Lev Semenovich Pontryagin Encyclopedia Article

Lev Semenovich Pontryagin

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Lev Semenovich Pontryagin

1908-1988

Russian mathematician who contributed to the study of overlapping aspects of algebra and topology, and later, control theory. After Pontryagin was blinded in an explosion, his mother devoted herself to his education and he subsequently earned a degree from the University of Moscow in 1929. Pontryagin joined the Steklov Institute in 1934, and the next year was named head of its Department of Topology and Functional Analysis. He was elected to the Academy of Sciences in 1939, and further honored when the International Union elected him vice president in 1970. Pontryagin published several significant works, including *Topological Groups* (1938) and *The Mathematical Theory of Optimal Processes* (1961), for which he received the Lenin Prize.