

50 years of *JETP Letters*

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## ПРЕЗИДИУМ АКАДЕМИИ НАУК СОЮЗА ССР

РАСПОРЯЖЕНИЕ № 69-276

Москва

15 февраля 1966 г.

Об издании приложения "Письма в редакцию" к "Журналу экспериментальной и теоретической физики"

В целях ускорения публикации результатов выполненных научных исследований и информации о важнейших достижениях в области физических наук:

1. Организовать с 1966 г. издание приложения "Письма в редакцию" к "Журналу экспериментальной и теоретической физики" объемом два печатных листа в номере, периодичность 24 номера в год (два номера в месяц).

Издание указанного приложения осуществить на условиях самофинансирования за счет фондов бумаги, выделенных Издательству "Наука".

2. Обеспечить редакционному коллективу "Журнала экспериментальной и теоретической физики" и Издательству "Наука" обеспечить выпуск приложения с 1 апреля 1966 г.

3. Установить месячный срок для редакционной подготовки и издания каждого номера приложения.

4. Расчитать в 1965 году приложение "Письма в редакцию" подписчикам "Журнала экспериментальной и теоретической физики" за счет принятой за журнал подписной платы, имея в виду, что выпуск приложения в 1966 году должен осуществляться в пределах общего годового объема журнала, запланированного на текущий год.

5. Установить ставку за титульное редактирование 25 руб. и за научное редактирование 25 рублей за авторский лист.

6. Установить с 1966 года цену на приложение "Письма в редакцию" к "Журналу экспериментальной и теоретической физики" 80 коп. за номер.

7. С 1966 года подписку на "Журнал экспериментальной и теоретической физики" объявлять:

а) на журнал без приложения с подписной ценой на год 46 руб. 80 коп;

б) на журнал с приложением "Письма в редакцию" с подписной ценой на год 54 рубля;

8. Предусмотреть выдачу авторам публикуемых писем по 25 экземпляров соответствующих номеров приложения, вместо отписок, одновременно с выходом каждого номера приложения.

Предоставить авторам право при направлении писем для опубликования заказывать за свой счет дополнительное число экземпляров приложения.

И.о. президента  
Академии наук СССР  
академик – В.А. Кириллин

/круглая печать/

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## PRESIDIUM OF THE USSR ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

RESOLUTION No. 69-276

Moscow

15 February 1966

On the publication of the supplement "Letters to the Editor" to the "Journal of Experimental and Theoretical Physics"

To promote the rapid publication of the results of scientific studies and information on the most important advances in the field of physical sciences:

1. To organize in 1966 the publication of the supplement "Pis'ma v redaktsiyu" (Letters to the Editor) to the "Zhurnal Eksperimental'noi i Teoreticheskoi Fiziki" (Journal of Experimental and Theoretical Physics) containing two publisher's signatures per issue, with periodicity of 24 issues per year (two issues per month).

2. To oblige the editorial board of *JETP* and the publishing house "Nauka" (Science) to provide the publication of the supplement beginning on 1 April 1966.

3. To establish one month for the editorial timetable and publication of each supplement issue.

4. To send the supplement "Letters to the Editor" to the subscribers to *JETP* without addition cost through 1965 bearing in mind that the supplement should be published in 1965 within the common annual volume of the journal planned for the current year.

5. To establish the rate of pay of 25 rubles for title editing and 25 rubles for scientific editing per signature.

6. To establish a cost of 80 kopecks per issue of "Letters to the Editor" beginning from 1966.

7. Beginning from 1966, the subscription to *JETP* will be announced to

(a) the journal without the supplement at an annual subscription cost of 46 rubles 80 kopecks and

(b) the journal with the supplement "Letters to the Editor" at an annual subscription cost of 54 rubles.

8. To send to each of the authors of "Letters" 25 copies of the corresponding issues of the supplement instead of separate reprints simultaneously with the publishing of each supplement issue.

To grant the authors a right to order at their expense the additional number of supplement copies during the submission of their manuscripts.

Deputy President  
of the USSR Academy of Sciences  
Academician V.A. Kirillin

/round seal/

Sent to: Publisher — RISO, Journal of Exp. and Theor. Physics — Academician P.L. Kapitza, FINO/TsB, Department of Law, Managing Department.

Figure 1. Copy of Resolution No. 69-276 of 15 February 1965, passed by the Presidium of the USSR Academy of Sciences on the publication of the supplement "Letters to the Editor" to the journal *JETP* (stored at the editorial office of *JETP Letters*).

**Abstract.** This paper briefly traces the 50-year history of the journal *Pis'ma v Zhurnal Eksperimental'noi i Teoreticheskoi Fiziki* (*JETP Letters*), whose first issue was published on 1 April 1965. The journal is intended for a wide circle of physicists-readers as a fast publication channel for short communications

on new results from research of the highest significance and highest priority in all areas of experimental and theoretical physics. Today, the journal celebrates numerous important contributions to the development of physics both in Russia and worldwide. Over a historically short period, *JETP Letters* developed into a highly authoritative and influential source for physicists engaged in a wide range of fields. Due to the wise and well-timed editorial policy, the journal continues to retain its leadership position, despite the difficulties the entire science periodical literature — and indeed the whole of science — is currently experiencing in Russia.

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**Keywords:** history of physics, scientific journals in multidisciplinary physics



Georgii Borisovich Zhdanov  
(1918–2004)



Andrei Stanislavovich Borovik-Romanov  
(1920–1997)



Iosif Solomonovich Shapiro  
(1918–1999)

**Figure 2.** Scientific editors of the first *JETP Letters* issues: Editor, G B Zhdanov (Laboratory of Cosmic Rays, Lebedev Physical Institute, USSR Academy of Sciences, FIAN), Associate Editors, A S Borovik-Romanov [4] (later on, Editor-in-Chief of *JETP Letters* from 1968 until the end of 1987) and I S Shapiro [5].

Readers of the journal *JETP Letters*, one of the leading Russian journals on general physics, apparently noticed that, beginning in January 2015, the new issues of *JETP Letters*, Vol. 101 appeared in libraries and on Internet sites. This means that the journal has entered in a jubilee age. However, this is not the centennial, it is just the fiftieth anniversary. Merely,

*JETP Letters* always worked and continues to work with a double intensity, publishing two issues per month, and thus our readers receive two volumes of “*Letters*” per year. This is related to the specificity of the journal, which rapidly publishes short communications containing the most precious results in the fields of theoretical and experimental physics of general interest for a wide community of physicists-readers.

For the half-century of its existence, the journal *Pis'ma v ZhETF* (and its English translation *JETP Letters*) has gained wide appreciation in the international scientific community, has become, in fact, an international journal receiving submitted articles in Russian and English, and has joined the ranks of the leading journals in the world in the field of fundamental physics. Now, contributors to the journal include scientists from many countries.

The history of the journal began with Resolution No. 69-276 of the Presidium of the USSR Academy of Sciences, containing the following passages (the full text is presented in Fig. 1):

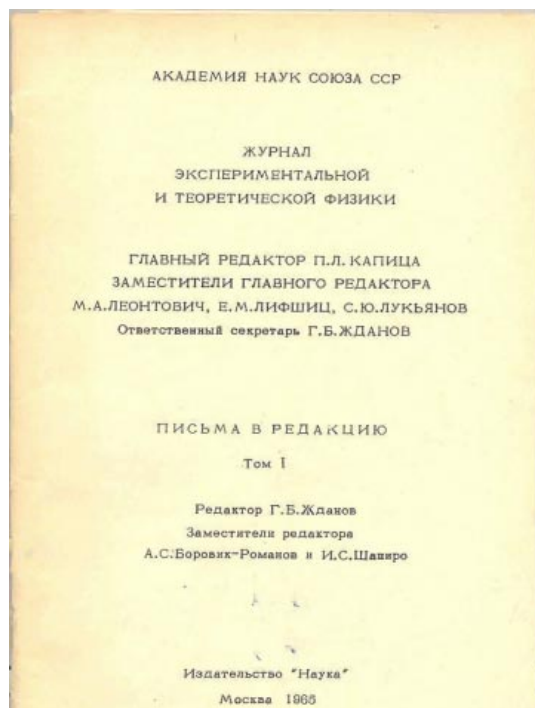
“To promote the rapid publication of the results of scientific studies and information on the most important advances in the field of physical sciences:

1. To organize in 1966 the publication of the supplement *Pis'ma v Redaktsiyu* (*Letters to the Editor*) to the *Zhurnal Eksperimental'noi i Teoreticheskoi Fiziki* (*Journal of Experimental and Theoretical Physics*) containing two (publisher's) signatures per issue, with a periodicity of 24 issues per year (two issues per month).

2. To oblige the editorial board of *JETP* and the publishing house Nauka (Science) to ensure the publication of the supplement beginning on 1 April 1965.

3. To establish a monthly period for the editorial preparation and publication of each supplement issue. < ... >”

Really, the first issue of *JETP Letters* was published on 1 April 1965. Despite the date, the publication of the first issue was no joke. At that moment, *JETP Letters* did not yet have its own editorial board and was edited by the members of the editorial board of *JETP* (Fig. 3). The first editorial board of *JETP Letters* including G B Zhdanov, editor, and



**Figure 3.** Title page of the first *JETP Letters* issue presenting the editorial board of *JETP* and the editors of the new journal. It can be seen that the newly founded journal *JETP Letters* is the flesh and blood of *Zhurnal Eksperimental'noi i Teoreticheskoi Fiziki* (*Journal of Experimental and Theoretical Physics* — *JETP*), the oldest and most authoritative periodical scientific journal in our country with a glorious history of 142 (!) years already [1–3].

ПРЕЗИДИУМ АКАДЕМИИ НАУК СОЮЗА ССР  
ПОСТАНОВЛЕНИЕ

от 5 ноября 1965 года № 705  
г. Москва

О составе редакционной коллегии  
приложения к "Журналу эксперимен-  
тальной и теоретической физики"  
(представление Секции физико-тех-  
нических и математических наук)

Президиум Академии наук СССР ПОСТАНОВЛЯЕТ:

Утвердить редакционную коллегию приложения к "Журналу  
экспериментальной и теоретической физики" "Письма в редак-  
цию" в составе:

- |                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1. Жданов Г.В.          | - доктор физико-математических наук, физический институт АН СССР, редактор             |
| 2. Боровик-Романов А.С. | - доктор физико-математических наук, институт физических проблем АН СССР               |
| 3. Шапиро И.С.          | - доктор физико-математических наук, институт теоретической и экспериментальной физики |

И.О. президента  
Академии наук СССР

PRESIDIUM OF THE USSR ACADEMY OF SCIENCES  
RESOLUTION

No. 705 of 5 November 1965  
Moscow

On the editorial board of the supplement to the "Journal of Experimental and Theoretical Physics" (presentation by the Section of physico-technical and mathematical sciences)

The presidium of the USSR Academy of Sciences resolves:

To approve the editorial board of the supplement of "Letters to the Editor" to the "Journal of Experimental and Theoretical Physics" consisting of

- |                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1. Zhdanov G.B.         | — Doctor of Physical and Mathematical Sciences, Lebedev Physical Institute, the USSR Academy of Sciences, Editor                |
| 2. Borovik-Romanov A.S. | — Doctor of Physical and Mathematical Sciences, Institute of Physical Problems, the USSR Academy of Sciences                    |
| 3. Shapiro I.S.         | — Doctor of Physical and Mathematical Sciences, Institute of Theoretical and Experimental Physics, the USSR Academy of Sciences |

Deputy President  
of the USSR Academy of Sciences

**Figure 4.** Resolution No. 705 of 15 November 1965 of the Presidium of the USSR Academy of Sciences (listing the first editorial board of *JETP Letters*).

A S Borovik-Romanov [4], and I S Shapiro [5], associate editors (Fig. 2), was officially approved by a resolution of the Presidium of the USSR Academy of Sciences on 5 November 1965 (Fig. 4).

The first issues of the new journal were something intermediate between an author's manuscript and a printed issue. The prints of texts in articles by different authors could be considerably different and figures could be drawn by hand. However, from the beginning the highest requirements were imposed on the scientific content of published papers from the very beginning and, as a result, the journal instantly became well known both in our country and abroad. It is sufficient to say that the citation index of a few papers published in the first two years exceeded 500 references, and this index for the most cited paper amounted to 1250!

At the end of 1968, A S Borovik-Romanov (Fig. 6), who had become by that time a Corresponding Member of the USSR Academy of Sciences, was appointed the editor of *JETP Letters*, and I I Sobel'man [8] was additionally invited to the editorial board. Later, due to the development and extension of studies in a number of areas in physics, E I Rashba and A M Stefanovskii were also seated on the editorial board of *JETP Letters*.

Andrei Stanislavovich headed the editorial board of *JETP Letters* until late 1987. During this time, the number of articles and the admissible maximum volume of each article gradually increased. However, the requirements imposed on the content of published papers and their scientific importance were always unchanging.



Igor' Ekhiel'evich Dzyaloshinskii



Vsevolod Feliksovich Gantmakher  
(1935–2015)



Valerii Timofeevich Dolgoplov

**Figure 5.** Editors-in-Chief of the journal *JETP Letters*, beginning in 1988 until the present time: I E Dzyaloshinskii [6] (Editor-in-Chief from 1988 until 1991), V F Gantmakher [7] (1991–2011), and V T Dolgoplov (March 2012 to the present).

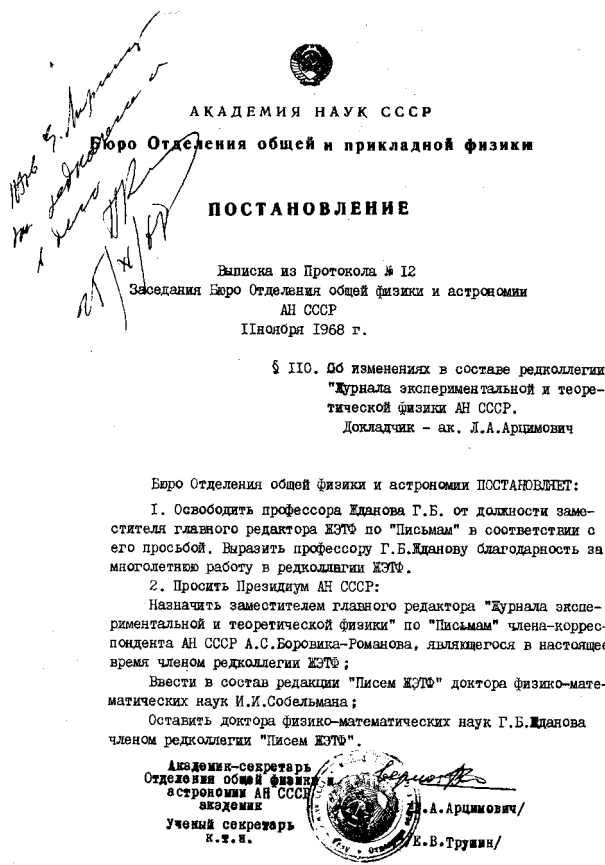


Figure 6. Copy of the Resolution of 11 November 1968 of the Bureau of the General and Applied Physics Division, USSR Academy of Sciences, kept at the editorial office of *JETP Letters* with the instruction written by P L Kapitza: "To comrade E Lifshitz for the editorial board to file, 25/XI/68."

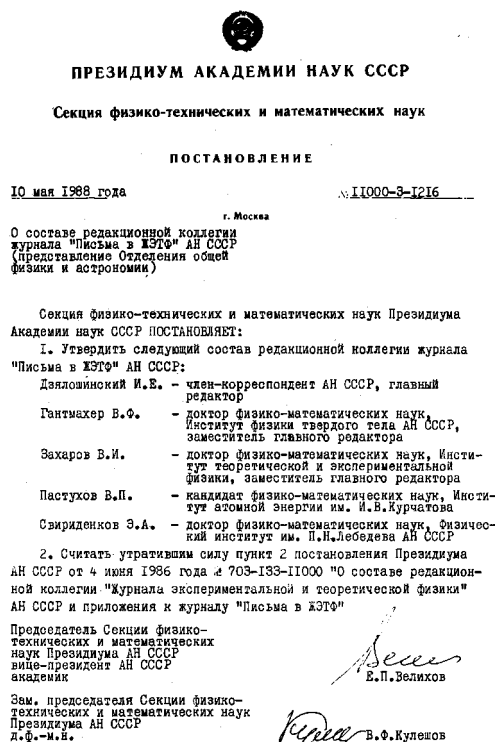
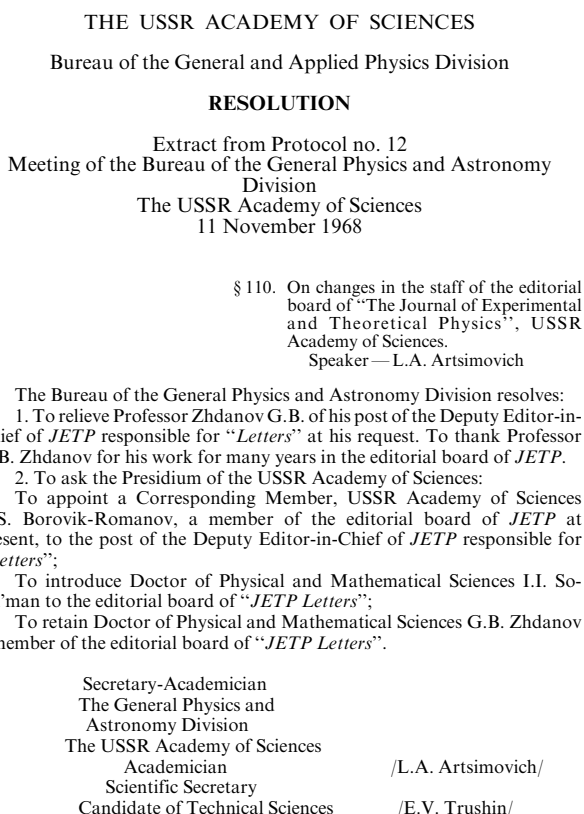
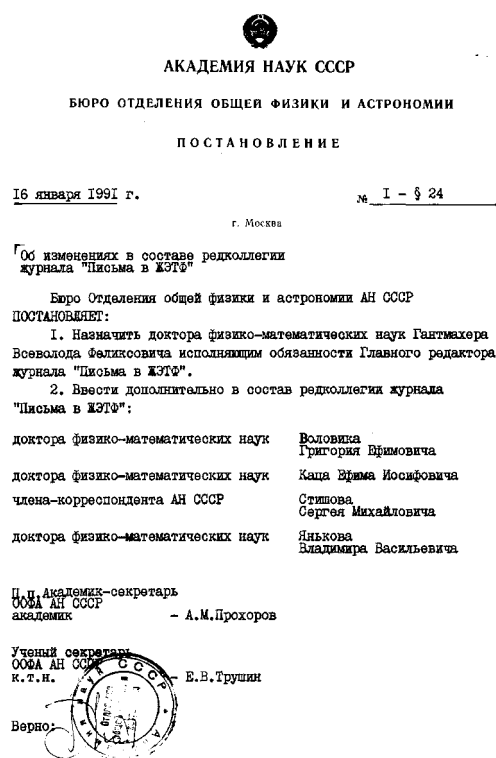


Figure 7. Resolution No. 11000-3-1216 of 10 May 1988 of the Presidium of the USSR Academy of Sciences, "On the editorial staff of the journal *JETP Letters*, USSR Academy of Sciences": I E Dzyaloshinskii (Editor-in-Chief), V F Gantmakher, V I Zakharov, V P Pastukhov, E A Sviridenkov (members of the editorial board).



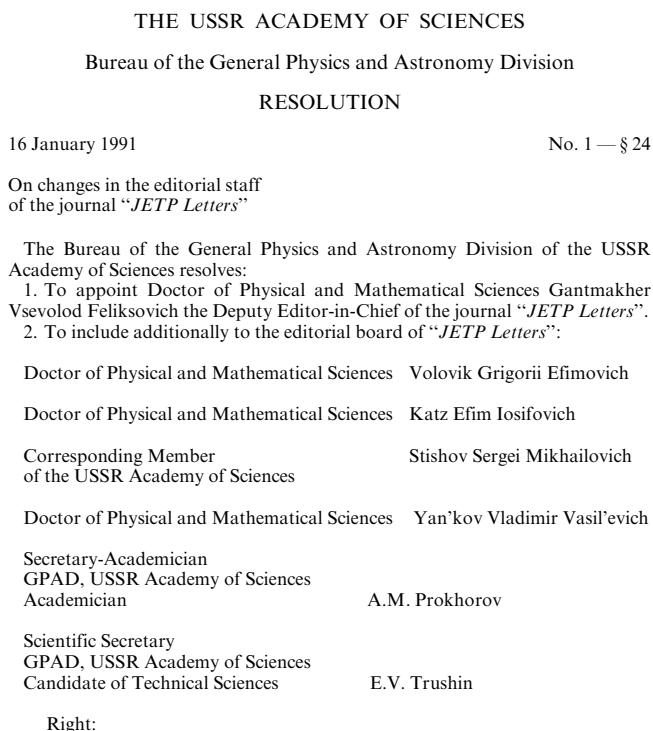


**Figure 8.** Copy of the Resolution of 16 January 1991 of the Bureau of the General Physics and Astronomy Division, USSR Academy of Sciences, on the appointment of V F Gantmakher as the Deputy Editor-in-Chief of the journal *JETP Letters* and the inclusion of G E Volovik, E I Katz, S M Stishov, and V V Yan'kov on the editorial board.

Beginning from the first days of its existence, *JETP Letters* was the favorite and desired ‘child’ for the founding fathers of the editorial board of *JETP*, among them outstanding scientists P L Kapitza [9, 10], M A Leontovich [11], E M Lifshitz [12], and A M Prokhorov [13]. They promoted the formation and development of the young journal in every possible way and supported publishing in the *Letters* the most valuable and spectacular results really contributing to the understanding of natural phenomena. Owing to their attention and support, *Letters* became internationally recognized and gradually transformed from a supplement to *JETP* to the fully independent scientific journal *JETP Letters*.

The next serious reorganization of *JETP Letters* took place in 1988 (Fig. 7), when the editorial board of the journal was almost completely replaced. Somewhat earlier, A S Borovik-Romanov became the Editor-in-Chief of *JETP*, while I E Dzyaloshinskii, a Corresponding Member of the USSR Academy of Sciences, who was earlier a member of the editorial board of *JETP*, was appointed the Editor-in-Chief of the considerably rejuvenated editorial board of *JETP Letters*. However, Andrei Stanislavovich did not sever contacts with *JETP Letters* all at once. Being already the Editor-in-Chief of *JETP*, he traditionally first entered the editorial office of *Letters* to drink a cup of coffee and talk with his previous collaborators and only then went to the former patrimony of E M Lifshitz. This even gave rise to some jealousy between the two editorial staffs.

In the next years, which were rather difficult for Russian science, when the real financing of scientific studies in our country was considerably lowered and some Russian scientists began to leave Russia to work in scientific centers abroad, the editorial board succeeded in substantial preservation of the high scientific level of published papers.



In January 1991, V F Gantmakher was appointed the Editor-in-Chief of *JETP Letters* (Fig. 8). He headed the editorial board for more than 21 years. The 1990s were a time of rapid development of new information technologies and their introduction into the daily practice of publishing world scientific periodicals.

The leading foreign scientific journals now had online versions and their own websites, providing faster and more convenient access to the papers for their readers. Also, the submission of articles by e-mail and many other options accelerating the reviewing and editing of received papers became common practice. To remain in demand and preserve the readership, it was necessary for Russian scientific journals to keep pace with this global tendency, especially in publishing and distributing English translations of Russian journals. In this regard, the journal *JETP Letters* was always ahead.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Note that owing to the initiative and decisive activity of V F Gantmakher, already in the early 2000s the journal *JETP Letters* has successfully signed agreement with the American Institute of Physics on the right to distribute *JETP Letters* in English from its foundation day to 1995 on the openly accessible site [www.jetpletters.ac.ru](http://www.jetpletters.ac.ru). Now, the 30-year archive of *JETP Letters* (from the first to the 62nd volume) is freely accessible to readers worldwide, and because this archive contains an appreciable part of “the gold fund of Russian physics”, this, of course, supports the high international reputation of the journal. In addition, notice the remarkable initiative of the editorial board of the journal concerning the creation of the entry “The gold fund of *JETP Letters*”, containing brief reviews of the most cited articles in the journal up to the present time and concise descriptions of these texts. These key publications’ role in and influence on the development of various fields in modern physics are also considered. The reading of brief reviews in this entry is interesting and instructive for any physicist. (*Editorial note.*)



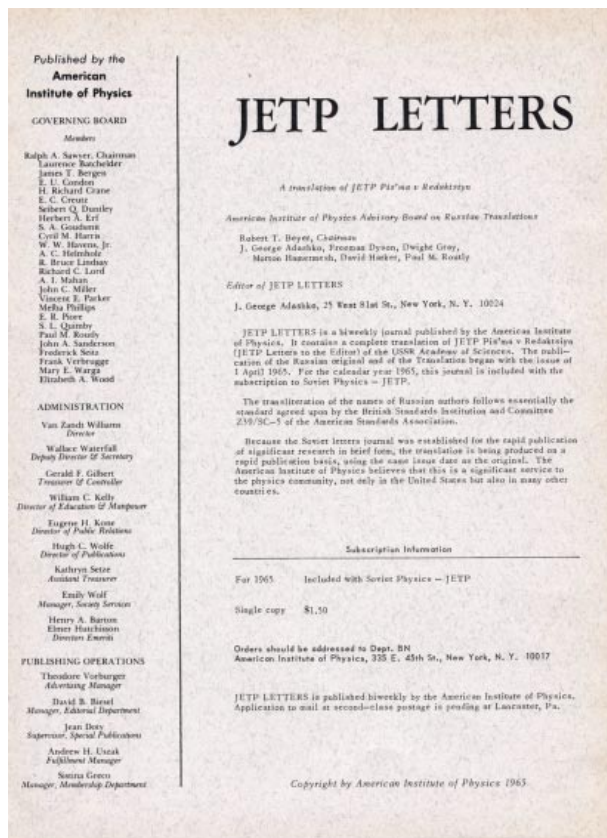


Figure 9. Inside of the cover of the first *Pis'ma v ZhETF* issue in English (*JETP Letters*) published by the American Institute of Physics simultaneously with the first issue of *Pis'ma v ZhETF* in Russian in April 1965.

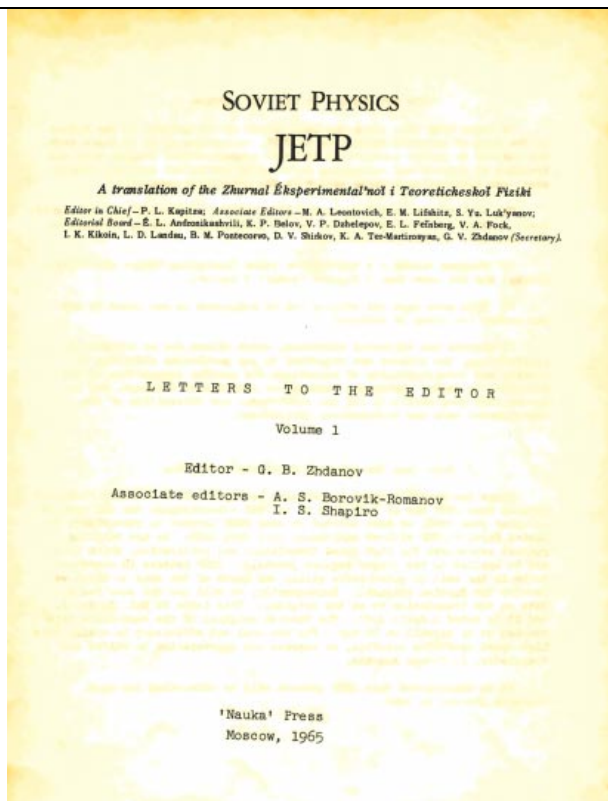


Figure 10. The title page of the first *JETP Letters* in English contains the names of members of the editorial board of the journal *JETP* and the names of the editors of the new journal.

In that period the most Russian physical journals were translated into English, published, and distributed by the American Institute of Physics (Figs 9–11) [14], for which *JETP Letters* always served as a 'pilot project' for introducing new information technologies to Russian journal publishing. Later on, *JETP Letters* retained the leading position in this process, when the International Academic Publishing Company Nauka/Interperiodica and Pleiades Publishing, Inc. began to translate, publish, and distribute the English version of the journal.

In March 2012, Valerii Timofeevich Dolgoplov became the Editor-in-Chief of *JETP Letters*. The journal retains the high rating of one of the leading journals on general physics, confirmed by its impact factor 1.359, one of the highest among Russian scientific journals. However, not all the misfortunes of Russian science, especially of fundamental science in Russia, could bypass our journal.

By tracing the publications of our journal for a long enough period, say, for 20 years, we will see a systematic decrease in the number of high-quality theoretical papers and the appearance of a considerable fraction of experimental work on the verge of physics and materials technology. Unfortunately, the fraction of high-class fundamental experimental studies also declines.

Another problem is the journal portfolio. In the long run, the journal is also a mirror reflecting the state of the art of science in our country. However, this mirror is not clear enough, producing only a foggy image. The best work done in our country is often published abroad. On the one hand, this is a natural process, and articles flow where they have more chance to be noticed. On the other hand, such a spillover was additionally stimulated by the clumsy actions of the Ministry

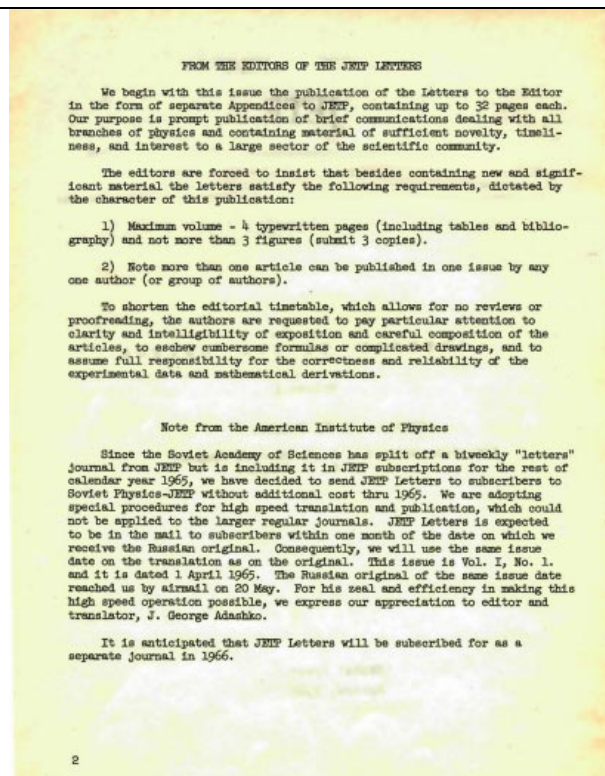


Figure 11. English translation of the address by editors of *JETP Letters* to readers and explanations for subscribers to *JETP Letters* from the American Institute of Physics (AIP) which publishes *JETP Letters* in English (in the first *JETP Letters* issue).

of Education and Science of the Russian Federation and by the poorly formulated reform of the Russian Academy of Sciences. The journal felt the consequences of these factors already in the summer of 2013, when the number of articles submitted to the journal noticeably decreased.

Compared to its older colleagues, general physics journals *JETP*, *Uspekhi Fizicheskikh Nauk* (*UFN*, *Physics–Uspekhi*) [15, 16], and *Zhurnal Tekhnicheskoi Fiziki* (*JTP*) [17], *JETP Letters* is still a comparatively young journal. However, during the time of the rapid development of science, 50 years is a rather considerable age for a scientific journal, testifying to its maturity. Despite all the difficulties of contemporary scientific life, the journal remains in demand in many countries. The geographical location of the authors submitting their papers to our journal is also expanding [18]. Thus, there is reason to hope that *JETP Letters* will retain the high scientific level of its articles in the future.

By completing this brief jubilee note, on behalf of the editorial board of *JETP Letters* we address ourselves to you, our honorable authors: you are the pride, the main hope, and backbone of our journal. Please, submit to *JETP Letters* more of your own articles both good and various.

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