

Dear colleagues,

We have completed the program for the year. It would have been a joyful event, except that the program was for 2022, which means our lagging behind has actually increased. Still, I hope we will release the first issue in 2023 before the year is out. It's time for a radical change. We are going back to our roots, exploring the possibility of reactivating INEOS OPEN CUP fully and using it to fill our Journal portfolio. But more on that in the contest announcement and in the next editorial.

The Institute, just like many colleagues of our section, is facing elections—as usual, entirely unexpectedly. How exactly this atavism has come to be and made a place for itself in our scientific life is no longer possible to determine. To elect one's own bosses in science is utter stupidity that had been abolished back in the Soviet era, where it had once existed with the elections of officers in the Red Army and of "red" professors in the Academy, including even the Moscow State University. Later, that trend had made a comeback during Perestroika, when the elected directors had speedily bankrupted their firms.

Fortunately, the Russian Academy of Sciences had been minimally affected. The veterans remember that it wasn't M. E. Volpin who'd been elected in INEOS RAS, and it wasn't M. P. Egorov in IOC RAS, but young and popular doctors of sciences. However, the RAS Department had corrected that bit of democracy, and the Institutes had ended up with mature and competent directors who had preserved the academic traditions for years afterwards.

It is unclear where the current election system has been copied from. Its inadequacy is revealed in full when studying the agreement that the elected director has to sign—it states that he or she can be fired within 24 hours if found to be even slightly veering off from the Ministry's edicts. There are no precedents like that in the civilized world. The only remaining conclusion is that it's our own local creativity in action. What is it, nostalgia for the revolutionary roots?

The process of electing the director of the Max Planck Institute is a long one; it includes numerous interviews in various committees and commissions, after all of which he has nine years where he manages the Institute's budget as he sees fit, forms the management structure, and carries the full weight of responsibility for scientific highs and lows. Yes, it's a long and arduous process, but that arduousness is rewarded with a long term in which to act without conforming to the passing whims of subordinates and nervous demands of bureaucrats.

What of the current one we have? On the one hand, it had allowed for electing of a populist who had nothing to do with the Academy at all, which had led to a rapid degradation of institutes that had previously been innovative leaders in some not insignificant fields. Only thanks to the prevalence of technical specialists over scientists, such institutes are handed over through the election process to "experienced managers"

who don't need the RSF projects and megagrants, they only need contracts that capitalize on past insights. It's amazing how it only takes one or two years to destroy a former leader of innovation. At the same time, this pseudo-democracy does nothing to stop a bureaucrat with a Ph.D. degree from shuffling institutes from one department to another or from firing an Academy-member-rank director at the stroke of a pen.

All of this is to say that we should show solidarity and respect to the academic roots of our Institute. Let's preserve the academic tradition that had been created by our founder, a great scientist whose name our Institute has been proudly carrying for over twenty years. The strength of our Institute is in the academic tradition, and in that same tradition lies its future.

Sincerely yours,

Editor-in-Chief

Prof., Full Member of RAS

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