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25–30 мая 2000 г. Москва, Санкт-Петербург. В Политехническом музее и Академии гражданской авиации состоялись Вторые международные чтения, посвященные развитию творческого наследия И. И. Сикорского.

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5–8 июня 2000 г. Москва. Состоялась научная конференция «От истории природы к истории общества», организованная Российским философским обществом, ИИЕТ РАН, Геологическим музеем им. В. И. Вернадского РАН, Отделением эколого-информационных систем МАИ, секцией истории естествознания МОИП.

#### **От Национального комитета РАН по истории и философии науки и техники**

20 июля 2000 г. Москва. На 75-м году жизни скончалась Галина Евгеньевна Павлова — ведущий научный сотрудник

ИИЕТ им. С. И. Вавилова РАН, кандидат исторических наук.

## ABSTRACTS

**Kessenikh A. V. Untypical Representative: Aleksandr Armand in the People's Commissariat of Heavy Industry, 1933–1937.** A descendant of the famous French family, whose Russian branch (known from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century) gave its new homeland a number of outstanding engineers and manufacturers, Aleksandr Armand became widely known in the USSR in the mid-1930s, when he became a scientific advisor to G. K. Ordzhonikidze, the then Head of the People's Commissariat of Heavy Industry. A man who owed his distinction among the Soviet officials both to his erudition and to his ancestry (his mother, Inessa Armand, was well-remembered in the party circles as Lenin's close comrade), Aleksandr Armand played a no small role in the development of the Soviet Atomic Project. As the article shows, it was his energetic support that helped integrate nuclear physics into research programs of the institutes administered by the People's Commissariat of Heavy Industry. The death of his powerful patron Ordzhonikidze in 1937 exerted a heavy blow on Armand's life: immediately thereafter, he was fired from the Commissariat and expelled from the Communist Party. Yet, his talisman — the name of his mother — saved Armand from the worst. Even his career was to make a circle rather than a fall: eventually, he managed to get a research position at the Institute of Heat Engineering, returning to the place where he had worked prior to his bright, albeit short, service at the Commissariat of Heavy Industry.

**Correspondence between N. I. Vavilov and H. J. Muller, 1936–1939.** The hitherto unpublished correspondence of two prominent geneticists sheds new light on the events preceding the 7<sup>th</sup> International Congress on Genetics. Committed as he was to building international partnerships, in 1933 Vavilov invited his American colleague Muller to work at the Institute of Genetics of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. In charge of the Institute's Division of Gene and Mutations Studies from 1933 through 1937, Muller became familiar with the work of his Soviet colleagues and the difficulties they experienced thanks to the growing influence of Lysenkoism. In fact, he played an active role in a large-scale public discussion on genetics (which took place in Moscow in 1936), criticizing Lysenko and supporting the views of Vavilov and his collaborators. At that time, the Soviet authorities, influenced by Lysenkoism, decided to suspend the preparatory work for the 7<sup>th</sup> International Congress on Genetics (initially scheduled to take place in the USSR in 1937), making its organizers think of a more hospitable host. With Muller as an active member of the Organizing Committee, who himself had left the USSR for England in 1938, his new homeland was an obvious choice. Notwithstanding the decision to move the Congress from the USSR to England, the Organizing Committee elected Vavilov to serve as its President. In his letters written in the course of planning the Congress, Vavilov described his own current work and the latest results of his associates at

the Institute of Genetics. Muller, in his turn, suggested the names of Soviet geneticists whose presence at the Congress he thought would be most important. As it turned out, however, the Congress (which took place in 1939) featured not a single Soviet participant. Even Vavilov, its President elect, was not able to get the permission of the Soviet authorities to attend the event.

Apart from the correspondence between Vavilov and Muller, the publication features a little-known preface written by Vavilov to Muller's book, *Izbrannye raboty po genetike* [*Selected Papers on Genetics*], published in the USSR in 1937 on Vavilov's initiative.

**Goncharov G. A. Distorted Drafts of Flerov's Letters.** A seminal figure in the history of the Soviet Atomic Project, Georgii Flerov made a name for himself by his discovery of the spontaneous fission of uranium (in 1940, together with K. A. Petrzhak) and by his active promotion of the early Soviet efforts to master nuclear energy, interrupted by the onset of World War II. According to the students of the Soviet Atomic Project, the renewal of those efforts in 1942 had much to do with a series of letters written by Flerov in 1941–1942 to the top authorities of the country (including Stalin) and its leading physicists (including Kurchatov). The former publications of those "letters" however, based on their draft versions (the originals have not been found to date), have resulted in different interpretations of Flerov's work. An analysis of the recently found drafts makes the author conclude that some of those interpretations have given a distorted picture of Flerov's ideas — including, among other things, the alleged proposal to use plutonium in the construction of atomic bomb, attributed to Flerov by Iu. N. Smirnov in his earlier publication in this journal (1996. №2).

**Vakulenko A. A., Mikhailov G. K. Clifford Truesdell and the Modern History of Mechanics.** The article is devoted to the work of the late Clifford Truesdell (1918–2000), viewed by the authors as the only outstanding modern specialist in general mechanics with professional expertise in its history. Analyzing his pioneering studies devoted to the development of continuous medium mechanics and thermodynamics in the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the authors argue that Truesdell's approach, emphasizing critical reflection on the sources, set the standards for the modern history of mathematics as a scholarly field. Apart from that, Truesdell was instrumental in helping develop professional interchange among the students of the history of mechanics, having established (in the late 1950s) the two journals that eventually became a major force in shaping the discipline (namely, the *Archive for Rational Mechanics and Analysis* and the *Archive for History of Exact Sciences*).

**Bogatova T. V., Zefirova O. N., Zaitseva E. A. Teaching the History of Chemistry at Moscow University: Social and Political Aspects.** Based on a variety of published and archival sources, the article documents the development of the history of chemistry since its inclusion into the curriculum of Moscow University's Chemistry Department in the 1890s. Particular attention is given to the programmatic changes related to the social and political transformations experienced by the country over the 20<sup>th</sup> century. At the same time, the authors highlight certain elements constituting what they view as the continued tradition of teaching the history of chemistry in Russia, attributing their development mainly to Professor Figurovskii, who had been teaching the discipline at Moscow University from 1947 through the mid-1980s. His encyclopedic approach — marked by an emphasis on the general trends in the development of natural sciences, on the one hand, and an interest in little-known historical anecdotes, on the other — became the canon for his numerous students, eventually spread by them to other universities of Russia and the former USSR.

**Idlis G. M. The Teacher: In Memory of Academician A. D. Aleksandrov (1912–1999).** The article presents the author's lyric reminiscences of his longtime acquaintanceship with an outstanding Russian mathematician. Most famous for his fundamental work in the field of geometry, the late A. D. Aleksandrov was also the author of pioneering studies devoted to the methodological problems of physics (including the axiomatics of relativity theory and its interpretation as the theory of absolute space). Apart from listing the major achievements of A. D. Aleksandrov in his primary fields of expertise, the article documents the wide range of his cultural and philosophical interests, revealed by his numerous essays (e. g., "Scientific Inquiry and Religious Faith," "Reflections on Economics and Ethics," "Truth as a Moral Value," and "Talks on the History of Science") as well as his poetry.