

The sixtieth anniversary of this journal, which coincided with the centennial of the birth date of its founder and first editor, Academician Petr Petrovich Lazarev, in an occasion to remind the contemporary reader, if only briefly, of the social circumstances under which it was born.

In prerevolutionary Russia there were no scientific research institutes for physics whose specific objective was to investigate physical problems, whereas such institutes had already become the chief centers of development of the science abroad. In Russia, physics was being developed in university departments, in "cabinets" equipped in a makeshift way out of the meager and sometimes personal finances of the professors. A small group of physicists worked in the institutions of higher learning in St. Petersburg, others gravitated toward P. N. Lebedev in Moscow, and physicists in other cities worked alone. The largest school was that of P. N. Lebedev at the Moscow University. In 1911, however, Lebedev and his colleagues left the university in protest over repressive actions of the government against the elected rectorate and student agitation. Lebedev's school had lost its university base, and soon thereafter lost its leader as well when he died after a heart attack on March 14, 1912.

However, Lebedev's scientific school remained alive. It has been supported by the progressive community even during Lebedev's life; the Moscow Scientific Institute Society had been formed, private donations were collected, and a physics institute was later built and equipped at Miussy. It opened in January 1917. After Lebedev's passing, all of the scientific-organizational activity was directed by his student and closest associate, P. P. Lazarev (Academician after 1917). It was he who was elected director of the first scientific research institute of physics.

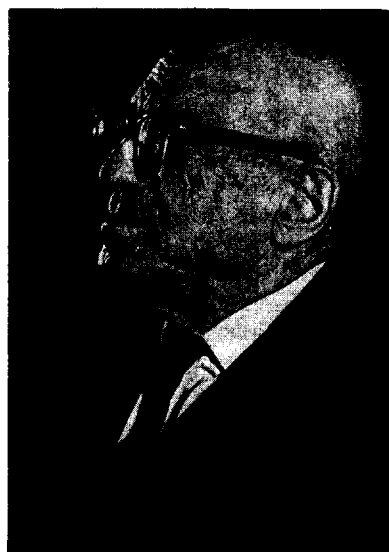
Such were the difficult conditions under which native physics was developing early in our century. Nevertheless, it recorded magnificent achievements: as examples, we might cite the experimental observation and measurement of light pressure by Lebedev, the "elementary photoeffect" of A. F. Ioffe, and D. S. Rozhdestvenskii's studies of anomalous dispersion in sodium vapor.

The Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917 opened up broad prospects for the development of physics. The science was not only supported by the party leadership and government, but was also charged with a monumental task; that of raising the scientific-technical level of the young socialist country's economy. This was the time during which the large scientific research institutes—Physico-technical, Optical, Aerohydrodynamical, and others—were being conceived and created. Physicists joined actively in the construction of Soviet science and in the training of scientific cadres, who were needed in rapidly increasing numbers. The most urgent task was that of organizing rapid dissemination of information on the present state of physics, its problems, and its most recent advances. This was the time during which physicists were penetrating to the atomic level, when new quantum and relativistic ideas were taking hold, unexpected new effects were being discovered, and more precise research methods were being developed. At the same time, there was an obvious need for a review periodical devoted to publication of summaries of the most recent advances in physics.

Such a publication—"Uspekhi Fizicheskikh Nauk"—was founded early in 1918. Its founder and editor was P. P. Lazarev, and his deputy was E. V. Shpol'skii (another member of the Lebedev school); after 1924 (Russian Vol. 4), the names of both appeared on the masthead as coeditors, and later Shpol'skii headed the



P. P. Lazarev



E. V. Shpol'skii

editorial staff, remaining in that position to his death in 1975. (For an article devoted to his memory see *Usp. Fiz. Nauk* 118, 189 (1976) [*Sov. Phys. Uspekhi* 19, 102 (1977)].) Many of Lebedev's students were among the first authors to appear in the journal, and S. I. Vavilov later joined the editorial staff.

It can therefore be said that "Uspekhi Fizicheskikh Nauk" was the "very own child" of the Lebedev school of physicists.

The early management must be given credit for its skill in assembling around the journal, even during its earliest years, both physicists who were already eminent and the scientific youth of the time, who would mature into scientists of note. As Shpol'skiĭ rightly wrote 10 years ago, "there was no active Soviet physicist, beginning with the founders of Soviet science Ioffe,

Lazarev, and Rozhdestvenskiĭ, through the first rank of the then-young physicists Vavilov, Kurchatov, Kapitza, Semenov, Tamm, Frenkel' and Fok to their students and the students of their students, who did not publish in 'Uspekhi'." The organizers and administrators of the journal showed appreciation for sound innovation in science, and this enabled them, over the decades, to orient Soviet physicists correctly in the direction of genuine scientific values. This demanded of them both love for the science and broad erudition, and won the journal well-merited respect.

In observing the sixtieth year of "Uspekhi," the Editors join with the readers of the journal in paying tribute to their highly productive activity.

Translated by R. W. Bowers