

## FOREWORD

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Three decades have elapsed since the concept of the activity of the nuclei of galaxies was introduced. The workers in the field from the very beginning considered this concept as something which was inspired by observations and which required careful study. The attention of observers to this problem was growing very fast and today almost half of the observational effort in extragalactic astronomy is devoted to active galaxies. Regarding the input from the theoreticians, their attitude was at first rather sceptical and negative. Next they understood the importance of the problem and some of them even tried to solve the problem with "one blow". Only later the majority of theoreticians anticipated that the problem is extremely difficult and there is no hope to solve the question with one stroke. Some astronomers think now that the theoretical explanation of all relevant observational data will require the effort of several generations of XXI century theoreticians. Apparently such a prediction is quite realistic.

This was the reason that it was decided to concentrate the discussions of the Symposium No. 121 of the IAU around the observational data.

Therefore, the first item considered by the Symposium was the discussion of works aiming at the discovery of new active galaxies (and quasars) and compiling the lists of these objects.

Then the specific properties of UV galaxies including their morphology and spectroscopy were considered. As was shown firstly in the early papers of Khachikian (1968) and Khachikian and Weedman (1969) a considerable fraction of the galaxies with UV excess show quite definite signs of nuclear activity, some of them containing clearly expressed Seyfert spectral features.

This is why the next item of discussions was Seyfert galaxies. And it naturally has led to the question of classification of Seyfert galaxies.

Of course, the Seyferts are closely connected with QSO's and therefore the next item was the essence of this connection. However, the subject of QSO's was considered only in this connection. It is true that QSO's are also active galaxies but there were several

conferences (for example, IAU Symposium No. 119 in Bangalore) specially devoted to them. Of course, some attention was paid to BL Lacertae objects.

A whole generation of younger astrophysicists has demonstrated in the second half of the Symposium the importance of the study of objects intermediate between AGN and more quiet objects. It now seems that the fraction of galaxies with some moderate activity of their nuclei is much larger than it was supposed until recently.

A considerable percentage of Markarian galaxies contain "starburst" regions mostly in the form of superassociations (giant HII regions by western terminology). Sometimes these regions coincide with the nucleus of the galaxy and sometimes a galaxy of rather low luminosity is itself a superassociation.

In what degree the physical processes behind the starburst phenomena and behind the purely nuclear activity are similar or related to each other is not yet clear but one can be sure that this question will bring us to a new perspective in the study of active galaxies.

One can see that the coverage of the observational data was sufficiently complete and therefore the publishing of this book is fully justified.

I was very unhappy that my illness has prevented me from being present at the Symposium and Dr. Khachikian has taken on himself all duties of chairman of SOC working efficiently day and night. But my friends kept me informed about the events and I am glad to express my sincere thanks for their kind wishes addressed to me.

After the end of the Symposium we received many letters from the participants (both foreign and Soviet) expressing their satisfaction with the contents and organization of the meeting.

In its turn the scientific committee is glad to thank them for the true scientific cooperative spirit shown by every participant.