

PREFACE

The *Conference on Topological Algebras, their Applications, and Related Topics* was held in Będlewo near Poznań, Poland from May 11 to May 17, 2003 to celebrate the 70th birthday of Professor Wiesław Żelazko. The research of Wiesław Żelazko spans almost half a century and well over 100 papers, many of which started new lines of research; his main research achievements are discussed in the first article of this volume.

The Conference was attended by over 60 mathematicians from Azerbaijan, Belarus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Iran, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Slovenia, Spain, United Kingdom, USA, and Poland. The lectures covered a broad range of topics, including the general theory of Banach and topological algebras, the spectral theory of Banach and topological algebras, operator theory, topological algebras and complex analysis, harmonic analysis, homological methods in the theory of Banach algebras, automatic continuity, representations, structure and classification of topological algebras, nonassociative topological algebras, and applications.

The main purpose of the Conference was to bring together mathematicians interested in various problems within the general area of topological algebras and to allow a free discussion and exchange of ideas with people working on exactly the same problems as well as with people working on related questions. Hence, many of the lectures, and therefore the papers in this volume, have been directed to non-experts. A number of articles contain expositions of known results (known to experts) and open problems; other articles contain new discoveries that are presented in a way that should be accessible also to mathematicians working in other areas of functional analysis.

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