

Abstracts

Plate N. A. Jubilee of the Russian Academy of Sciences. This jubilee article written by the Chief Scientific Secretary of the Russian Academy of Sciences is focused on the question of its overall contribution to the stature of the country. Stressing its indispensable role in the building of the national scientific community and educational system, the author also points to the Academy's active engagement in the exploration and development of the country's natural resources, its commitment to the task of strengthening the defensive capacity of the state, as well as participation in the work of state-building as such. Since the early stages of its history, the Russian Academy became a major center of the nation's spiritual and intellectual culture; numerous outstanding discoveries and results obtained by its researchers contributed to the enrichment of the world culture and civilization. Today, this impressive establishment embraces 18 disciplinary divisions, 12 major research centers and 3 regional divisions — the Ural, Siberian, and Far-Eastern — combining 16 local research centers. Spread all over the country, the Academy's network of some four hundred institutions numbers 114,000 employees, more than 53,000 of whom are scientific researchers, including 26,427 persons with graduate and 8,593 with DSc degrees, 455 full and 672 corresponding members.

Kolchinskii E. I. Academic Science in Saint-Petersburg and World Culture. Explicating the reasons for the founding of the Academy of Sciences in Russia and specifics of its shaping in 17th-century St.-Petersburg (including the existence of favorable research conditions, especially in the realms of exact and natural sciences, the Academy's close ties with the local University, and its closeness to the practical needs of the state), the article traces the development of Saint-Petersburg's academic community throughout the 275 years of its subsequent history. Marked by brilliant discoveries and the creation of new scientific fields, the work of this community has long become an indispensable part of both the national and the world culture.

Kopelevich Iu. Kh. «Paradise for the Scholars» . . . ? (On the Destinies of the First Russian Academicians). In 1727, a world-renowned philosopher Christian Wolff called the newborn Academy of Sciences in Russia a «paradise for the scholars» — the thesis which this article puts to the issue by tracing the destinies of its first members after their arrival in St.-Petersburg in the summer of 1725. Some of them (such as the mathematician Hermann), having failed to produce any significant results in a new setting, soon left for good. Several others (such as the mathematician D. Bernoulli and the anatomist Duvernoix) did achieve apparent success in Russia, but chose to return to their home countries after the expiration of their initial contracts. A few of the first academicians (such as the philosopher Gross or the lawyer Beckenstein) found their work to be of little interest for contemporary Russian scholars. The productive career of the orientalist Bayer was destroyed by diseases. A number of younger researchers, such as Krafft, Miller, Euler, and Gmelin, seemed to start quite well in Russia, but most of them did not last long there. The one of them who could rightfully relate his successful career to the work with the Russian Academy was Leonard Euler, whose 14-year stay in St.-Petersburg granted him a spectacular transformation from an unknown youth into a world-famous mathematician. For him, the Russian Academy became a real «paradise.»

Karpeev E. P. Sketches for the Psychological Portrait of M. V. Lomonosov. Attempting to sketch out the psychological portrait of this seminal figure in the history of Russian science, the article first highlights the difficult circumstances of Lomonosov's adolescence, taking them to be responsible for the early emergence in his personality of such prevalent traits as emotional restlessness, inner tension, and desire to change the fate, on the one hand, and the excitement of mind, its perpetual yearning after new food for reflection, on the other. In his young years still, Lomonosov also acquired such features as firmness and purposefulness, consolidated by the ambivalent combination of loneliness and keen awareness of belonging to the peasantry. His departure from home, subsequent wanderings from one school to another, and eventual study in Germany only intensified the ambivalence peculiar to his character: his love for the native language, poetry, and history, the pictorial manner of expressing his ideas all came from the «Russian roots»; the method of scientific thinking and broad education were acquired from Germany.

Soloviev Iu. Ia. Academician N. S. Shatskii in the Memoirs of His Contemporaries. This article is devoted to an outstanding Russian geologist N. S. Shatskii, the founder of the famous tectonics school at the Geological Institute of the USSR Academy of Sciences. His admirable personality is revealed through the recollections of his students and followers, including those of the article's author.

Soloviev Iu. I. Academician S. I. Vavilov: The Drama of a Russian Intellectual. The article provides an account of the fruitful scientific career and the complicated life of S. I. Vavilov (1891—1951). A gifted physicist and one of the founders of the Russian school of physical biology, he was elected President of the USSR Academy of Sciences in 1945. Underneath this seemingly brilliant career, however, was hidden a deep personal drama caused by the fate of his brother, a world-famous geneticist Nikolai Vavilov (who was arrested in 1940 and died in prison in 1943). Anxiety about the destiny of his brother's scientific heritage and the future of genetics in the Soviet Union filled S. I. Vavilov with perpetual pain and concern for the preservation of Soviet science from the ruinous interference of ignorant «ideologists.»

Bastrakova M. S. The Academy of Sciences and the Establishment of Research Institutes (Two Memos by V. I. Vernadskii). This publication features two memos, both written by V. I. Vernadskii in connection with the initial steps towards establishing a network of research institutes taken by the Russian Academy of Sciences. The first of them, composed in 1912, was commissioned to him by the Academy in the course of developing its earliest project of this type, namely, the Lomonosov Institute. In this memo Vernadskii argued for the necessity of establishing research institutes as a «new tool for [obtaining] scientific knowledge,» indispensable for the future development of science in Russia. The second memo (written in early 1917) concerned the program of creating the all-state network of research institutes, advanced by the Academy scientists a few months earlier. In this connection, Vernadskii suggested a number of basic principles for such establishments, such as the building of their work upon the «broad scientific foundation» (irrespective of the scope of their particular applied studies), the fostering of «their close ties with Russian scientific circles,» and their independence from the dictate of bureaucratic structures.

Afiani V. Iu., Ilizarov S. S. The USSR Academy of Sciences and Nikita Khrushchev.

Pointing to the coincidence of the 10-year period of Khrushchev's rule with the peak period in the development of Soviet science, the authors argue for the importance of exploring his relationships with fundamental science in general and the USSR Academy of Sciences in particular. Indeed, the Academy was a major target for Khrushchev's reformatory aspirations: he found it too archaic, too cumbersome, and too distant from the real needs of the people's economy; worse yet, he felt it was becoming more and more obstinate. The hitherto unavailable archival documents discussed in the article help see the immediate reasons of his eventual assault upon the Academy and throw new light on the circumstances preceding the end of his political career. At the meeting of the Academy's General Assembly on June 26, 1964, Andrei Sakharov raised public charges against Khrushchev's favorite, academician Trofim Lysenko. Shortly thereafter, at the Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party on July 11, Khrushchev suddenly interrupted his talk on agricultural issues to castigate those «certain scoundrels» who had dared to criticize Lysenko. Indignant at Sakharov's recent speech and considering it indicative of the Academy's interference in politics, he claimed that «for political leadership, I reckon, it is enough for us to have our party and Central Committee; and if the Academy of Sciences will interfere, we shall send it to devil's mother . . . » Ironically, this speech proved fatal for Khrushchev's own political career; for Sakharov, on the other hand, the 1964 address to the Academy's General Assembly was a herald of his emergence as a public activist.

Vinogradov Iu. A. Honorary Academicians and «Coryphaei of Science.» Similar to many foreign academies, the Russian Academy of Sciences set going the tradition of electing honorary members from the early period of its existence. The article discusses its subsequent historical transformations, particularly after the Bolshevik takeover and under Stalin's rule.