



IN MEMORIAM OF YURI SERGEEVICH BALASHOV 1931–2012

The Corresponding Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Doctor of biological sciences, Professor Yuri Sergeevich Balashov has passed away on 28 September 2012 at the age of 80. Prof. Y.S. Balashov headed the Laboratory for Parasitology in the Zoological Institute of the Russian Academy of Science in Saint Petersburg for over a quarter of century and was a prominent scientist in the field of the medical and veterinary arachno-entomology and one of the most famous parasitologists in the world.

Yuri Balashov was born on 24 December 1931 in Leningrad (now Saint Petersburg) in the family of historians, who worked in the State Hermitage Museum. With the beginning of the Second World War his family was evacuated to the Northern Caucasus. After return to Leningrad he graduated from a high school in 1949 and entered the Biology Faculty of the Leningrad State University (now Saint Petersburg State University), where he received training at the department of the Invertebrate Zoology. From the earliest steps of his education, Yuri Balashov carried himself as an extremely goal-oriented and hard-working researcher. By the recommendation of Prof. V.A. Dogiel, who was the chair of the department at that time, he was sent for extended field studies at

the biological station “Dalniye Zelentsy” at the coast of the Barents Sea instead of the regular summer field courses. In 1954, Yuri Balashov graduated from the University and continued his scientific education as a postgraduate student in the Zoological Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, where he had the honor of doing research under the supervision of the academician E. N. Pavlovsky, the founder of the doctrine of the natural foci of parasitic and transmissible diseases. Within the walls of the Zoological Institute he has undergone the pathway from a postgraduate student to a deputy director and a head of a laboratory.

From 1978–2005, Yuri Balashov headed the Laboratory for Parasitology. In 1994, he was elected a Corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS). In the past ten years he also hold a position of the Councilor at RAS. In 1980s, Yuri Balashov become a vice editor of the journal “Parazitologiya” and since 1994 he has been the Editor in chief of this journal.

Nearly 60 years of his scientific activity Yuri Balashov devoted to his studies on physiology and morphology of ixodid ticks, their interrelations with vertebrate hosts and transmissible disease agents and to investigations of specificity of blood-sucking ar-

thropods, the evolution of parasite systems and roles of parasitic Acari and insects in ecosystems. Because to an initiative of Prof. Balashov, an electronic microscopy research group had been organized at the Zoological Institute in the beginning of 1970s, significantly improving the capabilities of scientific investigations in many departments of the institute. Yuri Balashov did not limit his studies to laboratory researches. Under his leaderships, numerous field expeditions, mainly to the Asian republics of the former USSR, have been carried out. His encyclopedic knowledge, rich field experience and skill in laboratory research techniques allowed him to present a great contribution to the scientific knowledge. Scientific advances of Yuri Balashov are summarized in seven monographs and over than 210 scientific publications. His monograph "Bloodsucking ticks (Ixodoidea) — vectors of diseases of man and animals" written in 1967, was a reference book for a whole generation of researchers dealing with morphology and physiology of ticks. Among numerous scientific achievements of Yuri Balashov, which cannot be fully listed here, are the finding of new relationships between bloodsucking arthropods and terrestrial vertebrates, mechanisms maintaining the

stability in the system "tick — vertebrate host", and the crucial importance of feeding and digestive processes for protective mechanisms of ticks against agents of transmissible diseases etc.

For his scientific advances in the field of parasitology, Yuri Balashov was awarded an E.N. Pavlovsky Gold Medal in 1981. In 1994, he was elected the honorary member of the International Congresses of Acarology, in 1995 he has become a honorary member of the American Entomological Society (USA). Under the supervision of Yuri Balashov, 16 candidate and doctor of science theses have been successfully defended. For the great contribution to the Russian and International science, Yuri Balashov has been awarded several medals: "For the service to the home country" of the 2nd degree, "For the Labor Valor", "For the Service in the development of the Soviet science", and "For the Valorous Work".

The bright memory of Yuri Sergeevich Balashov will remain in the hearts of his friends and colleagues.

*S.G. Medvedev and the staff of
the Laboratory for Parasitology*

Zoological Institute, Russian Academy of Sciences, Universitetskaya embankment 1, Saint Petersburg, 199034 Russia