

Personalia

IN MEMORY OF S. A. YANOVSKAYA (1896 – 1966) ON THE CENTENARY OF HER BIRTH¹

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Currently there are already comprehensive papers which document and analyze the heritage of S. A. Yanovskaya, and her contribution to history and philosophy of mathematics as well as to the formation and defense of mathematical logic in the USSR (see [Anellis 1987]). Yet the centenary of her birth is an appropriate opportunity to raise recollections which may add some traits to the image of this eminent scholar and superb human being.

Below I am going to publish and comment on (the translation of) some documents, among them letters addressed to me by S.A. From a personal perspective these documents, dated 1951, tell the story of how I was accused of “bourgeois idealism”, and how, due to the guidance and support of my mentors and especially of S.A., I managed to overcome the danger of these accusations in an era of persecution of idealists”, “cosmopolites”, and others. But beyond my personal affairs the documents apparently present some additional evidence on the general atmosphere surrounding mathematical logic at that time and to the struggle of S.A. for its legitimacy and consolidation.

§1. The Seminar.

My first acquaintance with S.A. occurred in 1947 at the seminar she ran together with P. S. Novikov. Having graduated from the Chernovtsy University, I had just started my Ph.D. studies at the Kiev Mathematical Institute of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences. The director of the

¹ Received March 12, 1997.