

MUDr. RNDr. Jindřich Jíra on the occasion of his 50th birthday

Not so long ago, the well-known scientist Dr. Jíra celebrated his 50th anniversary. He was born in Prague on April 21, 1925. His interest in natural sciences and, particularly, in parasitic organisms, was aroused at an early age. After completing secondary school in 1944, he started to study medicine at the Medical Faculty, Charles University, and graduated in 1950. For his deep interest in natural sciences, he took a RNDr. at the Biological Faculty in 1953 and obtained thus an understanding of both the health and diseases of man and the surrounding nature. He took up postgraduate studies at the Department of Ecological Zoology, Faculty of Biology, Charles University under Professor J. Jírovec, who was his Director of studies. During this period, Dr. Jíra was carrying out work on the problem of trichomoniasis of man and, in 1957, was awarded the C.Sc. degree for his thesis "Studies on trichomoniasis in the male".

In 1956, the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences appointed him scientific officer at the Protozoological Laboratory which, in 1962, became part of the newly established Institute of Parasitology. There, he has remained until the present. Dr. Jíra, an extraordinarily capable pedagogue, has been lecturing at universities in Prague and Bratislava. In 1972, he has been appointed external lecturer in medical parasitology at the Department of Infectious Diseases, Hygiene and Epidemiology at the Paediatric Faculty, Charles University, Prague.

The results of Dr. Jíra's scientific work have been published in numerous papers at home and abroad. During the initial stage of his scientific career, his work was concerned with the effect of various substances on protozoans, and with several bacteriological problems. In 1953, Dr. Jíra started to devote much of his time to the importance of trichomonad infection of the urinary tract in the male; this resulted in 13 papers published in domestic and foreign periodicals (1954–1961). His epidemiological studies on the incidence of virile trichomoniasis range among the most numerous in the world literature. His contributions to the clinical symptoms of the disease and its epidemiological importance in the male as regards the spreading of this infection as a parasitic venereal disease are of greatest value.

In 1954, in collaboration with Professor Jírovec and others, Dr. Jíra began his studies on a disease which, at that time, had started to arouse the interest of protozoologists and clini-

cians, and had first been detected by Dr. Janků in Czechoslovakia. Since then, these problems have been the principal object of his research work regardless of the difficulties involved. It is typical of his work that he has tried to establish the widest possible contacts with the clinics, paediatricians, obstetricians, ophthalmologists, in his effort to investigate the incidence of toxoplasmosis and its importance in our population. His first papers on these problems were devoted to laboratory diagnostics, the preparation of antigen for skin- and antibody tests. He prepared a standard antigen used by numerous institutions in Czechoslovakia and abroad, and his toxoplasmin antigen has been tested in various countries (U.S.S.R., Vietnam, Egypt, Poland, Bulgaria, Roumania, etc.). A series of papers on the complement-fixation-test published in collaboration with Dr. Bozděch, reflects his extreme experience in these problems. Dr. Jíra, one of the closest collaborators of Professor Jírovec in the research of toxoplasmosis, and his most frequent co-author in papers on this problem, published himself 112 papers covering practically the complete range of problems on toxoplasmosis including diagnostics, epidemiology, clinical importance, therapy and control measures. The results of his studies are surveyed in the monograph "Toxoplasmosis" by Kouba, Jíra and Hübner, published by Avicenum in 1974. His bibliography on toxoplasmosis compiled in collaboration with V. Kozojed, and published by Gustav Fischer, Stuttgart, in 1970 comprises roughly 8,000 references on toxoplasmosis. Of his 140 papers concerned with parasitology in general, 40 have been published in foreign periodicals.

Dr. Jíra is a member of numerous international and Czechoslovak scientific societies. For many years he has been an active member of the Czechoslovak Parasitological Society. He participated in a number of international congresses in Czechoslovakia and abroad, and has kept up close scientific contacts with his colleagues in the U.S.S.R., G.D.R., G.F.R., Poland, Bulgaria, Italy, Great Britain, France, Chile, Tunisia, Austria, etc. He initiated the establishment of a Coordination Committee for collaboration in toxoplasmosis research in the socialist countries.

On the behalf of his collaborators and friends, I wish Dr. Jíra many successful years of indomitable activity, good health and further important successes in his work and life.

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