THERMOCHIMICA ACTA

LEV GERMANOVICH BERG
1896–1974

The science of thermal analysis has sustained a grievous loss through the death on 30th March 1974 of Lev Germanovich Berg, Professor of Inorganic Chemistry at the University of Kazan, U.S.S.R.

His father, of German stock, was Professor of German at the University of Kazan and it was in this town in 1896 that Lev Germanovich was born and indeed spent the major part of his life. After graduating from the Kazan Veterinary Institute he remained there for post-graduate studies before transferring to the University of Kazan. His early scientific research, for which he was awarded the Kucherov Prize of the Russian Physics Society, was concerned with investigations on oxyacids of chlorine.

In 1930, at the invitation of Academician N. S. Kurnakov, he joined the Institute of Physico-Chemical Analysis of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences in Leningrad and accompanied Kurnakov to Moscow in 1934 to the Institute known since 1939 as the Kurnakov Institute of General and Inorganic Chemistry of the

Academy of Sciences. From this period stemmed Prof. Berg's lifelong interest in thermal analysis, the quality of his work being such that he was awarded the degree of Candidate of Chemical Science in 1936 without the necessity of submitting a thesis. After Kurnakov's death in 1941, he continued, along with A. V. Nikolaev, E. Ya. Rode, T. V. Rode, I. S. Rassonskaya and others, to develop thermal analysis at the Institute in Moscow and with the first two named published in 1944 the first book in any language on thermal analysis—*Termografiya*. In 1943, the degree of Doctor of Chemical Science was awarded to him for a thesis on "Thermal Analysis as a Method of Physico-Chemical Analysis" and in 1947 he became Professor.

On his return to Kazan in 1950— to the Arbuzov Chemical Institute of the Kazan Section of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences—Prof. Berg was fired with the ambition to make Kazan a Soviet if not a world centre for thermal analysis. Along with his collaborators he continued there his studies on the use of DTA in phase analysis of inorganic systems and on theory with particular reference to quantitative determinations and apparatus development. Much of his work was of relevance in the processing and purification of natural salts, a subject that interested him through his expeditions to the salt lakes of the U.S.S.R. He also organized three national conferences on thermal analysis, two in Kazan in 1953 and 1957, and the third in Riga in 1962, and was elected Chairman of the U.S.S.R. Committee on Thermal Analysis. The transactions of the first two conferences are not only full of scientific information in papers of excellent quality but are also valuable historical documents showing the state and status of thermal analysis at a time when chemical applications were more widespread in the U.S.S.R. than in the west. In 1953 he was awarded the Lenin Prize for his achievements.

Prof. Berg was appointed to the Chair of Inorganic Chemistry in the University of Kazan in the mid 1960's and occupied this post till his death. His interests continued along the sames lines and with his colleagues he published in all over 200 papers, monographs and books. *An Introduction to Thermal Analysis*, which was first published in 1962 and which appeared in a thoroughly revised and extended second edition in 1969, must still be regarded as one of the classical publications in the field and reveals the profundity and clarity of his thought.

Although he travelled little abroad, Prof. Berg always had an international outlook. Already in 1963 he was thinking in terms of an international conference on thermal analysis and as a member of the Organizing Committee was instrumental in getting the First International Conference in Aberdeen in 1965 off the ground. At this conference Prof. Berg was elected first President of the international organization then formed (now the International Confederation for Thermal Analysis), an office he held till 1968. On his 70th birthday in 1966, the University of Kazan held a celebration at which greetings and good wishes from foreign as well as Soviet scientists were presented to him.

To those who knew him, Lev Germanovich was a gentleman in every sense of the word. Despite his achievements and his eminence he was essentially a humble man who laid much store on friendship. He and his wife Anna were a devoted

couple who enjoyed cultural interests outside the field of science, particularly music.

To his widow and colleagues we of the scientific community express our deepest sympathy on the loss of a husband, a man eminent in science nationally and internationally, and a friend.

R. C. MacKenzie