

Memories of V. I. Ogievetsky

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In 1971 a little after I finished my PhD exams and did some work with my de facto supervisor Ladislau Banyai from Institute of Physics of the Romanian Academy, Laci (Banyai) was about to spend a year in France doing research. We went on to discuss what I will be doing in the meantime and Laci suggested that I should interact with other people maybe go to Dubna. He was just back from a conference where he met V.I. Ogievetsky with whom he established an instant contact. This was the way Victor Isaakovich was: truly fascinating. So in the middle of April 1973 I arrived in Dubna and soon afterwards I met Victor Isaakovich for the first time, this was the time he was completing his work with Borisov on gravity as the closure of nonlinear realization of affine and conformal symmetry. I started by getting acquainted with this work, and maybe I am the only person in the world which got introduced to the theory of gravity in this way. Eventually I settled on computing the graviton-graviton scattering just to learn that it was computed already by Bryce de Witt some time ago. Life in the Victor Isaakovich group was quite exciting, one of the stories he told me was about the difference between Landau and Tamm: when a student went to Landau, he was leaving with the impression that Landau knows everything and he knows nothing on the opposite when a student will ask Tamm a question he will be lead to consider that he is moving something, that he should pursue the subject, This last, was the type a person Victor Isaakovich was, always willing to help always willing to make a positive remark. Beyond physics he had an unbelievable broad range, with the same ease he would be able to comment about literature art or about the chess match between Karpov and Korchnoi, if I remember correctly. I witnessed this during our lunches in different places in Dubna, when he was volleying with Boris Nikolaevich Valuev which was joining him for lunch many times. He encouraged us to obtain permission to attend seminars at FIAN in Moscow. Specifically this was the seminar of Evgenii L'vovich Feinberg, where I was able to attend even a seminar by the then not very "popular" D. I. Sakharov, not to speak about seminars by other remarkable members of that group.

At the beginning of 1974 Victor Isaakovich started to work on the newly revived supersymmetry, he directed me toward the articles of Wess and Zumino and Golfand and Lichtman, and of course Volkov and Akulov. I remember about his notebook in which he was redoing a lot of supersymmetry computations in the simpler version of 3 dimensions. I was welcome in his office where I had the opportunity to meet a lot physicists among them Smorodinsky, Kirzhnits. I was lucky enough to meet Akulov, but not Volkov as he did not visit Dubna in the time span spent by me there, but as it happened I hosted a seminar

by D. Leites in my apartment in Dubna because he came to Dubna without the necessary papers so he could not make it in the Institute. One of the days when I went to Victor Isaakovich's office, Ivan Todorov was there and I could hear the end of the conversation: he is a very good young man and I will like you to take care of him. In a few months I had the pleasure to meet Emery Sokatchev who arrived in Dubna. I had a lot of interaction with Emery and with Zhenya Ivanov during my stay in Dubna. Another outstanding occasion was the visit of Berezin in Dubna, Victor Isaakovich had him in high regards, so this was the first time I joined him to the river Dubna where we were sitting on some benches next to the river, we had Berezin explain his latest achievements.

One story which I vividly remember to this day, was about how Victor Isaakovich defended his Candidate (PhD) thesis. This was around 1953 when many people were haunted by the authorities in the bor'ba s kosmopolitizmom', so Victor Isaakovich just finished his thesis and was preparing to defend it, when the "prikaz" came that the material of his thesis was classified, however Victor Isaakovich did not get access to classified information so that overnight he was put in the situation that he could not defend his thesis because he did not have legal access to it, not having access to classified information. So what did Victor Isaakovich do in this situation? He just produced another thesis which he submitted in due time.

One thing which bothered Victor Isaakovich a lot was that he was what is called "nevyezdnoi" (with few exceptions which took a lot of effort from the Institute and from Victor Isaakovich). He always had a pile of invitations, I remember from Gursev, from Bidenharn, from Salam, to which he was supposed to answer, not in the way he put it by faking a Russian accent and saying: I am told that I am sick. This situation eventually changed with the coming of perestroika, then he wrote to me (I was already living in the States!) that I should visit Dubna which I did in 1989, and in the following year he visited us together with Margarita Mikhailovna here in Miami. I still had the pleasure to see him one more time in Bonn Germany where in the company of late Vladimir Rittenberg he spent one year as Humboldt Invited Professor.

In retrospect I was extremely fortunate to be able to work in the group of Victor Isaakovich, and it was also very important for my later career. A lot of years passed, but I still miss him a lot.