

CENTENARY OF THE BIRTH OF ACADEMICIAN K. I. SKRYABIN

On 7 December 1978 helminthologists throughout the world commemorated the 100th anniversary of the birth of the late Academician K. I. Skryabin, the initiator of the modern concept of helminthology and the founder of the Soviet helminthological school. At the scientific conference, organized in Moscow by the USSR Academy of Sciences and the All-Union Helminthological Society to mark this important anniversary, a detailed evaluation was given of Academician Skryabin's huge heritage in the field of world helminthology and of his contribution to its advancement. The conference also paid attention to his vast teaching, scientific-organizational and popular-scientific activities. In their communications the representatives of helminthology from Socialist countries pointed out the great credit due to Academician Skryabin for the rise and rapid development of helminthological research in their respective countries. Academician Skryabin was a great personality not only in the Soviet science, but in the science of the world for many years. He died on October 17, 1972.

He was born in Saint Petersburg (now Leningrad) in the family of a transport engineer and since his childhood he was encouraged by his father to follow in his footsteps professionally. The young Constantin was not attracted by technology, but by nature. Finally, his interest in nature led him to the studies of veterinary medicine, which soon proved not enough for him. He often attended lectures at the Natural Science Department of the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics, the Yuryev University, given by prominent Russian scientists, the botanist Kuznetsov, the zoologist Andrusov. This interest in biology, together with diligent veterinary studies created a wide base for the future scientist. Already in the third year of his studies the young Skryabin published his first scientific paper on musculature of the dog and the horse. After graduating from Veterinary College he went to Tashkent and later to Chimkent (the present Uzbek SSR), where he worked as local veterinary surgeon. During his veterinary practice under difficult conditions of Central Asia he always found time for scientific work. He became interested in teratologic changes in animal organs, but in 1908 he published his first helminthological paper on nematodes found in glandular stomach of hens. However, his interest was not only directed at parasitic worms. He also collected different species of animals for the Zoological Museum of Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg of that time, plants for Professor Yachevsky and took photographs of interesting localities in deserts and steppes for Professor Fedchenko. After two years he left Chimkent for Aulie-Ata (now Djambul) in Kazakhstan. In this remote provincial town he spent four years of his life, devoted to diligent work, mainly in helminthology. Here the young veterinarian collected his first large material of helminths and, embarked on the path of the future world-famous leading figure in helminthology. In 1911 he returned to St. Petersburg and in 1912 joined the staff of the Central Veterinary laboratory where he treated an enormous material of helminths accumulated by him in Kazakhstan. He worked under the guidance of prominent zoologists—specialists in helminthology, such as Professor Braun and Professor Lühe in Germany, Professor Fuhrman in Switzerland and Professor Railliet in France. At that time helminthology was not a distinct scientific discipline, it was only a part of zoology of invertebrates.

The Great October Socialist Revolution found K. I. Skryabin in Novocherkask where he lectured at the Veterinary Institute as Professor of parasitology and invasive diseases. The young Professor Skryabin devoted all his efforts to the service of the

young Soviet state. He was indefatigable organizer of the Soviet veterinary medicine, trained young specialists for the new society, helped publish professional journals, organized new veterinary centres, never neglecting helminthology. As early as 1918 he organized first helminthological field work, the Azov expedition. Expeditions became a very important tool for a complex study of helminths and helminthoses of animals and man all over the vast territory of the USSR. This form of work made it possible to accumulate a huge material of helminths which later became a basis for the compilation of monographs on helminths of animals and man numbering many volumes. Up to the present time almost 400 such expeditions have been organized.

His enormous and many-sided scientific, teaching and administrative activities were honoured by high scientific degrees and awards. Academician K. I. Skryabin, as the only Soviet scientist, was a full member of three academies — the USSR Academy of Sciences, the USSR Academy of Medical Sciences and the Lenin All-Union Academy of Agriculture.

Great is Academician Skryabin's contribution to the advancement of helminthology in Socialist countries. Thanks to his indefatigable and unselfish help helminthology could successfully develop in Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Rumania, Yugoslavia, German Democratic Republic, Mongolia and last but not least in Czechoslovakia. Especially Czechoslovak parasitology is much indebted to him. He devoted great attention and effort in the training of new helminthologists, helped them in solving their scientific problems, offered consultations and literature. He was an exacting teacher, kind advisor and good friend. It is much to his credit that Czechoslovak helminthology can contribute to the advancement of the helminthological science in the world and to the development of our society.

Academician Skryabin will always be a paragon of great scientist and great man who devoted his entire life to the service of science and mankind.

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