

Richard Solomonovich Shults (1896—1973)

In October 1973, Professor Richard Solomonovich Shults, the renowned Soviet scientist, parasitologist, member of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences, doctor of biological sciences, died at the age of 78 years. Professor Shults devoted his life to scientific work on theoretical and applied parasitology and helminthology with a view on introducing scientific results to the practice. He published more than 250 original papers, numerous monographs and textbooks, sometimes as the sole author, sometimes in collaboration with other authors, e.g., with academician K. I. Skryabin („Helminthiases of cattle”; „Veterinary parasitology and infective diseases of domestic animals”; „Parasitic helminths of the rabbit and hare and diseases caused by them”, etc.). These publications are of lasting value for both scientists and practitioners, and a useful guide in the training of young helminthologists and parasitologists. Professor Shults participated most actively in the training of the young scientific generation of parasitologists from the Soviet Union and from other countries. His work and personal approach influenced considerably the Czechoslovak helminthological school particularly in the study on problems concerned with immunology and pathogenicity of helminths, their phylogeny, ecology and systematics.

At first, Professor Shults worked in Moscow and later in Alma-Ata as Head of the Helminthological Laboratory, Kazakh Scientific Veterinary Research Institute. During this period he collected and evaluated a vast amount of experimental material contributing thus considerably to the knowledge and concept of a number of problems concerned with the pathogenicity, clinic, therapy, epizootology and control of helminthiases. Of greatest importance in both theory and practice are his results on the

diagnosis, experimental therapy, immunology and pathogenesis of helminths. He pointed out and investigated a number of new, elemental problems, exactified the connotation of terms such as „parasitism”, the extent of host-parasite specificity, categories of host-parasite relationships, reservoir parasitism, helminthic processes and others. In addition, he classified immunological responses and helminth virulence. He contributed greatly to our knowledge of helminth migrations in the organism of the definitive host and made a new classification of these migrations.

He devoted much of his time to academic activities. Of the large number of specialists trained by him, many have become foremost Soviet helminthologists. Particularly in the Soviet republics beyond the Caucasus, the development of helminthology owes a great deal to Professor Shults and his unceasing efforts.

For the last years of his life, he worked together with Professor Gvozdev on the unique, four-volumed monograph „Fundamentals of general helminthology”. The first two volumes were published in 1970 and 1972, work on the third and almost finished volume dealing with the pathogenesis and immunity of helminthiases was interrupted by his death.

The life of Professor Shults was that of an active Soviet scientist who devoted all his efforts to the development of his country and of science. With him we have lost a great scientist and a wise, just and upright friend. His work and personality will live forever in the hearts of all his pupils, collaborators and friends.

Honoured be his memory!

*Dr. V. Baruš, D.Sc. and
Doc. Dr. B. Ryšavý, D.Sc.*