

On passing away of Zygmunt Zahorski*

Henryk Fast

I was bonded with Professor Zygmunt Zahorski by a long-standing friendship and similar interests in mathematics. I visited him always when I was in Łódź.

I met him still during my early student times and got to know him much better in the years to come. I knew him as a warm unpretentious man, totally devoid of the artificial poise so frequently found among important academics. Easily accessible, he was never too busy to stop and tell you about a mathematical problem which excited him at that moment and was equally ready to listen to your ideas and to engage into impromptu looking for solutions. And not only one could talk with him about mathematics but about personal matters as well.

I asked him in my time to be one of two reviewers of my PhD dissertation, however some complications, which I don't even remember, prevented him to do that.

Among the Polish mathematical establishment of that time he was a maverick of a kind. He didn't seem to lean toward any of the "inner groups" and was the only one among the mathematicians of stature who have not held a position at the Mathematical Institute of the Academy.

By many he was considered an eccentric and perhaps, by the standards of the times, he was. I recall one of the characteristic anecdotes told later about his meeting with Kuratowski in Warsaw. He went there to collect a substantial amount of cash owed to him for something. He chattered and drank coffee unconcerned that it continued until very late at night. When he finally left the last trains to Łódź was already gone and he had to have a class early in the morning. Without hesitation he hired a taxi to take him from Warsaw to Łódź. And for the fare... he had to pay all the money for which he went to Warsaw...

He was eager to attack problems of gigantic difficulty with unbelievable persistence. Years he has devoted the classical, open for many years Lusin's problem about trigonometric series. Unfortunately without final success which belonged finally to Carleman.

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When in United States I was a member of some group connected with journal Real Analysis Exchange and I participated in traditional annual conferences organized by this group (held in United States as well as in other countries, in particular in Poland), I was a witness of congratulations and appreciations for Professor Zahorski's results in the subject of differentiability. Especially from my friend Andy Bruckner, Professor in Californian University in Santa Barbara, author of a famous work concerning this subject.



From left: Henryk Fast, Borge Jessen and Zygmunt Zahorski