obituary

W. H. Morton

WILLIAM H. MORTON, for seven years Assistant Professor of Geology at Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia, was shot to death by Government troops in Addis Ababa on 10 March 1977, one of the many victims of the current political disturbances in Ethiopia.

Bill Morton graduated from Manchester University and served his apprenticeship with the Geological Survey of Uganda. A field geologist *par excellence*, he belonged to that select group of British geologists with detailed first-hand knowledge of the remoter parts of East Africa.

In addition to his own research publications, always the fruit of long months of painstaking geological mapping with his colleagues and students, Bill had a very real desire to share his hard-earned geological knowledge with students and teachers throughout the country. He had recently completed a handbook for non-specialists on the

rocks, minerals and fossils of Ethiopia, and was awaiting the comments of his colleagues. Its publication may have to await happier times. Of more immediate value to the government of Ethiopia are the geological maps of many parts of the country, including the Addis Ababa region, which Bill and his former students produced with that attention to detail and high degree of intellectual honesty which were amongst his outstanding qualities.

The Afar Triangle has stimulated new concepts in geology which have reper- cussed far beyond Africa, and Bill Morton made his own contribution to the knowledge of a region that has attracted so many distinguished earth scientists. Starting with a recognition that the tilted fault-blocks bordering the Afar were the result of extension tectonics and not, as previously thought, of folding and decompressive stresses, Bill and his colleagues went on to develop a model of crustal attenuation as part of a continuous process of plate

separation. His studies of Afar tec- tonics, of the age trends of plateau and rift margin volcanics in Ethiopia, and of crustal thinning at rift margins, some of which appeared as seminal papers in *Nature*, were always con- veyed in clear and simple prose, a by-product of his experience as a teacher.

A level-headed and thoughtful per- son, Bill Morton was a tireless teacher, devoted to his students and immensely concerned with imparting practical and worthwhile knowledge. He was equally at home on the summit of a glaciated volcano as at the bottom of Ethiopia's deepest known pot-hole. Well loved by students and colleagues, he was highly respected by geologists from many countries. In a tragic moment, Ethio- pia has lost a man who had devoted his career to her scientific advance- ment and welfare. His many friends and geological colleagues both inside and outside Ethiopia will remember him with love and professional admiration.

D. Adamson, F. M. Dakin and
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Hans-Lukas Teuber

HANS-LUKAS TEUBER, Professor of Psychology at M.I.T., was lost on January 4 while swimming off the British Virgin Islands. It is thought likely that he died of heart disease; he was 60 years old. Many in Britain will share the sense of loss, not only because "Luke" (as he became known in later years as he became fully absorbed into the American culture) was an indefatigable traveller and lecturer, but also because of a memorable year as Eastman Visiting Professor at Oxford in 1971-2. His audience and influence were deservedly world-wide.

In later years he was perhaps best known as the father of a distinguished, indeed unique, centre of psychology and brain sciences at M.I.T., to which his devotion was complete and in which his pride was transparent. But it was his earlier highly penetrating and influential analyses of the problems and mechanisms of visual perception, in particular, and of brain function more generally, with which he first made his mark. His early major

researches were on the psychological analysis of brain wounds in war veterans, carried out while serving with the U.S. Navy during World War II. This type of research remained a con- suming interest until the end, but he contributed a unique and distinctive personal approach to a tradition that had its roots in 19th century neuro- logic. To that tradition Teuber injected a concern for the importance of certain crucial demands that modern psycho- logical analysis places upon the inter- pretation of brain function. He was, for example, one of the first to seize upon the importance of the distinction between externally imposed changes in sensory stimulation and those that result from self-initiated movement, which produces a "corollary dis- charge." He was quick to spot and integrate important modern develop- ments, both technical and intellectual, but these always were seen in a historical context which he viewed with enormous erudition and reverence.

Born in Germany and educated at the French College in Berlin and at the University of Basel, he emigrated to America during the War and

received his doctorate in psychology at Harvard in 1947. He claimed that he was accepted as a desirable emigré, when his ship was stopped at Gibraltar, because he was able to converse freely in Latin and Greek with the young inspecting British officer. His father was founder, for the Prussian Academy of Sciences, of a field station for the observation of chimpanzees on Tenerife, whose fame was later assured by the important work of Wolfgang Köhler (*The Mentality of Apes*) carried out there. This perhaps accounts for Teuber's early interest in problems of visual perception identified by the Gestalt psychologists, and his friendship and admiration for Köhler were life-long.

At Harvard, the story is told, he managed to fail the compulsory German translation because, as a new arrival, he did not know enough English into which to translate the German. But, if so, his command of English soon developed to lofty heights, and he could hold an audience rapt with his eloquent and gently humorous style. In 1947 he joined the faculty of the Bellevue Medical Center of New