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REMEMBERING V. F. LAZUTKIN

Many years have gone away since then a short student with spectacles – Vladimir Lazutkin – addressed me asking to give him a problem to work on. At that time our Leningrad school on diffraction was rising up: the method of diffraction boundary layers permitted to solve more and more problems. We started with Volodya to study the difficult, to my mind, problem about eigenfunctions concentrated in the vicinity of a geodesic line at a border of a finite domain.

To be a supervisor of students diploma theses is the job damaging your soul: as a rule you can do everything what you proposed to do for your student and to do it better than he can. Conceit appears and it can begin the mental degeneration. It could be rather bad unless such students as Volodya exist whom you can not dominate. He was a virtuoso of formulae and often found impressive approaches to solution which had missed his supervisor.

His analytical mastership was combined with trend to superior fields of mathematics quite nontraditional to diffraction theory. Once a guest from Novosibirsk visited our seminar. Volodya was the speaker. I remember how terribly astonished was the guest when Volodya began his talk with the words " Let A be a topological space...."

We have been taught during Stalin's times: " There are no unique people". I do not want to discuss this doubtful statement. However, Volodya is not any longer among us and he is unique.

V.M. Babich – former supervisor of V.F. Lazutkin

First I met Volodya at the beginning of our studentship at the physical faculty and for many years afterwards our lives had many intersections.

He was a very modest person, very punctual in studies without difference whether it was mathematics or history of the Communist Party. To my surprise, however, he was able to do something quite adventurous like to work as a woodcutter during vacations or to travel in winter to Moscow without any money in the pocket hitchhiking seldom autos or using locomotive instead of sleeping cars.

He was not among those who got only excellent marks for exams but his knowledge in favorite subjects was deep and much beyond the programs. First he did not work in pure mathematics preferring problems which had visual physical sense. But his tastes in research slowly changed to more and more rigorous considerations.

Volodya's personal life was not easy. He lost his first child who died from pneumonia. Only in his second marriage he got real support and happiness.

By no means Volodya was a conformist and it results in various tensions with authorities and later in real troubles with the secret service. Only changes in our country gave him opportunities to travel abroad.

In life he had not many close friends but after his death numerous scientists remember his generosity, reliability, and mathematical talents.

S.Yu. Slavyanov – university mate of V.F. Lazutkin

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