

150+ Years of Moscow Mathematical Society

- The previous year, Moscow Mathematical Society has met its 150th anniversary.
- MMS was founded in 1864 by a group of 14 mathematics professors, originally for coordination and mutual information. However, in the official statute of the Society, fixed in 1866 and officially registered in 1867, its goal is described as "Assistance in developing mathematical sciences in Russia".

- Almost immediately, in 1866, the first Russian mathematical journal, *Matematicheskii Sbornik* (= *Sbornik: Mathematics*), was launched by the Society.
- The founding president and vice-president of the Society were Nikolai Brashman and August Davidov (president in 1866-85); the most prominent member of its starting team was Pafnuty Chebyshev.





- It was the time of great expectations for Russia, the time of liberal reforms following the abolition of slavery, the upraise and growth of industry, the turbulent social activity. So, there was a serious social request for the development of mathematics and mathematical cooperation.

- In 46 years since its registration the society has grown from 14 to 112 members; what is more important, some internationally recognizable persons like Nikolai Lusin, Dmitry Yegorov and Nikolay Zhukovsky occurred in the list of ordinary members.

- In 1879 and 1890, two other Mathematical societies were founded in Russia: the Kharkov and St-Petersbourg Societies.

- Since then, the MMS has had a long and sometimes dramatic history, through revolutions, wars and ideology; this history is partially described in the article by S.S.Demidov, V.M.Tikhomirov and T.A.Tokareva in EMS Newsletter, 2003 and 2004. See also <http://mms.mathnet.ru/> and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moscow_Mathematical_Society.

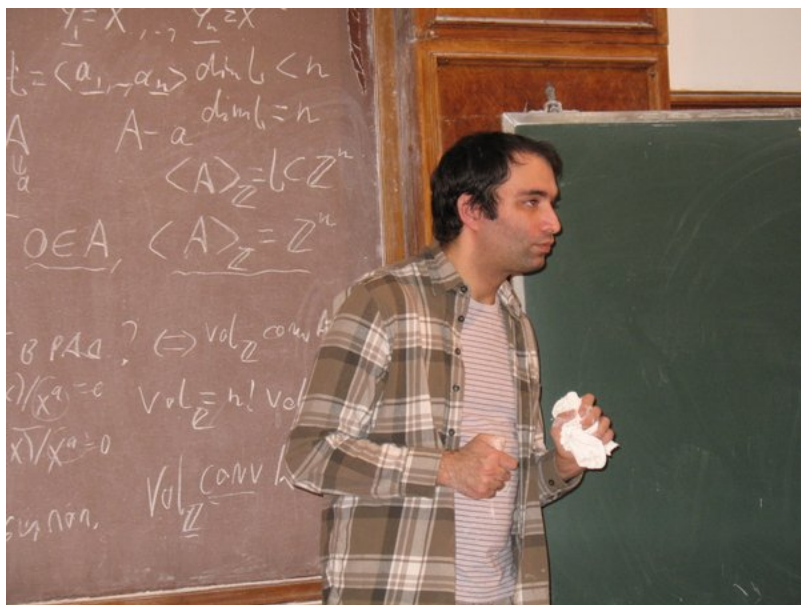
- The mathematical activity has grown very much in the Soviet era, when Mathematics was the most safe field of intellectual activity, in which one could make a comparatively successful career without entering the Communist Party, on the one hand, and be almost free of the ideology in one's professional activity, on the other.

- A particular rise of Moscow mathematics is related with the movement of our capital to Moscow from St-Petersburg; it is also to mention the fantastic activity of I.Petrovsky and A.Kolmogorov in raising the Faculty of mechanics and mathematics of the Moscow State University.

- I will not name all the great mathematicians who worked in Moscow in these times: all of you know them very well.
- Unfortunately it was impossible to be free of the environment. One can mention several disgusting cases in our history, like the Egorov case, the Luzin affair, and the two-year presidency of Ernst Kolman, a specialist in marxist mathematics.

- Nevertheless, along almost all the Soviet and post-Soviet history the MMS was the most independent body in our mathematical community (in particular, thanks to its financial humility: for instance now the yearly Membership fee is 300 roubles, i.e. approximately 5 US\$ with about 350 active members).

- The main activity of the Society are Tuesday meetings with scientific talks or (more seldom) discussions, e.g. on the problems of mathematical education; usually we have about 20 meeting a year. The golden era of this activity are the 1960-ies and 1970-ies.





- Also, the MMS awards yearly up to 2 Prizes to young (up to 30 yo) mathematicians. This prize is very prestigious in the Russian mathematical community: unofficially, it is the highest Russian honor in mathematics (and probably also in all sciences) awarded for purely scientific merits.

- The Society is running the Russian Mathematical Surveys journal (together with the Russian Academy of Sciences) and Transactions of the MMS. We do not have a newsletter, only a twitter tape on our site.

- But probably the main duty and impact of the Society is as follows. For many years (except for a few most dark ones) it was controlled by real mathematicians motivated primarily by scientific interests, and not by administrators and functionaries.

- The presidents of the Society in this time were Pavel Alexandrov (1932-64), A.Kolmogorov (64–66, 73–85), I.Gelfand (66–70), I.Shafarevich (70–73), S.Novikov (85-96), V.Arnold (1996-2010).

- In these years, MMS has accumulated a reputational fund making it a high level source of independent expertize and judgment for the Russian mathematical community. We are trying to keep this reputation in our interesting times, too.