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## In Memoriam: Mark Dmitrievich Sonin, 1932-2010

K. V. Galaktionov

*Zoological Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences*

A. J. Russ

*Zoological Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences*

O. Pugachev

*Zoological Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences*

A. Pelgunov

*Russian Academy of Sciences*

A. L. Kontrimavichus

*Center of Nature Research, Vilnius, Lithuania*

*See next page for additional authors*

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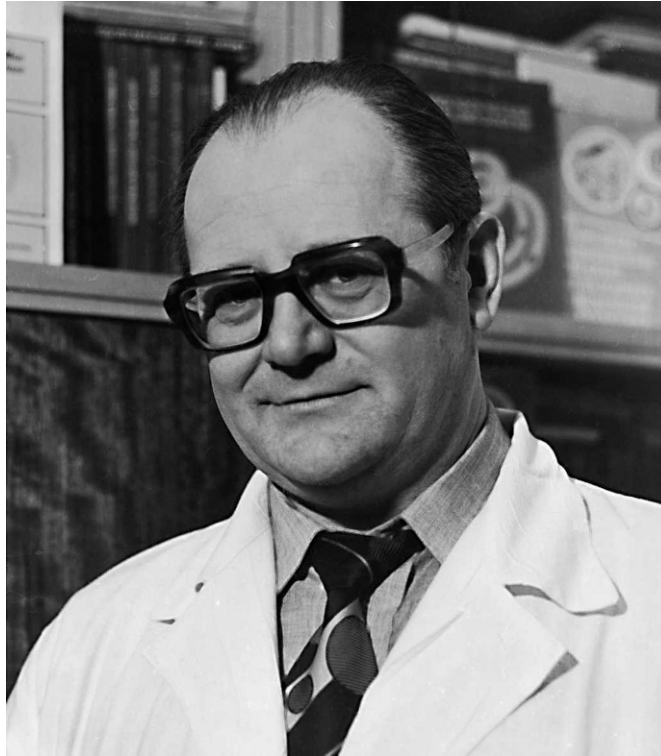
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**Authors**

K. V. Galaktionov, A. J. Russ, O. Pugachev, A. Pelgunov, A. L. Kontrimavichus, and Eric P. Hoberg

## IN MEMORIAM



### MARK DMITRIEVICH SONIN 1932–2010

Mark D. Sonin in 1974 at the Helminthological Laboratory of the Academy of Sciences, USSR (GELAN), Moscow, following the completion of his doctoral studies.

With feelings of deep regret and loss among his friends and colleagues, we sadly report the passing of Mark Dmitrievich Sonin at 78 years of age on 26 January 2010 following a long illness. As a Corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Doctor of Science in Biology, and professor, M. D. Sonin was a well-known and internationally respected scientist in the field of parasite faunistics, systematics, biogeography, and ecology of helminths. His long and distinguished career began under the guidance of Academician K. I. Skrjabin, the influential founder of the “Russian school” of helminthology.

M. D. Sonin was born on 1 August 1932 in the Ivanovskaya oblast’ in western Russia. We do not know much of his youth, and family life would have been challenging with his father having been subjected to repression in days of Stalin. He was educated in Gor’kiy (now Nizhny Novgorod) State University in 1955. From 1955–57 he was a teacher of high school, and through 1957–1960 a postgraduate student, or “aspirant” at the Helminthological Laboratory of the Academy of Sciences, USSR (GELAN) in Moscow. He received the Candidate of Sciences in 1963, the Doctor of Sciences in 1972.

Across Russia, the former Soviet Union, and globally, M. D. Sonin is best known as a nematologist who has made seminal contributions to the development of helminthology. He was the author of more than 300 scientific papers and 10 major monographs that have had a broad impact in the parasitological community. Among these works are 4

volumes, published in 1966 and 1967 and later translated to English, in the series *Osnovy Nematologii (Essentials of Nematology)* that address *Filariata of Animals and Man and the Diseases Caused by Them*. For these series of comprehensive studies he was awarded the title of K. I. Skrjabin Academician by the Russian Academy of Sciences. These studies represented contributions to our current understanding of systematics and taxonomy of the Diplostiaenoidea, Aprocotoidea, and Filarioidea and offered a new taxonomic framework for these enigmatic nematodes. The 4 volumes of *Osnovy* continue to have considerable value today as comprehensive compilations of a broad and scattered literature and as a gateway to identification and diagnostics of these significant parasites of vertebrates.

During his career, M. D. Sonin was one of the primary organizers and participants of the influential All-Union Helminthological Expeditions. Field survey and inventory of the parasites of vertebrates across the broad expanse of Russia in many ways represented the foundation of what we now recognize as our ongoing process to characterize biodiversity on a global scale. A considerable legacy is apparent in scientific collections and information on the distribution of parasite faunas that emanated from these expeditions to the remote corners of often newly explored territories. As a leader of helminthology in Russia, he further served as the editor for numerous scientific publications, and as the organizer of many All-Union and All-Russian parasitological conferences.

Starting in 1983, M. D. Sonin was the head of the Helminthological Laboratory of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, and from 1992 through 2001 he was director of the Institute of Parasitology of the

Russian Academy of Science (now the Center of Parasitology in the A. N. Svertsov Institute of Problems of Ecology and Evolution). Under the innovative leadership of M. D. Sonin, the Institute moved in new directions to study broader ecological aspects for helminths (virology, mycology, and the immunity of plants related to nematode infections) and protozoology. Under the initiative of M. D. Sonin, the Council on Parasitology was created in the Russian Academy of Sciences, serving to consolidate and strengthen the discipline across Russia. During the late 1990s independent status was received for the Helminthological Museum of the Institute, one of the most important parasitological collections globally. He was instrumental in the establishment of a joint center for science and experimentation linking the Institute of Parasitology (RAS) and the Institute of Zoology of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia.

Leadership of the Institute was only a small part of his larger organizational contributions. He was vice president of the All-Russia Society of Helminthologists and of the Russian Society of Parasitologists, chairman of the Scientific Council on Problems of Parasitology, and a member of editorial boards of several journals, including, *Parasitology* (Russia) and *Helminthologia* (Slovakia).

During recent years his interests drew special attention to studies of theoretical and practical problems in parasitology. Included were considerations about transmission and circulation of parasites in biocoenoses, questions about the evolution of parasitism, biodiversity, and the formation of parasitic complexes in urbanized ecosystems.

M. D. Sonin, an outstanding scientist and helminthologist, was elected to honorary membership in the Parasitological Society of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the national societies of Czechoslovakia and Germany in recognition of a long and eminent career. Furthermore, in honor of his contributions to the development of modern parasitology, the Presidium of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences awarded him the Mendel Medal. Beyond acclaim for M. D. Sonin as a scientist, he was widely respected, wise, versatile, educated, and always approachable. It was always simple and easy to communicate with Mark Dmitrievich Sonin, who was always willing to help colleagues both young and established, and was a good friend to many throughout their lives and careers. The good memories of our dear friend, Mark Dmitrievich Sonin, will always remain in our hearts.

**K. V. Galaktionov**, **A. J. Ryss**, **O. Pugachev**, Zoological Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Universitetskaya nab. 1, St. Petersburg 199034, Russia; **A. Pelgunov**, Center of Parasitology of the Institute of Problems of Ecology and Evolution, Russian Academy of Sciences, Leninskiy 33, Moscow 119071, Russia; **V. L. Kontrimavichus**, Institute of Ecology, Center of Nature Research, Akademijos 2, Vilnius 08412, Lithuania; **Eric P. Hoberg**, U.S. National Parasite Collection, Animal Parasitic Diseases Laboratory, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service, BARC East 1180, Beltsville, Maryland 20705.

