Russian Mathematicians in the 20th Century

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RUSSIAN MATHEMATICIANS IN THE 20TH CENTURY

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Preface

Several years ago, Dr. Sen Hu from World Scientific Publishing Co. approached me with a suggestion to publish a volume of selected papers of Soviet mathematicians that were done in the twentieth century. Certainly, it was a sign of respect and appreciation for Soviet mathematics, and I agreed to participate in the preparation of the corresponding edition. Dr. Hu asked several leading Russian mathematicians for the names of people whose works should be included. After the list was completed, he and I started a long and difficult process of selecting papers from each author. We wanted to maintain some parity, and at the same time, include papers of some interest even nowadays.

This volume is essentially the result of our efforts. There is some difference between the mathematical talent of people working under a totalitarian regime, and those working in a democratic society. Soviet mathematicians much more often discussed “what to do” rather than “how to do”. Maybe this difference of styles can be seen in this edition.

There is every reason to expect that this volume will be useful to many researchers who preserve some interest in how mathematics was done in the Soviet Union in the past.

Ya. G. Sinai
February 2003

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