

In memoriam

Viktor Yefimovich Khain

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The sad news about the death of Viktor Yefimovich reached us almost after a year's delay. World geology lost one of the outstanding scientists of our times whose rich heritage consists of more than 1000 publications, 60 books included. During his 60 years of teaching activities, he was the teacher of hundreds of students, and supervisor of 67 Ph.D. students. Twenty-five of his pupils became doctors of geological sciences and prominent professors. His field work covered many regions of the former Soviet Union and the world, including the Caucasus, the Yenisei Range (Siberia) and the Tien Shan mountains (Kazakhstan). He visited and studied tectonic problems of folded belts in five continents and took part in sailing expeditions in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans as well as the Caribbean and Mediterranean. Nobody knew better than him the Geology of the World, and some of his fundamental books bear titles as Regional Geotectonics, Geology of Northern Eurasia (former USSR), Tectonics of Europe and adjacent regions thus showing the vast interests and enormous erudition of their author and/or editor. During long years, Viktor Yefimovich was the Chairman and uncontested leader of the International Tectonic Map of the World. Academician of the Academy of Sciences of USSR and of Russia, his contributions to geology found also the recognition of the European Academy of Sciences, the Azerbaijani National Academy of Sciences, the Pierre and Marie Curie University of Paris, the French, London, Bulgarian and U.S. geological societies, which elected him as honorary member. He received many awards, as the P. Fourmarier gold medal of the Belgian Royal Academy of Sciences, Steinmann medal of the German Geological Society, Prestwich Medal of the French Geological Society, Golden Medal and Diploma of the First Degree of the World Organization for Scientific Cooperation, Nobel Prize Laureate Pavlov golden badge award of the International Academy of Science Health & Ecology. V. Khain was Honorary Professor of the Lomonosov Moscow State University, Dynamic Geology department; Honorary President (since 2007) of the International Academy of Science (Health and Ecology), Austria, Innsbruck), and of the World Organization for Scientific Cooperation (WOSCO) since 2009.

Viktor Yefimovich possessed an amazing personality which deeply impressed everybody at first encounter. An eminent professor (X.) once exclaimed spontaneously "Such people should never die". The case is almost anecdotic but true. During the International Geological Congress in Moscow (1984) Academician Khain was ill and did not attend the meetings of the Tectonic Map of the World. Before the second meeting, X. approached me and said: "Do you know Professor Khain"? At my affirmative answer, he told me the phrase cited above, and at my amazement explained: "The board of the Tectonic Map has been invited at Prof. Khain's domicile. When introduced, the host said: Ah, Prof. X., I am very glad to meet you finally, I have wanted for a long time to ask you about the profile section at T. in Africa (Prof. X. had worked there more than 20 years earlier, publishing the results in 1957 – 1964). And, said X., I began recollecting my memories about these sections, but at the second phrase Khain interrupted me saying: Well, excuse me but do you have some recent studies there: in your paper of 1957 you give the following sequence . . . , and in your 1964 paper you added . . . ; and now, you are speaking quite different things!"

Personally, I have met Viktor Yefimovich at three or four international events at intervals of 6 to 10 years, and had occasional conversations with him. After a similar conversation in 1996, I met him again in 2004 at the International Geological Congress in Florence. In fact, I saw him in the street, firmly maintained (he was already 90, and not in good health) by a young colleague. I approached and said: "I am very glad to see you again, Viktor Yefimovich!" at which he answered: "I am also very glad to meet you again, Ivan Stefanovich, but cannot see you because am totally blind!". I was speechless, this man had in his brains not only thousands of geological sections all over the world but also all three names of hundreds of geologists with their faces and voices, together with their most important publications!

Viktor Yefimovich Khain was also a great friend of Bulgaria and the Bulgarian geologists. During long years, he has been member of the Editorial Council of *Geologica Balcanica*, and on several occasions has helped the Editorial Board with valuable advice. We lost a friend, a teacher, and the Patriarch of World Geology, as one newspaper has rightfully called him!