

A Note of Welcome

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I am very glad that the new *Journal of Graph Theory* is born—but I cannot help feeling sorry that Dénes König did not live to see the present flowering of graph theory, to which he contributed so much.

I myself got interested in graph theory when I was in high school and saw a paper by König published in the mathematical magazine for high school students. When I was a freshman, T. Gallai, G. Grünwald and I took König's course on graph theory. All three of us very rapidly began to "prove and conjecture" independently.

It is curious how little graph theory and combinatorial analysis was appreciated in those early dark ages. A friend of my parents, a statistician, once said about Dénes König: "He is great in his art but his art is so small." Ten years later J. H. C. Whitehead, the great English topologist, said about a graph theorist: "He works in the slums of topology." When I first got to Princeton in 1938, I was surprised how many of the topologists looked down upon the four color problem and considered it an unimportant side issue.

It is interesting to contemplate what was the cause of the present "combinatorial explosion." No doubt one reason is computers and the various evolving practical applications as well as applications to natural sciences. But there is no doubt that more and more mathematicians realize that there are very many beautiful and unexpected theorems and theories to be discovered in this field and I hope that this new periodical will greatly contribute to the further development of our beloved subject.