

In Memoriam: Mikhail Konstantinovich Ivanov, 1945–2012

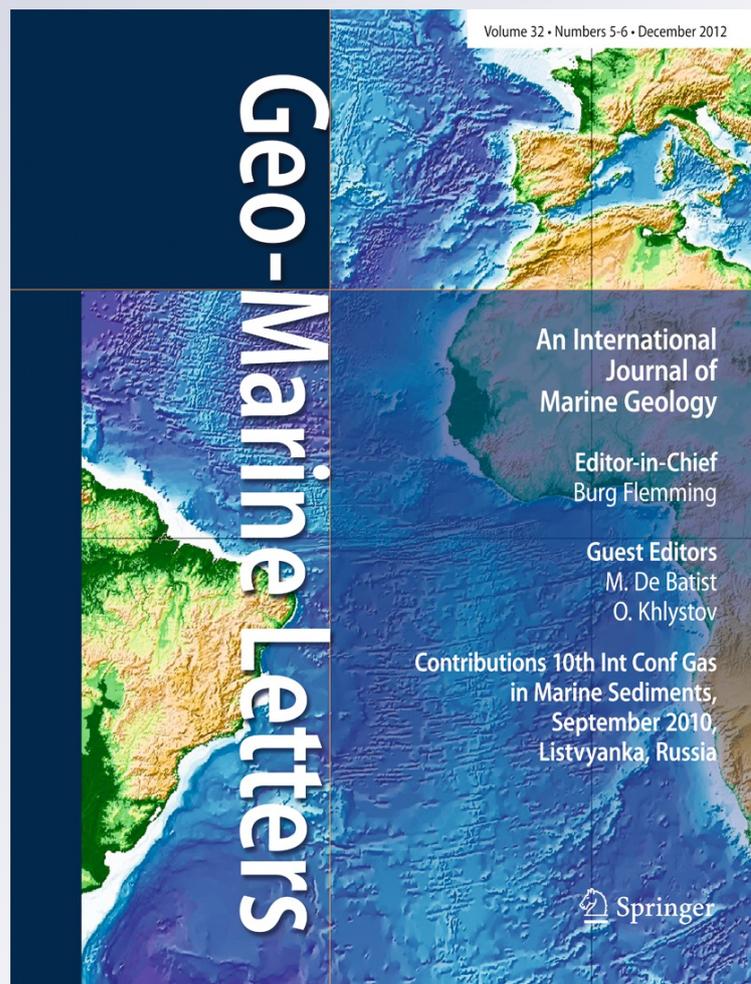
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Geo-Marine Letters

An International Journal of Marine
Geology

ISSN 0276-0460
Volume 32
Combined 5-6

Geo-Mar Lett (2012) 32:379-382
DOI 10.1007/s00367-012-0289-8



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Received: 28 March 2012 / Accepted: 4 April 2012 / Published online: 9 May 2012
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Abstract The guest editors Marc De Batist and Oleg Khlystov dedicate this special double issue of Geo-Marine Letters, presenting contributions from the 10th International Conference on Gas in Marine Sediments (September 2010, Lake Baikal, Russia), to the memory of Mikhail Konstantinovich Ivanov. The author of this In Memoriam is Alexei Suzyumov, former staff member of UNESCO responsible for the TTR program.

For his Russian colleagues and students he was “Mikhail Konstantinovich”. For others he was “Michael”, “Mikhail” or “Professor Ivanov”. For his friends he was just Misha. Prof. Dr. Mikhail Ivanov (my friend Misha; Fig. 1) passed away on the 15th of February 2012. A few citations from many messages of condolence will help recognizing the role he played for the last 20 years or so in the world of marine sciences:

“... Misha will always remain in my memory and for several reasons: great scientist, great TTR and lab organizer, great professor and simply a great man. He built such a fantastic program (TTR) when Russia was facing so many difficulties ...” (Jean Mascle, Observatoire Océanologique de Villefranche sur Mer, France);

“... The sad news about Mikhail brought to my mind all the vivid, extraordinary moments spent during TTR cruises and meetings ... Many of our students could enjoy the TTR experience and profited from this program – from 2003 five PhD theses, five Master theses and over 15 undergraduate projects were completed

and many more will be accomplished ... I am greatly in debt with Mikhail not only by these achievements but mostly by his unconditional friendship, support and vision. It was the honour to share some moments of Mikhail’s life!” (Marina Ribeiro da Cunha, Departamento de Biologia, Universidade de Aveiro, Portugal);

“... Mikhail as we remember him from many occasions, both onboard the Logachev and during meetings and conferences, was always inspiring and stimulating company, prepared to pursue new ideas and untraditional ways to go. His leadership onboard during the numerous TTR cruises left an unforgettable impression on the participants, both students and scientists. This involved both the practical work on deck, scientific discussions, teaching hours, and last but not least the fantastic social atmosphere we had onboard. We are grateful for having known and having worked with Mikhail, and we will truly miss him” (Tove Nielsen and Antoon Kuijpers, Geological Survey of Denmark, Copenhagen).

And now a few words from young scientists:

“... Mikhail Ivanov provided me with a first glance of what Marine Geology really is. I will never forget the TTR-9 and TTR-12 campaigns, as well as the endless new discoveries the TTR programme provided to the scientific community, every summer, during the 1990's and 2000's. They made me the scientist I am now, and forever moulded my view of the World” (Tiago M. Alves, Cardiff University). And also: “Having had the privilege of knowing Professor Mikhail Ivanov and the opportunity to work as a young researcher in three TTR cruises in the last decade, I must recognize how much Professor Ivanov taught and

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Fig. 1 2004: M. Ivanov during the TTR-14 cruise

inspired many of us and I am sure that he will remain long in our memory” (Francisco Curado, Portugal). “We lost a very big scientist and a very special professor”, says Loubna Tehrzaz from Morocco.

Mikhail Ivanov (24.10.1945–15.02.2012) became widely known to the international scientific community from the early 1990s when he finally convinced a group of academics from Western Europe to launch, under the auspices of UNESCO and its Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), an innovative program in marine geosciences that would seek achieving more effective training of students and young researchers through their participation in advanced multidisciplinary research works. This happened after a few years of negotiations, formal and informal meetings and workshops, and a demonstration cruise that he organized in 1990. The founding group formulated the program’s guiding principle as “Training-through-Research” (TTR). It was decided to concentrate research efforts on the most intriguing scientific issues and make a research vessel an annual “floating university” with shipboard training in science.

The first TTR cruise was carried out in the summer of 1991 in the Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean on board the newly constructed, large (5,800 t) Russian R.V. *Gelendzhik* (followed later by her sister-ship R.V. *Prof. Logachev*) specifically designed and equipped for deep-sea geological-geophysical investigations. From these early days of TTR, M. Ivanov recognized that the large size of the vessel would be particularly important for the program’s goals. It not only provided an instrumental platform for advanced multidisciplinary studies but also allowed to gather onboard a critical number of scientists and students that generated a fruitful atmosphere for educational activities, ideas’ testing and exchange.

TTR was designed and has been carried out as a mutually beneficial program of cooperation, networking and co-

funding. The future of the program depended primarily on the research achievements, and Mikhail was the one who was able to ensure its success. The first TTR results were introduced to the European Science Foundation (ESF), and this organization agreed to finance students’ exchange and TTR annual workshops for the following 3 years. This was really indispensable support at the start of the program, which shaped it for another 20 years of operation. The Training-through-Research approach promoted by M. Ivanov soon became very popular—because it was exceptionally successful.

Under his leadership and in cooperation with many other partners, the TTR cruises (of which M. Ivanov was the organizer and permanent Co-chief Scientist) conducted detailed studies of mud volcano processes, diapirism, fluids’ discharge and related phenomena of mass input from the geosphere into the hydrosphere and biosphere on Atlantic margins and adjacent seas, and contributed to research on environment-specific ecosystems of deep-water coral reefs. Pioneering studies of gas hydrates were undertaken as well as that of deep-water sedimentary depositional systems (modern analogues of ancient oil reservoirs) and processes of their formation on continental margins.

The program has provided for capacity development in specific domains of marine science, including seabed processes, resources and ecosystems. Over 1,000 students and young researches from practically all countries of Eastern and Western Europe, North Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and Asia became involved in these studies and received advanced training through the participation in (by now) 18 TTR cruises, mid-cruise workshops and post-cruise conferences (Fig. 2). All these elements that have been included in the annual cycle of the program have made it a quite unique endeavour that ultimately promoted the creation of an expansive international collaborative network of seasoned and young scientists. The cruise scientific reports, proceedings of the TTR conferences and annual reports have regularly been published by the IOC (available from the site of UNESCO documents, UNESDOC). Several hundred research papers have been published by the cruises’ participants in international peer-reviewed journals.

M. Ivanov came to marine sciences as an experienced specialist in petroleum geology. He graduated from the Department of Petroleum Geology and Geochemistry (Faculty of Geology, Moscow State University, MSU) in 1969 and remained attached to this Department throughout his entire career. His PhD thesis (1975) was based on field studies of the petroleum potential of the Chukotka peninsula (far northeast Russia). He continued field studies in the eastern parts of Russia but gradually became more interested in the petroleum potential of the World Ocean. In the 1980s he took part in several cruises with the R.V. *Akademik Petrovskiy* (the MSU ship) to the Black and Mediterranean

Fig. 2 2008: M. Ivanov (centre) with the participants of the TTR-17 cruise



seas to study mud volcanism and gas-hydrate accumulation processes. He was a lecturer and associate professor until 1999, when he obtained his Doctor of Sciences degree and became a full professor. It was a combination of his pedagogical insight and his vision as a scientist that helped Ivanov to formulate the idea of an international “floating university”.

Prof. Ivanov was Director of the UNESCO-MSU Centre for Marine Geology and Geophysics established in support of the TTR program, and a holder of the UNESCO/IOC Chair in Marine Geology and Geophysics, the training “arm” of the program. He was a member of the editorial board of the journal *Marine and Petroleum Geology*.

TTR was a very important, albeit not the only part of his professional life. Over 40 years of his career were devoted to petroleum geology research and education. In 2004 he was elected Head of the abovementioned Petroleum Department, the biggest in the Geology Faculty. In the last few years he greatly transformed his Department by fitting it with modern, advanced equipment and by forging partnerships with many geological and petroleum companies such as the Russian Rosneft, Gazprom and Lukoil, but also internationally with Shell, Statoil, ConocoPhillips, Total, TNK-BP, Petrobras, Exxon Mobil and others. His former students now work in these and other companies in Russia and abroad. He co-authored over 200 research papers, including 70 papers published in international journals. In recognition of his research achievements, he was elected a member of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Russia. M. Ivanov was decorated with the (national) Gold Lomonosov Medal for outstanding results in education, and the 50th anniversary commemorative medal in recognition of his outstanding contribution to IOC program activities.

In his behaviour, Mikhail was a leader. He combated his illness with unprecedented strength. Despite his poor health, in September 2011 he organized and convened the TTR-18 cruise to the Arctic Ocean. It was a smaller-scale cruise and his last one ... He defended his scientific convictions forcefully, but always based those convictions on research results. He was very specific in his research, his watchword being less speculation, more multidisciplinary data. He knew shipboard equipment in detail as well as various research methods, could efficiently combine them and was always happy to transfer his knowledge to others. Mikhail was a generous host on board “his” ship but, during operations at sea, his authority was indisputable. He was a natural educator who liked very much to work with students, teaching them not just science but also helping them to find their way in life. He was surrounded by young people and was able to establish a special atmosphere of creativity, teamwork and benevolence. With this in mind, John Woodside, the first TTR Coordinator (from The Netherlands), wrote to me: “... for me (and I am sure for you also) TTR was not the important part – that was Michael and the people that joined him in the great adventure. I miss Misha very much”.

Luis Pinheiro (Vice-Chairman of the Portuguese Oceanographic Committee) echoed: “... Michael was an outstanding scientist, a friend to all of us, and someone to whom we all owe so much. There are not enough words to express our gratitude for all he has done for the young scientists all over the world ... I am sure all the Portuguese scientists and students from various generations who have had the opportunity to share with him time at sea during the wonderful TTR cruises that he organized ... share the same feeling and will

always remember his immense knowledge, huge experience at sea and friendship”.

On the 1st of March 2012 the R.V. *Meteor* (cruise 86–5) working west of the Gulf of Cadiz (Atlantic Ocean) discovered at the depth of 4,500 m a complex, active mud-volcano structure. The research team on board (headed by Christian Hensen) gave to it the name of Mikhail Ivanov.

“... Only half a year ago he was decorated with the IOC medal for his outstanding contribution to the IOC activities. I am sure that what was started by him so efficiently and successfully will be continued by those who he made to

believe the importance of working together with a vision of seeing the Ocean safe and secure” wrote Wendy Watson-Wright, Assistant Director-General of UNESCO—words under which many of Mikhail’s friends, colleagues and students would have signed.

Alexei Suzumov

Former staff member of UNESCO responsible for the TTR program