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Polina Andreyevna Petrishcheva (1899 — 1973)



Not long ago we celebrated her 70th birthday and no one who had known her and collaborated with her could believe the sad news that Polina

Andreyevna Petrishcheva, the prominent Soviet parasitologist, corresponding member of the USSR Academy of Medical Sciences, doctor of biological sciences, one of the closest disciples and outstanding collaborators of Academician E. N. Pavlovsky in the field of the theory of natural focality of diseases, died on September 21, 1973.

She was born on 29 October, 1899 in a large peasant family and her childhood was full of hardship. After graduating from university in 1923 she worked first as a teacher and then as head of protozoological department of the regional anti-malaria station in Samara (now Kuibyshev); afterwards she headed the station of tropical diseases in the Karakal district and the medical entomology and arachnology department of the Tropical Institute in Ashkhabad. In 1933 on the invitation of Academician Pavlovsky she came to Moscow to work at the medical parasitology department of the All-Union Institute of Experimental Medicine (now the Gamaleya Institute of Epidemiology and Microbiology of the USSR Academy of Medical Sciences), first as laboratory head and deputy of E. N. Pavlovsky, later as head of the department of natural focality infections.

Her further career is closely associated with studies on the problems of natural focality of diseases. She was engaged in the research of bloodsucking arthropods, primarily mosquitoes and sand-flies. The results of her research of the fauna, ecology and medical importance of families Culicidae and Phlebotomidae are fundamental contributions to world science. In recent years she intensively studied biological relationships between bloodsucking arthropods and causative agents of human diseases transmitted by them. Significant is also the contribution that she and the teams led by her made to the prevention and control of transmissible diseases such as Japanese B-encephalitis, tick-borne encephalitis, papataci fever, leishmaniosis, tick-borne rickettsiosis etc. She always knew how to apply theoretical results to practice in the struggle for human health.

Professor Petrishcheva headed or participated in many scientific expeditions to various regions of the USSR, especially to the republics of Central Asia, Siberia and the Far East, where she collected valuable materials. Her many-sided erudition helped her to arrive at many significant conclusions in the field of landscape epidemiology, concerning e.g. the characterization of natural foci of Japanese B-encephalitis and leishmanioses, the concept of co-existence of natural foci of different transmissible diseases in areas of contact of two landscapes, the co-existence of causative agents of different diseases in the vector's organism. For a long time she headed the All-Union problem committee for the research of human diseases with natural foci. Professional public is well acquainted with her books (*Polevye metody izucheniya moskitov i protivomoskitnye meropriyatiya* — 1954; *Metody izucheniya i profilaktika leishmaniozov i moskitnoy likhoradki* — 1961) as well as monographs edited by her (e.g. *Perenoschiki vzbuditeley prirodnoochagovykh bolezney*, translated into English: *Vectors of diseases of natural foci*, 1965; *Metody izucheniya prirodnykh ochagov bolezney* etc.). For her scientific activities she was awarded high Soviet orders and prizes.

Czechoslovak parasitologists and medical circles have known P. A. Petrishcheva as an unflinching propagator of the natural focality

theory in particular and of medical entomology in general. Her first visit to Czechoslovakia in 1950, when she enthusiastically informed our medical circles about the new ecological concept of epidemiology of some human diseases, namely about the natural focality of diseases, was the corner-stone in the history of the natural focality research in Czechoslovakia. Her paper "Incidence of human infections in natural foci of diseases" which was translated into Czech and published in the *Journal of Czech Physicians (Časopis lékařů českých)* (90: 534—538, 1951) has been the first treatise on these problems in Czechoslovakia.

Her many trips abroad to scientific congresses and symposia were always associated with the propagation of new trends and advances in the natural focality research. Her paper which she read at the Symposium on theoretical questions of natural foci of diseases in Prague in 1963, dealing with the influence of economic activities upon natural foci of transmissible diseases, was memorable. Besides propagating scientific trends in professional circles she also promoted science in general public. Her book on natural focality "Decoded Danger" (*Razgadannaya opasnost*) was also translated into English. She trained a number of young collaborators whom she inspired to work in parasitology. She was an active member of editorial boards of several important parasitological journals and her services to the editorial council of *Folia parasitologica (Praha)* will never be forgotten. Professor Petrishcheva maintained close personal and professional contacts with many Czechoslovak specialists, several times visited Czechoslovakia and greatly contributed to the research of natural foci of diseases in this country. The world parasitology has lost one of its outstanding representatives, a tireless fighter against transmissible diseases, a great friend ready to help whenever it was necessary.

Professor Polina Andreyevna Petrishcheva, the prominent representative of the Soviet medical arachnoentomology, will long be remembered by Czechoslovak parasitologists.

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