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CHRONICLE

Armin Genrikhovich Stromberg Has Passed Away

Armin Genrikhovich Stromberg, one of Russia's oldest analysts and the founder of the Tomsk scientific school of stripping voltammetry, passed away on September 18, 2004.

One might say he was a chemist by blood: his grandfather had a private chemical laboratory in Yekaterinburg. Stromberg graduated from the Urals Polytechnic Institute in 1930 and then worked at the analytical laboratory of the chemical industry's Urals Research Institute for two years. He spent the next 18 years working at the USSR Academy of Sciences' (Urals Division) Institute of Solid-State Chemistry, was head of its analytical laboratory for seven years (from 1943 until 1950). In 1942–1943, Stromberg was interned with the special German detachment at the NKVD's Tagil Camp Complex; he would be fully exonerated in 1992.

In 1939, Stromberg defended his candidate's dissertation. In 1950, he was dismissed from the Institute for being politically suspect (a German) and for six years held the posts of Associate Professor and, from 1954, Professor in the Division of Physical and Colloidal Chemistry at Urals State University. In 1951, Stromberg defended his doctoral dissertation on the basics of amalgam polarography; he would spend the next 50 years and more developing and refining this branch of electrochemistry as one of the discoverers of the theoretical fundamentals of stripping voltammetry (SVA).

In 1956, Stromberg moved to Tomsk, where he would head the Division of Physical and Colloidal Chemistry of Tomsk Polytechnic Institute for the next 30 years. In 1962, he organized a fundamental research laboratory of trace impurities at the division and headed it almost to the end of his life. The laboratory's researchers developed both the theoretical fundamentals and practical basics of stripping voltammetry. Stromberg supervised more than 100 candidate dissertations and 5 doctoral dissertations. He was the author of more than 450 scientific papers, and his index of citations in voltammetry is one of the largest.

Stromberg used to say that the principles he followed in life were put forward long before he was born; however, he followed these principles as it they were his own. They were "Life is short; act now," "I take great joy in every new thing," "Plato is dear to me, but dearer still is truth," and so on. Indeed, he used every hour and minute up to his death to widen his knowledge and to advance science.

In 1985, when Stromberg was 75, he begun studying approximation models to describe the analytical signals in SVA. To do so, he would eventually (at the age of almost 90!) have to master computer technologies. In his remaining few years, Professor Stromberg supervised four candidate dissertations in this field; one of his former students is now preparing to defend a doctoral dissertation.

Stromberg was a very kind person, but maintained high principles when considering scientific problems. He wrote in one of his autobiographies that he ruined his relations with many people he should not have for the sake of his career, and that he was a romantic in science.

Professor Stromberg was a prizewinning laureate of the Russian Academy of Sciences' Scientific Council on Analytical Chemistry, an Honored Chemist, and a Soros Professor Emeritus. He was decorated with the Order of People's Friendship, the Order of Honor, and five lesser medals.

Stromberg was always concerned about and interested in the successes and failure of his students and colleagues. He always worried about their having proper living conditions. His house was open to his students, for whom he would play Chopin's preludes. He had learned these preludes by heart at the age of 80; this became helpful later when he had eye trouble. Stromberg did not like watching television very much. He was an amazing person, at once strict and gentle, serious and humorous. He was a teacher who was never above learning from his pupils.

Stromberg passed away as few other people have, by saying goodbye to all of us. On his 94th birthday on September 16, he gave each of his students a copy of his book *Tomskoi elektrokhimicheskoi shkole i problemnoi laboratorii 40 let* (The Tomsk Electrochemical School and Fundamental Research Laboratory Turns Forty), in which he summed up the events of his scientific life.

The warm and glowing memory of Armin Genrikhovich Stromberg, our great and beloved teacher, will live in our hearts forever.