

FIFTY YEARS OF SIBERIAN MATHEMATICAL JOURNAL

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Abstract: This is a write-up on the principles of *Siberian Mathematical Journal* which was founded in 1960.

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The epoch of the contemporary science stemming from Newton is connected with the uprise of scientific journals. These journals have been the principal distributors and collectors of current scientific information during three centuries. Moreover, the journals have played the role of the centers for verification and internationalization of all available instances of knowledge.

The fifty years of *Siberian Mathematical Journal* intersect the period of revolutionary changes in the proliferation of information technologies. It is impossible to compare the present day with the first years of the Siberian Division of the Academy of Sciences when there was no automatic telephone communication even with Moscow. Novosibirsk had lacked appropriate polygraphic facilities and the journal had been produced in Moscow during its first decade. Today the journal is distributed mainly in electronic form but its operation and role in the scientific life remain practically the same as before. Any scientific journal was always not only an efficient mean for operative information but also a challenging intellectual filter. The authority of a journal in academic circles and its real influence are mostly determined by its requirements to the quality of expertise and the level of publications, primarily, to the validity of the information provided by the journal. The obligatory anonymous reviewing, well-grounded and just decision making, competence, and high moral standards of the members of the editorial board are the prerequisites of successful solution of the task of collecting and providing the scruples of scientific truth.

The expert and regulatory functions of a journal are in constantly growing demand in these days of rapidly developing electronic technologies when everyone can post whatever information in the Internet without any constraints. As any good, the open access to mass media has its seamy side. The ether is drowned in the flood of pseudoscience and junk science. There are instances galore of the flourishing online journals that open free ways to feeble and ignorant publications and accommodate the abundance of the would-be authors indulging in plagiarism, multiplication, obfuscation, and mysticism, to say nothing about definitely sick persons. To stop or at least decelerate this flood is the task only for the established journals whose authority rests on the quality of the procedures of verification and objectification of facts.

Siberian Mathematical Journal has stable international and domestic reputation not only in view of the merits of its authors but also to some extent in view of the principles of its management and operation. These principles fully active these fifty years were propounded by ANATOLIĬ IVANOVICH MALCEV (1909–1967), the first Editor-in-Chief of *Siberian Mathematical Journal*.

It is worth recalling that the traditional management of a scientific journal bases on the principle of personal responsibility of each member of the editorial board. The editor-in-chief forwarded a submitted article to the member of the board whom he considers most competent in the content of the article. The article goes to the “file” or “portfolio” of the member of the board who solely assigns an appropriate reviewer and takes the decision on the article which is practically final but announced to the author by the editor-in-chief. This is the routine of most of the Western mathematical journals.

Malcev essentially improved and enriched the traditional procedure. The classical “personal portfolio principle” was supplemented with the *joint responsibility principle* and the *consensus principle* untypical of the Western journals.

No single submitted article can be accepted or rejected in any fashion other than by a decision of the editorial board which is made at a meeting of the board after a report of the member of the board who has the article in his portfolio. This is the joint responsibility principle of decision making.

At the same time, the consensus principle is effective which forbids to make any decision by majority vote. Any decision on any submitted article must be approved by all members of the editorial board.

Individual responsibility and freedom in preparation of a decision which is allotted to every member of the editorial board are combined the requirement of obligatory consensus. This ensures the principle of unconditional trust in the professionalism of each member of the board as well as some defense against biased or discriminatory decisions. It is worth observing that the meetings of the Editorial Board of *Siberian Mathematical Journal* exhibited the examples of dignified and decent decision making on academic problems in the most critical and controversial periods of the life of the Sobolev Institute of Mathematics.

The fate of science is in the hands of scientists. The present and the future of *Siberian Mathematical Journal* are determined by its authors and editors who keep the standards and traditions of the journal alive.

Siberian Mathematical Journal enters its new half-century confidently, leaning on the creative potential of the mathematical community of the Siberian Division of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

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