

From the Editorial Board

With this issue, Uspekhi Fizicheskikh Nauk (UFN) [Physics – Uspekhi in English edition] enters its ninth decade. Some information on the history of foundation and evolution of UFN over these 80 years can be found in the article that opens this issue.

The goals of our journal remain unchanged, the foremost of them being to keep describing and discussing the latest achievements in physics and in associated fields. We firmly aim at taking the utmost care of our readers. The journal must be accessible not only to mature physicists but to the younger generation as well: to students of senior years, postgraduates and in general to all those beginning their life in science. In view of this, we request that even the authors of monographic review papers, that are mostly aimed at experts, begin a paper with an introduction that allows any physicist to understand what the paper is about; we also request that every symbol of notation, even those traditional for specialized publications, be defined. One should never assume that the readers are familiar with the history of the subjects involved and that the contribution of Russian (Soviet) authors is common knowledge. There can be no doubt that the better is the enemy of the good and that the boundaries of the above guidelines are blurred. We only hope that our authors keep this in mind and are therefore ready to understand the comments of the referees, of members of the editorial board and of the staff of the journal who strive to do their job responsibly.

It is also necessary to emphasize the principal difference between an UFN-type journal and journals that publish original research papers. UFN cannot and will not publish even very important papers if they deal with very narrow topics, or if the topic has already been presented in the journal earlier with sufficient details, etc.

In the past UFN used to frequently publish translations from foreign sources, and refereed books published abroad. This has become inexpedient and impossible in recent years, as in the nearest future, for obvious reasons. We will only print translated into Russian Nobel Lectures in physics and sometimes in chemistry if they concern physics subjects. Of course, there may be infrequent exceptions from this rule (one cannot foresee everything) but the guidelines are clear.

As for book reviewing, so many books are published nowadays on physics, astrophysics, biophysics, etc. (mostly in English) that it would be quite impossible to give a picture of this flood in UFN, while a random selection would be unjustified. UFN will therefore review foreign-published books only if their contents are closely linked with the progress of physics in Russia.

On the other hand, we do wish to review physics books published in Russia and will print as much information about them as possible. As a first step in this direction, a list of titles printed by Fizmatlit in 1995–1998 was placed in issue 10 of UFN in 1998. In the future we will try to systematically publish information on Russian physics books and books interesting for physicists printed by other publishers as well.

It is unfortunate that all kinds of pulp is being published now in which the fundamentals of modern physics are negated (relativity and quantum theory are especially eagerly vilified). UFN will no doubt ignore such literature. On the other hand, critical information and critical reviews on pseudo-scientific publications are very welcome. The editors ask the readers for help in this field. In fact, we will be grateful to our readers for any critical comments and suggestions. We will try to take them into account in our work.

Please write to us: improving UFN is in the interest of every physicist!