Commentationes Mathematicae Universitatis Carolinae

Introduction

This issue is dedicated to the 120th birthday anniversary of Eduard Čech.

Eduard Čech (June 29, 1893 – March 15, 1960) is well-known among mathematicians for his work in differential geometry and topology, both general and algebraic. Readers may find several descriptions of Čech's life and work in various papers or books — we mention the book *The Mathematical Legacy of Eduard Čech*, Academia Prague 1993, edited by M. Katětov and P. Simon.

Less known are Čech's other important activities for the mathematical community. We can mention his contributions to the teaching of mathematics at grammar schools (textbooks, essays, papers, seminars) and his initiation in 1951 of the Mathematical Olympiad. He was a leader in organizing mathematics in Czechoslovakia after the 2nd world war both in the Academy and the Charles University (among others, he established the Mathematical Institute of Charles University). In about 1959 E. Čech initiated the Prague Topological Symposium which has become one of the most important meetings of general topologists in the world. This was especially important in the politically divided world in those years.

Also in 1959 he established the first mathematical journal at Charles University, Commentationes Mathematicae Universitatis Carolinae, and prepared a paper for its first issue. He would certainly be happy to know that this journal CMUC has become one of the most cited journals in general topology. For that reason this issue, devoted to the 120th anniversary of Čech's birthday, contains only papers connected to general topology.

Finally, I would like to add two personal reminiscences. E. Čech was teaching the course on analytic geometry when I started to study at Charles University. He had a habit of explaining the boundary of a set by climbing on a window sill and saying "I am neither inside nor outside". One of my classmates used that scene as a key point in his successful detective story. About two years later while riding in a tram, I was reading a newly published book by Čech on topological spaces. A man sitting next to me asked how I can read such a terrible book. It turned out he was a teacher at a grammar school and knowing Čech's textbooks for his school, he had bought that new book and was highly disappointed by its content.

Miroslav Hušek, April 2013