

The name of Lev Petrovich Pitaevsky is well known to physicists all over the world due to his works in various fields of physics: from fundamental works on low temperature physics, helium-4 and helium-3 superfluidity, superfluidity theory near the phase transition point to Bose-Einstein condensation of cold atoms, Van der Waals force theory (with E. M. Lifshitz and I. E. Dzialoshinsky), the Gross-Pitaevskii equation for non-ideal Bose gases, and the theory of collisionless ionospheric plasma (with A. V. Gurevich). Pitaevsky's works have also made significant contributions to quantum mechanics and statistical physics. These works have received numerous awards, including the Landau Gold Medal, the Fermi Prize, the Pomeranczuk Prize, and the Lars Onsager Prize.

With the death of Lev Petrovich, an entire era in theoretical physics ends - the last author of the unique Course in Theoretical Physics by Landau and Lifshitz has passed away. After the untimely death of Landau, E. M. Lifshitz invited Lev Petrovich to work together to complete the course. With Pitaevsky's participation were written Volume IV: Quantum Electrodynamics (V.B. Berestetsky, E.M. Lifshitz, L.P. Pitaevsky), Volume IV, Part 2: Relativistic Quantum Theory (E.M. Lifshitz, L.P. Pitaevsky), Volume IX, Part 2: Statistical Physics. Theory of Condensed States (E.M. Lifshitz, L.P. Pitaevsky), Volume X: Physical Kinetics (E.M. Lifshitz, L.P. Pitaevsky). Translated into at least eleven languages, the Landau and Lifshitz Course in Theoretical Physics has served to educate generations of physicists throughout the world.

I first met Lev Petrovich when I was invited for a job interview by the director of the Institute of Physical Problems, Petr Leonidovich Kapitsa. At the gate, I was met by L.P. Pitaevsky, unfamiliar to me at that time, who talked a little with me, and then escorted me to the second floor of the main building of the Institute, where Kapitsa's office was. I was very worried, due to several previous failures to find a job after finishing graduate school. They did not take me to work, directly hinting that they did not want problems by getting in touch with the son-in-law of the disgraced academician A.D. Sakharov. My previous experience of having an interview with the Director of the Institute of Atomic Energy (IAE), Academician A.P. Alexandrov did not inspire optimism: after our conversation, Alexandrov gave me a note with his resolution to the personnel department to enroll me in the staff. However, as it soon became clear, the Ministry that was in charge of the IAE blocked my registration, evidently believing that they wanted nothing more to do with Sakharov or his family members. And this despite the great authority and influence of Academician A.P. Alexandrov, a member of the CPSU Central Committee, who soon became President of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. This failure led me to assess my chances of success as very low. However, at the end of our conversation, Kapitsa said that I was well recommended by many of his colleagues and that he would take me on. I left his office, not quite trusting what I had heard. Pitaevsky and Kapitsa's deputy, Academician A.S. Borovik-Romanov, were waiting for me in the waiting room. "Nina, please say hello" they introduced me. - "this is our new employee is Misha Liberman." "No way! We don't have any vacancies at the institute," objected Nina Agapova, head of human resources at the institute. "Pyotr Leonidovich gave his orders," came Borovik-Romanov's terse reply. This is how I ended up at the IPP, where I shared an office in the Theoretical Department with Lev Petrovich and Borya Meyerovich from 1970 onward.

The Institute of Physical Problems, as well as its Theoretical Department, was an absolutely unique institution for the USSR. The Institute was small, with about 40 research workers, and thanks to Pyotr Kapitsa, it was a real island of freedom, independent from the Party officials. There were eight employees in the Theoretical Department: I. M. Lifshitz, who headed the department; five senior researchers - E. M. Lifshitz, L. A. Weinstein, L. P. Pitaevsky, A. F. Andreev, M. I. Kaganov, and two junior researchers - Boris Meyerovich and I. Pitaevsky, Meyerovich, and I had additional responsibilities: to help theoretically interpret the experimental works of P.L. Kapitsa on plasma

physics and microwave discharge. Therefore, the three of us were also listed in the Physics Laboratory of P. L. Kapitsa and received an additional 20% of our salaries. Lev Petrovich had the highest qualification in the technique of calculations. I had the opportunity to convince myself of this, when P.L. Kapitsa asked us to make some calculations, in particular, related to heating of plasma by Alfvénian waves. I remember that when Academician Ya.B. Zeldovich began working with us in the Department of Theoretical Physics, he noted with delight that no one had such a high level of computing techniques in theoretical physics as Pitaevsky did.

How Lev Petrovich Pitaevsky himself got to work in the IPP told me Alexander Iosifovich Shalnikov. Pitaevsky was born in Saratov, where he graduated from the University of Saratov. While studying at the university, Lev passed all the examinations of the Landau Theorem and was admitted to the graduate school of the IPP in 1955, from which he graduated in 1958. Kapitsa wanted to take Lev Pitaevsky to work at the IPP, but a residence permit in Moscow was required for permanent work. No petition helped to obtain it, and Pitaevsky was taken to work at the Institute of Terrestrial Magnetism, Ionosphere and Radio Wave Propagation (IZMIRAN) in Troitsk, where he worked from 1959 to 1960. As Pavel Shalnikov told me, just then Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev invited leading Soviet scientists, among whom was Kapitsa, to a banquet in the Kremlin on some occasion. Wanting to demonstrate the limitless opportunities for professional growth that the CPSU had created for young scientists, Khrushchev quoted lines from Nekrasov's poem, which suggested that schoolchildren should look up to the example of M.V. Lomonosov. Kapitsa asked permission to add a few words: "Comrade Khrushchev! Russia is rich in talent, but today's youth has problems unknown to Mikhail Lomonosov. Here is an example: We have a brilliant young man who came to Moscow from Saratov. But in order for this new "Lomonosov," whose name is Lev Pitaevsky, to continue his work for the glory of Soviet science, he needs a Moscow residence permit, which we cannot get." According to Shalnikov, Khrushchev on the spot gave orders to the chairman of the Mossoviet to allow a residence permit - and thus L.P. Pitaevsky was hired to work at the Institute of Physical Problems.

Having found myself in the Theoretical Department of the IPP in 1970, for many years I had an opportunity to share an office with Lev Petrovich and Borey Meyerovich. It must be said that Lev Petrovich was an unusually kind and modest man in everyday life - in my memory, he did not enjoy the privileges that members of the Academy were entitled to, in a situation when everything in the country was in short supply - from housing to food. By coincidence, Lev Petrovich's family and mine rented summer cottages next door, in the village of Lutsino in the Zvenigorod region. It was a holiday village on a high bank of the Moskva River about 60 kilometers upstream from Moscow. There were forests for dozens of kilometers around the settlement. Lev Petrovich and his wife Lyubov Lazarevna used to come to the dacha on weekends. Lev Petrovich's mother, Anna Samoilovna, and Lyuba's mother, Inna Semyonovna, spent the whole summer at the dacha. Lev Petrovich and Lyuba loved to gather mushrooms and were experienced mushroom pickers. They collected and cooked, for example, umbrellas, to which other residents of the village treated with a certain distrust. Lev Petrovich and Lyuba were sometimes followed into the woods by their pet cat named "Marquesa". My daughter Marina, also a great lover of mushroom picking, often met them on their walks in the woods.

In 1991, I was invited to become a professor of theoretical physics at Uppsala University in Sweden. Lev Petrovich and Lyuba also started to visit Moscow less frequently: at first they spent some time at the Technion Institute in Haifa, and since 1998 Lev Petrovich took a permanent position at the Università di Trento. We corresponded regularly throughout the years. One summer the Pitaevskys visited Uppsala, where they were impressed by the abundance of ceps. Tragically, in August 2011 a

terrible tragedy struck - Luba Pitaevskaya died in a car accident while visiting friends in the Moscow region. Having been retired since 2008 (although continuing to cooperate in the university's BEC group), Pitaevsky was bored by the lack of communication. A pandemic for all compounded the isolation. During the last year, upon the removal of the restrictions caused by the pandemic, I made several attempts to come to Trento. Unfortunately, Lev Petrovich's health condition prevented him from receiving visitors. In his last letter, he expressed the hope that he would feel better by the end of the summer and we could finally see each other in person...

In concluding my brief memories of Lev Petrovich Pitaevsky, I would like to say that his passing is an irreparable loss to all who knew him. We will all miss Lev Pitaevsky very much!