MEMORIES OF MEDVEDEV —
A KIND AND GENTLE BEAR

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Historian of mathematics Feodr Andreevich Medvedev died about a year ago (late May ?) at his home in Moscow. He was born on 18 February 1923 and took his post-secondary studies at the Kaluga Pedagogical Institute before beginning his research in history of mathematics in the Department of History of Mathematics of the Institute for History of Science and Technology of the Russian Academy of Sciences in 1955. The exact date of his death is unknown, as he lived alone in his apartment, having lost his wife earlier, and he lay undiscovered for several days before alarmed colleagues from the Institute for History of Science and Technology decided to check on him and broke down the door.

I first became acquainted with the name Medvedev through Ivor Grattan-Guinness's double review in *History and Philosophy of Logic* of Medvedev's «Ранняя история аксиомы выбора» [*Early History of the Axiom of Choice*] and Gregory H. Moore's *Zermelo's Axiom of Choice*, which also appeared in 1982. Both books are very similar, although Medvedev's is more chronologically limited, proceeding in its account only to the end of World War I. It is characteristically generous of Medvedev that when I talked to him in 1987, he expressed to me the opinion that Moore's book was the better of the two. When he made some deprecating remarks about his own work, I said «не говори так!» ("Don't say such a thing!", literally, "Don't talk like that"), and he asked: «Почему?» ("Why?", really meaning "Why not?"). When I met Grattan-Guinness two years later at the International Charles S. Peirce Sesquicentennial Symposium at Harvard University in September 1989, I told him of this exchange, and he replied that he thought this intellectual modesty and generosity to be typical of Medvedev.

Medvedev's name became increasingly familiar to me as I read his papers in *Trudy Inst. Ist. i Estestv. Nauk* and *Ist.-mat. Issled.* Medvedev, besides being the most active worker in history of set theory and related areas such as general function theory and topology, was also the most thorough and systematic, and with the most solid technical interests and expertise. It is not surprising therefore that he should have produced a number of papers directly relating to technical aspects of Cantorian transfinitism. His