular member of the Academy of Agriculture and Sylviculture Sciences.

Doctor of Science

He presented his PhD thesis on the subject "*Research on establishing the system of using the chemical fertilizers in the rye-maize rotation on the sands left of the Jiu river*" on 29 February 1968, thesis elaborated under the guidance of Prof. Dr. Ioan Safta. It was the first public PhD thesis presentation held in Craiova, within the Faculty of Agronomy. Liviu Pop was bestowed the mark "*summa cum laude*". The diploma no. 1/15.03.1971 was released by the University of Craiova. Starting with the academic year 1969-1970 he received the status of PhD supervisor (The Order no. 965/11.10.1969 of the Ministry of Education).

On 25 February 1974, in front of a Ministry appointed Commission, at "*Nicolae Bălcescu*" Agronomical Institute in Bucharest, Liviu Pop publicly set out a professional activity report, on the basis of which he was conferred the degree of senior lecturer, confirmed by the Superior Commission for Diplomas on 25 May 1974.

Teaching and research activity

In 1957 he elaborated the course of General Agriculture, in three volumes, lithographed during 1958-1959, the first course in lithographic form at the Agronomical Institute of Craiova. Over the academic years 1970-1971 and 1971-1972 he delivered the course "*The rational using of the sands*" to fourth-year and fifth-year students. Since 1972 and until his retirement in 1985, he delivered to the students the course of Agrotechnics and Experimental Technique at the Faculty of Agricultural Science. In 1976 he published this course in litographic form, in two volumes comprising 852 pages.

In 1965 he participated in CAER conference on using the light soils, held in Budapest, where he delivered the lecture "*The agricultural production increase on sandy soils by means of fertilizers*". In 1970 he took part in the International Symposium concerning basic agrotechnical work on the soil, with the paper "*Research into agrotechnical work on the sandy lands in the south-west of Romania*".

In 1977 he published at Ceres Publishing House, together with lecturer Dr. Ion Matei and

engineer Dr. Ion Chichea, the book *“Agrophytotechnics on sandy soils”* to which Romania’s Academy awarded the *“Ion Ionescu de la Brad”* prize on 11 July 1980. In 1986 he published at Ceres Publishing House, together with Valeria Marghitu, Victor Barnaure and Ion Chichea, the monograph *“The culture of groundnuts (peanuts)”*, awarded by Romanian Academy with the *“Ion Ionescu de la Brad”* prize in 1990.

A great part of the research activity was devoted to adapting the peanuts for cultivation on the sandy soils in Oltenia region. In 1979 he introduced in the variety testing network several lines of peanuts, among which the line T 277, officially acknowledged for production in 1983 under the commercial name *“Tâmburești variety”*, for which he, together with engineer Dr. Valeria Marghitu and engineer Dr. Ion Chichea, obtained the Invention patent no. 89351. In 1995 the invention gained the Gold Medal at the International Salon of Inventions in Geneva.

The whole scientific and publishing activity carried out by Liviu Pop consists in 230 scientific papers, 7 books, 15 courses and handbooks, 16 articles of agricultural technique, 66 articles of scientific popularization, 99 articles of technical guiding.

He passed away in Craiova on 3.11.2010.

Column written by professor eng .Gheorghe Manolea, University of Craiova, Doctor Honoris Causa of Technical University of Moldova from Chișinău