

**TO Dr BORIS FEODOROVICH BELYSHEV ON HIS 80th BIRTHDAY**



*WZ!*

*Dear Boris Feodorovich,*

*it seems only a while ago since we celebrated your 65th birthday in ODONATOLOGICA 4 (1975): 207-208, and yet so much has happened since then! And here we are again to offer you, on behalf of our dragonfly family, this special Tribute Issue of the journal that you helped to set up more than two decades ago, and which continues to be one of your responsibilities ever since. It was back in September 1985 that we have first made plans for this issue: we wanted to have it published exactly on your 80th birthday, December 13, 1990. But, unfortunately, we did not succeed. Unforeseen communication difficulties in postal traffic prevented the realisation of the original idea. Even so, we hope that the present collection of papers by some of your colleagues and friends from so many countries of the world will stand witness to the worldwide respect for your personality and your dedication to Science, and to the appreciation your very significant contribution to Odonatology enjoys in all quarters of the globe.*

*It is the biogeographic organisation of our planet, as revealed by dragonflies, that you have uncovered and explained to us ever since 1951, in almost 200 publications, among which 7 books. This is a personal opus that only few odonatologists have ever achieved.*

*Certainly, you were fortunate to have been born in the centre of an odonatologically interesting and, at the time, almost completely unexplored country, full of taxonomic, ecological and biogeographical problems and puzzles. But, under the prevailing circumstances, enormous will power and inventiveness were required to discover and evaluate them the way you have done all your life.*

*In your early years life in these parts of the world was unhappy and extremely hard on you. Many of your foreign friends suspected this, but nobody knew anything definite about the personal sufferings you had to sustain. In those days of unfreedom there were no ways of telling them otherwise than by hinting at a long period of "past diapause" – an expression that could not be understood by the police oppressors, but that told much, though not everything, to biologists. Only recently did the world learn about your imprisonment in the 1930s and the 20 years of suffering in the Gulag of those dark days.*

*Your young years, the periods usually considered the most productive in the life*

*of a scientist, were immensely harder than the young generation, whether at home or abroad, could ever visualize. It is quite incomprehensible that under these circumstances you were able to produce such a large scientific oeuvre.*

*You have explored the Siberian odonate fauna virtually from one corner to the other of that gigantic, often not easily accessible territory; you have discovered almost 40 taxa then considered new, and revealed the secrets and peculiarities of Siberian dragonfly life in hundreds of pages of lucid and critical technical papers. You continue to be a master of the written word and your syntheses, published in commercially available books, represent a cornerstone of the dragonfly biogeography of the world. At the same time you have provided the badly needed basic tools for identification of the adult and immature stages of the Siberian taxa, used at present by countless entomologists, hydrobiologists and other field workers throughout the Soviet Union.*

*As a teacher you have inspired all of the current generation of Siberian odonatologists, and supervised the preparation of two PhD odonatological dissertations, which, as is well known, in the Soviet educational system represent a very substantial achievement, almost a life-work.*

*Your international scientific contacts enabled many of your young colleagues and students to get in touch with the odonatological world at large. As a Charter Member of the International Odonatological Society (S.I.O.) you were and still continue to be the liaison in Soviet dragonfly matters, while the First All-Union symposium of Odonatology (Novosibirsk, 1986) was also convened largely thanks to your informal initiative. The Symposium became a tradition!*

*With your formal retirement in 1981 your active scientific work did not entirely cease, witness a dozen of papers published since then. But, at last, life is becoming calmer and quieter and, as you call it, "uneventful". It makes you happy and you consider this a compensation for all the sufferings of the past. From the distance of time you*



Fig. 1. With Dr. A.Yu. Haritonov (left) and Professor Dr J.M. Van Brink (centre), in front of the building of the USSR Academy of Sciences, Novosibirsk, September, 1978.

often dream of the rough years of your youth. You feel happy and proud that the circumstances did not break you. We feel that they may even have made you stronger; once you said to one of us that, upon reflection, you are content not having missed that terrible experience. Only a noble soul, and an extremely strong character, is able to argue this way!

Throughout your active life ALEXANDRA DENISOVA, your dear wife, has been your companion and assistant in all your activities, providing a warm environment for your work and countless small and large attentions and niceties that make a house a real home, and life rich and warm. On your 80th birthday our heartfelt congratulations also go to her, and the odonatologists, your colleagues and friends, thank her for all she did for us through her help to you!

The river of life and time flows fast. A few more years and we shall be planning the celebration of your 90th anniversary! Until then we shall still communicate a lot. In the meantime, many thanks and warmest wishes to our starshina, on behalf of the world dragonfly community, from

Yours ever,  
Anatoly Yurevich  
and  
Bastian Milanovich

A. Yu. HARITONOV<sup>1</sup> and B. KIAUTA<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Institute of Biology

Siberian Section of the USSR Academy of Sciences

Ul. Frunse 11, USSR-630091 Novosibirsk, U.S.S.R.

<sup>2</sup>S.I.O. Central Office

P.O. Box 256, NL-3720 AG Bilthoven, The Netherlands

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\* Russian titles are given along with English translation. Where an abstract/summary appears in the primary journal, only its English title is given, verbatim.

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