

300 years

Russian Academy of Sciences

300th ANNIVERSARY OF THE RUSSIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

DEAR READERS

2024 marks the 300th anniversary of the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS). The Academy was founded at the direction of Peter the Great, according to a plan that had a considerable contribution from the great German scientist Gottfried Leibniz [1]. However, Peter the Great did not live long enough to see his intent realized. By his order, by the Decree of the Governing Senate of January 28 (February 8, new style), 1724, the Academy of Sciences was founded in St. Petersburg (its legal successor is now the Russian Academy of Sciences). Over three centuries, outstanding scientists of the Academy have made fundamental discoveries in understanding nature and society and worked out new technologies at the very core of civilization.

The history of the Academy has been reflected on pages of the journal *Uspekhi Fizicheskikh Nauk* (*UFN*) (*Physics–Uspekhi* in English translation now) from the very beginning of the publication of *UFN* in 1918, which was associated with the founder and the first editor-in-chief of *UFN*, academician Petr Petrovich Lazarev. It was P P Lazarev who had the honor to give the talk, "Historical outline of the development of exact sciences in Russia over 200 years," at the solemn jubilee meeting of the Academy dedicated to the 200th anniversary of its foundation. This very interesting essay was first published as a separate print and soon became a bibliographic rarity. Only 75 years later, in 1999, by the decision of the editorial board of *UFN*, was this essay [2]

reproduced in a special *UFN* issue dedicated to the 275th anniversary of the RAS, where the current stage of development of the physical sciences was also covered in detail in a paper by two academician secretaries of the Division of Physical Sciences of the RAS [3]. Previously, *UFN* published a large editorial for the 250th anniversary of the Academy [4].

Along with historical facts, these papers contain thoughts that are still relevant today. The admonition addressed to our contemporaries was clearly formulated 100 years ago at the end of the paper by the *UFN* editor-in-chief P P Lazarev: "If we wish technology to flourish in the third century of the existence of science in Russia, so that a strong and permanent connection is established between the results obtained by science and its application to technology, it is necessary that conditions be provided to science that are worthy of it, and then we may hope that we will be able to follow our great predecessors. This path should make our country technically strong and economically rich." These words are also topical for the coming fourth century of the Russian Academy of Sciences, for it is prosperity of sciences that may serve as a solid basis for the well-being and prosperity of the Fatherland.

Several *UFN* papers concerning the history of the Russian Academy of Sciences:

1. Henri V A "The role of Leibnitz in the establishment of scientific schools in Russia" *Phys. Usp.* **42** 1223 (1999); *Usp. Fiz. Nauk* **169** 1329 (1999)

2. Lazarev P P "Historical essay on the 200 years of the development of natural sciences in Russia" *Phys. Usp.* **42** 1247 (1999); *Usp. Fiz. Nauk* **169** 1351 (1999)

3. Boyarchuk A A, Keldysh L V "From a physics laboratory to the Division of General Physics and Astronomy" *Phys. Usp.* **42** 1183 (1999); *Usp. Fiz. Nauk* **169** 1289 (1999)

4. "The USSR Academy of Sciences: 250 years" *Sov. Phys. Usp.* **17** 289 (1974); Editorial board of *Usp. Fiz. Nauk* **113** 3 (1974)