

Fiftieth birthday of RNDr. Josef Řeháček, D.Sc.

Dr. J. Řeháček will celebrate his fiftieth birthday on 7 April 1981. He was born in Rychnov n/Kněžnou in 1931. He completed his secondary school education with honours in Nový Bydžov in 1950 and began to study



zoology at the Natural Sciences Faculty, Charles University in Prague. He graduated in 1954 using for his diploma thesis "Revision of Czechoslovak species of Coccoidea from the subfamily Lecaniinae". After graduation he started

his post-graduate studies at the Institute of Virology, Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava, where he devoted his efforts to the research of the arbovirus-vector relationship under the guidance of two experienced scientists — Prof. Dr. B. Rosický, D.Sc. in the field of medical arachnoentomology and Dr. H. Libíková, M.D., D.Sc. in the field of virology. In 1957 he was awarded the Candidate of Sciences degree using for his thesis "Biology of viruses of the eastern equine encephalitis (EEE) of North America in the ticks *Ixodes ricinus* Linné, 1758 and *Dermacentor marginatus* Sulzer, 1776". Until 1965 he worked at the department of neurotropic viruses of the Institute of Virology (head: Dr. H. Libíková) where he completed his treatise "Fauna of Coccidae in Slovakia" (Biol. práce 1960, Slovak Academy of Sciences). However, his interest was mainly directed at a deeper knowledge on the relationship of arboviruses to vectors, primarily ticks and to mammalian hosts — rodents as well as birds. In the course of ten years he solved the problem of the relationship between ticks and the EEE virus, determining the tick as a facultative mechanical vector and demonstrating that EEE and tick-borne encephalitis viruses may hibernate in ticks in nature. He collaborated in the discovery of the Kemerovo virus in Western Siberia, where he was a member of the joint Czechoslovak—

Soviet expedition of virologists, headed by Professor Chumakov and Dr. H. Libíková.

Dr. Řeháček's most outstanding achievement in his scientific activities was the elaboration of the tissue culture method from ticks. This method was accepted by a number of research workers abroad who came to his laboratory for training, among them Dr. Singh (Poona, India), the author of the well-known cell-line from *Aedes albopictus* mosquitoes.

In 1966—1967 Dr. Řeháček was on a professional visit at the Department of Entomology, C.S.I.R.O. in Canberra, Australia, where he further worked out the method of invertebrate tissue culture and demonstrated its importance for arbovirus cultivation. During this study visit he participated in the expedition to New Guinea. Thereafter he was active as Visiting Professor at the Department of Microbiology, School of Medicine, University of North Dakota in Grand Forks, USA, where he was engaged in studies on blood-sucking insects as mechanical vectors of the murine leukemia virus.

Since 1967 Dr. Řeháček has worked at the rickettsia department of the Institute of Virology, under the guidance of Dr. R. Brezina in the field of rickettsia ecology. He has become the project leader responsible for the thematic task of the State plan "Ecology of rickettsia in nature and communities", which he is heading to date.

His doctoral dissertation, which he presented for the award of the D.Sc. degree in 1971, was based on his publication "Organ, tissue and cell cultures of hematophagous arthropods and their application in virology and rickettsiology".

During his 10-year-activity as leading scientist at the rickettsia department, in collaboration with his co-workers in the department as well as abroad he discovered foci of rickettsioses in Czechoslovakia, Austria (Sixl et al.), Federal Republic of Germany, Armenian, Lithuanian and Azerbaidzhan SSR, USSR (Tarasevich et al.), Hungary (Nosek and Sztankay). In cooperation with Brezina he found a new species of rickettsia in Central Europe, named

Rickettsia slovaca. Thanks to Dr. Řeháček detailed studies on the ecology of *Coxiella burnetii* and *R. slovaca* were carried out in Czechoslovakia. The hemocyte test elaborated by him has been widely adopted in the detection of microorganisms harboured by ticks.

The publication activities of Dr. Řeháček are very extensive — he released about 160 original papers, which primarily appeared in foreign languages. Although most of his works are concerned with virology and rickettsiology, his valuable contributions to protozoology should be also pointed out. He was the first in Europe (in cooperation with Sixl and Šebek) to find trypanosomes in ticks and to describe (in cooperation with Weiser) microsporidium *Nosema slovaca* in the ticks *Ixodes ricinus* and *Dermacentor reticulatus*.

Dr. Řeháček is a member of the Czechoslovak Microbiological Society, the Slovak Zoological Society and a committee member of the Czechoslovak Parasitological Society. Since 1963 he has been a member of the International Advisory Board on Invertebrate Tissue Culture and since 1966 Honorary Fellow of the National University of Australia, Canberra. In 1971 he organized the Third International Colloquium on Invertebrate Tissue Culture at Smolenice.

His scientific efforts were acknowledged by many awards and honours from the director of the Virological Institute, the Scientific Board and the Presidium of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, the director of the Institute of Poliomyelitis and Viral Encephalitides, Moscow. Besides these honours he was awarded gold plaque of the Slovak Academy of Sciences on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of its foundation.

Dr. Řeháček's activities, however, are not limited to research, but they also include activities in social organizations of the Institute and in the training of young scientific workers.

On the occasion of his important anniversary we wish him good health, much happiness in personal life and further great success in his work.

R. Brezina, M.D., C.Sc.