REMINISCENCES OF S. A. YANOVSKAYA

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I met Sof'ya Aleksandrovna Yanovskaya (1896 – 1966) when I was a student of the Mechanico-Mathematical College (Mech.-Mat.) of Moscow University in 1937. She taught the special course on Mathematical Logic, which was very interesting for me. Later I also heard her course on History of Mathematics. She directed the Department [*kafedra*] of History of Mathematics, and led the Seminar in History of Mathematics — before World War II jointly with Mark Yakovlevich Vygodsky (1898 – 1965), and after World War II jointly with Adolf Pavlovich Yushkevich (1906 – 1993). I often talked with Sof'ya Aleksandrovna about philosophical and historical problems, and these talks exerted a strong influence on me.

Sof'ya Aleksandrovna was a convinced Marxist and I often asked her to explain problems of dialectics that were incomprehensible to me. She usually told me that the best model of dialectics is an electric bell consisting of a coil with an iron core closing the electrical circuit: when an electrical current flows through this circuit, the coil attains the properties of a magnet; it attracts the core and breaks the circuit, then the coil loses the properties of a magnet and the core returns to its initial position, closes the circuit, and a new current begins to flow. We often discussed the problems of stability of phenomena and questions about the structure of feudal society and of the duality between feudal and capitalist societies.

In 1951, when I was professor of the Department of Geometry of Azerbaijan University in Baku and I began to teach the course on