

Ninety Years of the Paleontological Society

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Abstract—The establishment in 1916 and the subsequent 90-year history of the Russian (later All-Union and All-Russia) Paleontological Society are discussed. The society's works and endeavors over ninety years were closely connected with the needs of practical geology, and primarily with paleontological research, the development of a stratigraphic basis, and their use in paleogeography, paleoecology, and biosphere studies.

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INTRODUCTION

The opening of the Russian Paleontological Society (RPS) was held in the building of the Imperial Mineralogical Society in the Empress Catherine II Mining Institute on April 22 (May 5, New Style), 1916. This day is considered the beginning of the Society, although it was preceded by two meetings.

SUMMARY OF THE HISTORY PRECEDING THE ORGANIZATION OF THE SOCIETY¹

By the beginning of the 20th century paleontological research in Russia had existed over 100 years. The research was conducted in educational institutions, primarily universities, in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kazan, Khar'kov and others, and in the St. Petersburg Mining Institute. From the beginning of the 1820s, paleontology was taught at these institutions as a separate subject. The Chair of Paleontology at the Mining Institute was organized in 1866.

Paleontology was also addressed by a number of scientific societies, including the Moscow Society of Nature Explorers (established in 1805), Imperial Mineralogical Society (1817), Amateur Society of Natural History, Anthropology, and Ethnography at Moscow University (1863).

When the Russian Geological Committee was organized in 1882 in St. Petersburg, its main tasks included the systematic study of the geology and mineral resources of the country, and geological mapping, which immediately required knowledge of the ancient faunas and floras for stratigraphy. Between 1883 and 1890, 16 paleontological monographs were published in *Trudy Geol'koma (Proceedings of Geological Committee)*.

¹ The author used data published in two reference books of the Moscow Society of Nature Explorers—one was edited by B.S. Sokolov and L.V. Mironova (*All-Union Paleontological ...*, 1984) and the other was compiled by N.G. Krymgholz, N.V. Kruchinina, and I.M. Kolobova (*Paleontological Society ...*, 2001)—and periodicals of the Society.

ORGANIZATION OF THE RUSSIAN PALEONTOLOGICAL SOCIETY

At the beginning of the 20th century, the idea of a paleontological society was, as they say, "in the air." Mikhail Dmitrievich Zalessky, a geologist from the Geological Committee, proposed the organization of such a society, drafted its Charter, and provided the organizational framework. The Russian Paleontological Society² had fifty-two founder members. They were not only paleontologists, but also geologists, zoologists, and botanists, including outstanding scientists who made Russian Science famous such as N.I. Andrusov, V.P. Amalitzky, M.V. Bayarunas, A.A. Borisyak, A.N. Krishtofovich, M.A. Menzbir, A.P. Pavlov, P.A. Pravoslavlev, A.N. Ryabinin, P.I. Stepanov, V.N. Sukachev, P.P. Sushkin, N.N. Tikhonovich, G.N. Fredericks, A.A. Tschernow, N.N. Yakovlev, M.E. Yanishevsky, and others. There were two women among the founder members: Maria Vasil'evna Pavlova from Moscow University and Anna Boleslavovna Missuna, an assistant from the Women's Higher Education Courses. Half of the founder members (27 people) worked in institutions in St. Petersburg, ten were from Moscow, nine from Khar'kov, four from Odessa, one from Nizhnii Novgorod, and one from Rostov-on-Don. On February 9 (February 22, New Style) the Charter of the Russian Paleontological Society was included by the Petrograd Special City Council on Matters Concerning Societies in the Register of the Societies of Petrograd, as no. 967. This charter included four sections: I. Aim of the Society and means of its achievement, II. Society members, III. Management of the Society, IV. On the activity of the Society (*Ezhegod. Russk. ...*, 1917).

Below, the first two paragraphs of the Charter are cited.

² The name was modeled on that of the Russian Botanical Society, established on December 30, 1915 (Old Style).

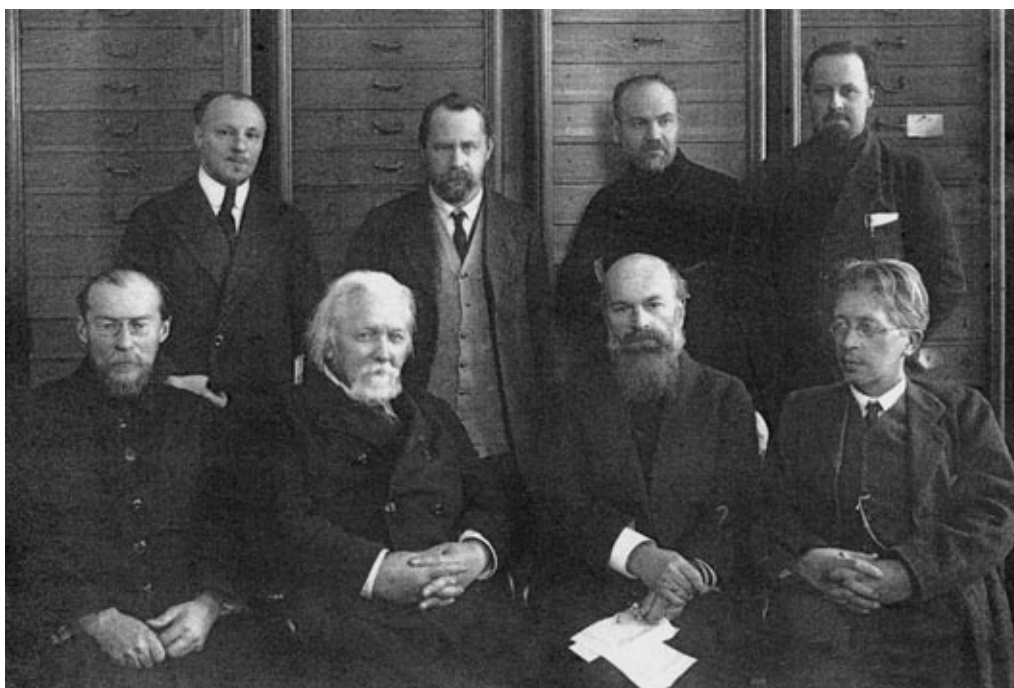


Fig. 1. Members of the Council of the Russian Paleontological Society, 1924. From left to right, first row: M.E. Yanishevsky, A.P. Karpinsky, N.N. Yakovlev, A.A. Borisyak; second row: A.N. Ryabinin, P.I. Stepanov, M.D. Zalessky, and B.K. Licharew.

(1) The purpose of the Society is to develop paleontology (the science of fossil animals and plants) in general, and to support the studies of related disciplines (zoology, botany, and geology) mainly in Russia. The activity of the Society is meant to encompass the entire Russian Empire.

(2) The above purpose is achieved by (1) collecting and studying animal and plant remains; (2) publishing their descriptions and studies; (3) collaboration with Russian and foreign societies and individuals who could benefit the Society; (4) acquisition of books and equipment necessary for study; (5) organization of excursions and expeditions to collect fossils; (6) organization of free and paid lectures and readings on paleontology, all with necessary government approval; (7) selection of tasks, with awards for their successful achievement; (8) meetings of the members (*Ezhegod. Russk. ...*, 1917, vol. 1, p. 116).

The Society's funds, kept in one of the state credit institutions, were composed of annual compulsory and life memberships, voluntary donations and money collected from publications, lectures and readings. The Society included actual and honorary members. Those who benefited the Society could be elected as corre-

sponding members. Actual members who did not pay their compulsory membership for two years were bound to be excluded from the Society.

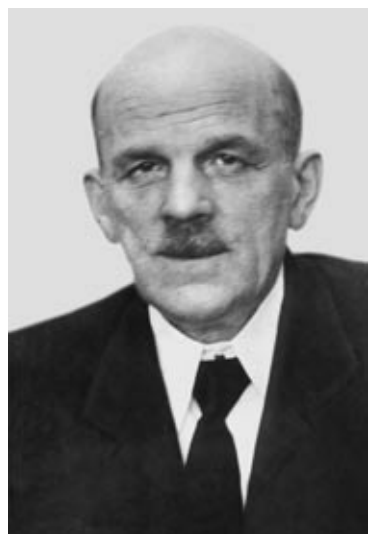
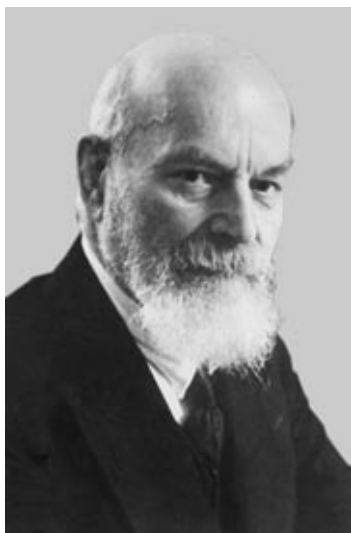
The Society had ordinary, annual, and emergency (called by the Chairman with the agreement of at least ten members) meetings. The Society was to be managed by a Council elected for three years at the annual meeting. Provision was also made for a revision commission of three members.

The first two meetings of the Society were held in the new building of the Geological Committee (now the main building of the All-Russia Institute of Geology).

The first meeting of the Society that was held on February 17 (March 1, New Style), was attended by seven founder members. At this meeting, M.D. Zalessky suggested that candidates for the Council be proposed by written proposals. Fifteen candidates were proposed. It was suggested that membership of the Council be decided by secret voting by all founder members, and a commission counting the votes be elected.

At the second meeting of the Society (March 21 [April 3, New Style]) the results of the election to the Council were announced, and a decision was reached on the two kinds of publications (monographs and col-

Fig. 2. Leaders of the Paleontological Society. From left to right, upper row: N.N. Yakovlev, Chairman in 1916–1940; A.N. Ryabinin, Chairman in 1940–1942; A.N. Krishtofovich, Chairman in 1946–1953 (Deputy Chairman in 1934–1945); middle row: I.I. Gorsky, Chairman in 1953–1956, President in 1956–1974; M.E. Yanishevsky, Deputy Chairman in 1916–1930; A.M. Obut in 1954–1956, Vice President in 1956–1961; lower row: D.L. Stepanov, Deputy Chairman in 1954–1956, Vice President in 1956–1995; B.P. Markovskiy, Vice President in 1966; and V.V. Menner, Vice President in 1972–1989.



lections of papers, summaries, bibliographies, etc. which were later named *Ezhegodnik*).

The Council of the RPS included N.N. Yakovlev (Chairman), M.D. Yanishevsky (Deputy Chairman and Librarian), N.N. Andrusov (Curator of paleontological collections), M.V. Pavlova, A.N. Ryabinin (Treasurer), A.A. Borisyak (Editor of Paleozoology), M.D. Zalesky (Editor of Paleophytology), and the secretaries P.I. Stepanov and A.N. Krishtofovich.

The meeting on May 5 was ceremonial, but gave an example of the scientific content that was followed by the Society in future. After the report of A.N. Krishtofovich about the appearance of the RPS and about its first meetings, N.N. Yakovlev (Chairman) presented an extended report (it is called a "speech" in the notes): "Current Tasks of Paleontology and Paleontological Society). The presenter referred to paleontology as a biological science (the zoology and botany of past geological periods), which included paleozoology and paleobotany with their respective tasks. To those he added a branch of science that was named paleobiology, by which he meant the study of the life of fossil organisms. He recommended the use of the principle of uniformity (uniformitarianism) to those groups with extant representatives (for example corals). For those groups, whose members are extinct, three ways of reconstructing their lifestyle are proposed: (1) use of modern organisms somewhat close in the system (e.g., using *Nautilus* when studying ammonoids); (2) using facial analysis of host rocks; and (3) analysis of the mechanics of the fossil organism. The presenter himself preferred the third approach. N.N. Yakovlev saw the main task of the Society as the "development of paleontology and supporting everything that may increase the number of interested people." He referred to the connection with geology as "topographical" because paleontology received material and its chronological distribution in the past epochs from geology. Geologists, in turn, use paleontological data for stratigraphy, developing so-called stratigraphic paleontology. Apparently by these accounts the new chairman wanted to emphasize that paleontology is an independent science developing in close contact with geology and neontology, because he expressed satisfaction that the Society included among its founder members geologists, paleontologists, zoologists, and botanists, and he hoped that the relationships would be maintained, and mutually beneficial collaboration between scientists in these two fields would be established.

N.N. Yakovlev finished his speech saying that "Summarizing all the above, I believe it is possible to say that the appearance of the Paleontological Society is a response to a need, and that the Society may count on a wide scope of activities that promote this science that is so dear to us, to the honor of our country, and therefore, looking earnestly to the future, let the great work begin!" (Yakovlev, 1917, p. 12). After the Chairman's report, A.A. Karpinsky was unanimously elected

the first honorary member of the Society. According to the minutes of the meeting, this was followed by scientific reports by A.N. Krishtofovich, M.E. Yanishevsky, and I.I. Nikshich, and new actual members were elected. Among these were B.K. Likharew, V.F. Pchelintsev, and V.P. Rengarten.

In the next year (1917) the first volume of *Ezhegod. Russk. Paleontol. O-va* was published. It began with the above speech by N.N. Yakovlev at the public meeting of the Society. A number of scientific papers were followed by sections on Bibliography (a review of selected topics, abstracts of published research, new literature); Chronicles and Personals (important paleontological events, anniversaries, obituaries), Meetings of the Society (minutes and reports). The volume finished with the publication of the Charter, membership of the Society, and its Council.

Two more regular meetings were held in 1916, on which a number of reports were presented and a possible source of additional funding of the Society were discussed (memberships were not sufficient to cover all the expenses). The registration fee was 15 rubles, whereas the annual membership was 10 rubles. Instead of the annual fee, life memberships were offered for 100 rubles. This right was only exercised by three founder members: N.N. Yakovlev, A.N. Ryabinin, and V.N. Ryabinin.

In ninety years the Society has changed its name three times. It became All-Russia in 1934, All-Union from 1949, and from 1992 ceased to have All-Union affiliation and until recently was an associate of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

Nikolai Nikolaevich Yakovlev was Chairman of the Society for a quarter of the century and passed the leadership in 1940 to Anatolii Nikolaevich Ryabinin, who died during the blockade of Leningrad in 1942. Afrikan Nikolaevich Krishtofovich (Deputy Chairman from 1934) was elected Chairman in 1946. After his death in 1953, Ivan Ivanovich Gorsky took the leadership of Society and became Chairman in 1956. Boris Sergeevich Sokolov has been Chairman of the Society for 32 years from 1974. Deputy Chairmen were M.E. Yanishevsky (1916–1930), A.N. Krishtofovich (1934–1945), A.M. Obut (1954–1961), D.L. Stepanov (1954–1995), B.S. Sokolov (1962–1973), B.P. Markovsky (1966), A.I. Zhamoida (from 1969), V.V. Menner (1972–1989), and A.Yu. Rozanov (from 1989). Scientific secretaries from the 1950s were Z.A. Maksimova (1949–1978), L.M. Donakova (1979–1995), E.A. Zhegallo (from 1991), and N.G. Kymgholz (from 1995).

The First Thirty Years

These years were eventful. The Society was established against the background of World War I, the Revolution and Civil War in Russia, and in the first years of the new Soviet state.



Fig. 3. Leaders and Secretariat of the Paleontological Society. From left to right, upper row: B.S. Sokolov, President from 1974 (Vice President in 1962–1973); A.I. Zhamoida, Vice President from 1969; A.Yu. Rozanov, Vice President from 1989; middle row: Z.A. Maksimova, scientific secretary in 1949–1978; L.M. Donakova, scientific secretary in 1979–1995; lower row: E.A. Zhegallo, scientific secretary from 1991; and N.G. Krymgholz, scientific secretary from 1995.

The beginning of the 1920s were particularly difficult. The report of the RPO for that decade states: "Perhaps one day the large figures (millions) of the budget of the Russian Paleontological Society for 1921 and 1922 will strike the imagination of our successors, if they forget that behind these millions was absolutely zero" (*Ezhegod. Russk. ...*, 1927, vol. 6, p. 131). Credit and debit in 1933 were 510298500 and 206790200 rubles, respectively, whereas in 1924 they were 1026 and 616 gold rubles. However, the Society regularly held meetings, with scientific reports and discussions of important problems of paleontology and stratigraphy. In the first decade 127 papers were delivered at 62 scientific meetings, and five volumes of *Ezhegodnik*.

The Council of the RPO worked and held its meetings at the Geological Committee, which immediately provided close contact with the Paleontological Section of the Committee, organized in 1917 and chaired by A.A. Borisyak.

Soon paleontology became needed by the geological survey of the country. The Soviet government from the first years paid particular attention to mineral resources, their inventory and expansion. This required the expansion of geological research, and hence, stratigraphic and paleontological studies. One of the key issues of this expansion was the proposal of A.A. Borisyak in the late 1920s to form a team of biostratigraphers responsible for entire geological periods. Along with experienced paleontologist-stratigraphers, young specialists (new members of the Society) were invited. Among those there were the future eminent scientists O.N. Nikiforova, L.O. Kiparisova, G.Ya. Krymgholz, N.P. Luppov, O.S. Vyalov and others.

By the mid-1930s the number of the members of RPO reached 200. The production in these years of the 1 : 1000000 scale State Geological Map of the USSR, that began with the initiative of Director of All-Russian Geological Research Institute A.P. Gerasimov, and intensification of oil exploration stimulated an increase in the number of paleontologists. In those years all paleontologists considered it an honor to be members of the Society. In 1939 a proposal was put forward to organize branches of the Society in other cities (large scientific centers). The Society took part in the work of the International Union of Paleontologists, of which it was a member from the time of its organization in 1933, and in the 17th Session of the International Geological Congress (Moscow, 1937). A collective volume was prepared for the Congress *Achievements in Paleontology in the USSR for the 20 Years of Its Existence* and organized a "Symposium on Climate of the Past" within the frameworks of the Congress. The RPO was a connecting link between the two largest teams of paleontologists (of Paleontological Institute and All-Russia Geological Research Institute). It should be said that in the 1930s members of the Society were involved in extensive popularizing activity, which was included in the annual reports as a separate paragraph. This

included presentations, lectures, including those in the Institute for Advances in Teaching, articles in magazines, papers in the journals *Priroda*, *Nauka i zhizn*, *Vestnik Znaniya*, and brochures. At that time this was typical for all branches of science.

The Second World War was a tragic period in the history of the All-Russia Paleontological Society (as for the whole country). The activity of the Society was temporarily interrupted, and paleontologists, like all citizens, were fighting or working for the war effort. Many did not live to see victory. One of the regular *Ezhegodnik* published a tribute to respect the memory of 32 members of the Society who died during the war. These memoirs contain warm descriptions of the achievements of lost friends and colleagues, accompanied by photographs (*Ezhegod. Vseross. ...*, 1949, vol. 13). We continue this tradition in a slightly different way. We begin each annual session with the remembrance of deceased colleagues. At the end of the first thirty year period the founder members A.A. Borisyak (1872–1944), M.D. Zalessky (1877–1946), and P.I. Stepanov (1880–1847) passed away.

A summary of the first thirty years of the Society's work was presented by A.N. Krishtofovich at the meeting in 1947 (*Ezhegod. Vseross. ...*, 1949, vol. 13). In this period about 400 reports were presented at 181 meetings, 12 volumes of *Ezhegodnik* and two monographs (by A.A. Borisyak and A.N. Ryabinin) were published by the Society. In addition to the results of observations and research, *Ezhegodnik* reported on the progress in studies of then little known organisms, including bryozoans (V.P. Nekhoroshev and A.I. Nikiforova), archaeocyaths (A.G. Vologdin), radiolarians (A.V. Khabakov), graptolites (A.M. Obut), and on new methods in paleontological research (R.F. Hecker, B.K. Licharew, and D.V. Nalivkin). The Chronicles section contained information on birthdays and deaths of eminent scientists from our country and abroad. Important events in paleontology were also announced. For instance, the discovery of "large deposits of vertebrates" in the Gobi Series (upper part of the Angara Group) in Mongolia, the third Asian expedition of the American Museum of Natural History (New York) (*Ezhegod. Vseross. ...*, 1926, vol. 4, p. 156). The discovery of 11 bone-yielding horizons in 1923 and the 12th in 1924 was ranked as the most important event in the last five years.

The Second Thirty Years

The second 30-year period began with the renaming of the All-Russia Society to the All-Union Society. In 1949, the first branch (Kazakh) was organized in Alma-Ata (now Almaty). The number of the Society's members grew as did the number of paleontologists in the country. It doubled by 1955 to become 400, and in 1966 reached 1100. And there were good reasons for that. The Decision of the Government on the commencement of the work on the 1 : 200000 State Geological

Map of the USSR adopted in 1954, so significant for geologists, was initiated by the administration and scientists of the All-Russia Geological Research Institute and demanded an unprecedented scale of stratigraphic, and hence, paleontological research. The Council of the Society discussed the front page article in the newspaper *Pravda* "To Activate Scientific Societies" (published on August 12, 1954) and decided to hold a session on the use of the paleontological method in the development of unified stratigraphic schemes. In January 1955, a session was held in the All-Russia Geological Research Institute, with the participation of workers from more than 70 institutions of the Ministry of Geology and Protection of Geological Resources, other Ministries, the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, and educational institutions. The transactions of the session published under the title *Problems of Paleobiogeography and Biostratigraphy* (1957) were dedicated to the 85th birthday of N.N. Yakovlev.

In his introductory speech, the Chairman of the Society I.I. Gorsky formulated the targets of the session, the tasks of paleontology in the Soviet Union and hence of the Society. The primary task was defined as stratigraphic research in all its diversity. Other important tasks included the problem of the relationship between the organisms and their environments, of speciation, phylogeny, systematics, zoo- and phytogeography. The presenter (who himself was a renowned coal geologist) mentioned fauna, flora, and the stratigraphy of continental series.

At the end he said: "This meeting begins a close collaborative research between paleontologists and geologists together with zoologists, botanists, ecologists, and other representatives of biological sciences in order to resolve problems related to stratigraphic research" (Gorsky, 1957, p. 8). The session of the Society had a large and very positive response.

The Interdepartmental Stratigraphic Committee (ISC) was established in June of the same year (Zhamoida and Prozorovskaya, 2005). ISC and Society are organizations the central bodies of which (if they can be called that) have collaborated and worked together for half a century under the same roof.

Sometimes greetings are sent off on a single card with a combined letterhead.

At the next meeting B.P. Markovsky³ proposed that these meetings should become annual. He was the principal leader of these meetings until his death in 1966. In the second 30-year period these sessions, apart from dominating stratigraphic targets, were devoted to paleogeography (9th Session, in 1963), evolution (12th Session, in 1966), systematics of the earliest organisms (13th Session, in 1967), stages of the evolution of the organic world (18th Session, in 1972), taphonomy (20th Session, in 1974), and ecostratigra-

phy (22nd Session, in 1976). One of the first sessions, the 5th session in 1959, was devoted to the significance of the biosphere to geological processes (reports by B.P. Markovsky, V.A. Uspensky, A.M. Obut, R.F. Hecker, A.N. Oleinikov, V.L. Librovich, and others). At two sessions (6th Session in 1960 and 21st Session in 1975) the discussions were concerned with the use of paleontology in tectonics (plate tectonics at the latter session). There was an acute discussion between proponents and opponents of this concept, both based on independent paleontological data (presentations by D.V. Nalivkin, V.E. Khain, L.I. Krasnyi, A.I. Zhamoida and A.I. Moiseeva, B.S. Sokolov, V.P. Nekhoroshev, A.F. Abushik, M.V. Oshurkova, V.A. Vakhrameev, K.M. Khudolei, V.I. Ustritskii, and others).

At the 16th Session of Society (1970) the main achievements of Russian paleontologists were discussed: those in 1720–1870 (V.V. Tikhomirov and L.I. Khozatskii), and in the last century with a review of the development of several fields related to paleontology (B.S. Sokolov, O.L. Einor, R.F. Hecker, and P.K. Chudinov), with characterization of various paleontological schools in our country (V.P. Nekhoroshev, V.A. Drushchits, E.I. Tikhvinskaya et al., V.A. Ivania and A.R. Anan'ev, V.G. Kamyshva-Elpat'evskaya, and others). Members of the Society took active part in preparation of the multivolume fundamental title series "Stratigraphy of the USSR," "Atlas of Lithologic-Paleogeographic Maps of the USSR," and "Fundamentals of Paleontology." Yu.A. Orlov, the Principle Editor of the latter series (and editors B.P. Markovsky, V.E. Ruzhencev, and B.S. Sokolov) were awarded the Lenin Prize. A large increase in the number of paleontologists in scientific institutions and in the geological survey caused exponential growth of the number of branches of the Society in various towns and cities. The organization of the Kazakhstan branch was followed by one in Uzbekistan in 1960, in Kiev and Lvov in 1961, and in Saratov in 1962. By 1976 there were 24 altogether, in capitals and many other cities of the republics of the USSR, including 12 in the Russian Federation and 6 in Ukraine. The closest relationships with the industrial geological organizations existed in the Azerbaijan, Belorussia, Vladivostok, Donetsk, Novosibirsk, and Ukhta branches. All the branches were involved in disseminating paleontological knowledge among non-professionals; some were involved with conservation of paleontological sites. Student groups of "Young geologists" were organized in university towns. The importance of work of local branches of the Society is difficult to overestimate not only for paleontology in the entire country, but also for the geological survey and, as has correctly been said in previous years, for the national economy. Speaking at the 12th annual session dedicated to the 50th anniversary of the Society, I.I. Gorsky mentioned, among most important achievements of paleontology in the Soviet Union, the organization of large teams of paleontologists in research and industrial institutions, wide use of micropaleontologi-

³ The badge of the VPO issued for the 50th anniversary of the Society was also designed by B.P. Markovsky.

cal methods, and extensive participation of paleontologists in the preparation of large studies and projects. The Chairman identified the main current direction of the paleontological science as biologization, using this term to describe the combined use of paleogeography and facial analysis, paleoecology, taphonomy, paleophysiology, paleoneurology, and paleopathology.

Concluding his speech Gorsky (1968, p. 11) said "The achievements of paleontology and related sciences is a huge merit of all Soviet scientists working in geology and biology, but among this large group of scientists, usually in the front ranks, we find members of the All-Union Paleontological Society, which is one of the principle coordinators of our research."

In 1957 on the initiative of I.M. Pokrovskaya, the first specialized section of the Society (Paleobotanical) was organized. This was followed by the Section of Mathematical Methods in Paleontology (led by A.N. Oleinikov) in 1974, Section of Conservation of Unique and Valuable Paleontological Sites (led by R.F. Hecker), and the Section of Paleontological Education (led by V.V. Drushchits and V.P. Makridin).

The active and diverse work of the Society, which now included over 1500 members, was somewhat hampered by the lack of finances for publications. Following the proposal of B.S. Sokolov, the Society began preparation for transition to the Academy of Sciences.

The Third Thirty Years

The beginning of the third 30-year period can be dated to the transfer of the Society to the Academy of Sciences, although formally it happened slightly earlier, in February 1974. This move was preceded by the decision of the plenary meeting of the Society, sending documents to the Academy, efforts by B.S. Sokolov, etc. I particularly remember the days when V.V. Menner and I were walking up and down the offices and stairs of the Presidium of the Academy and many bureaucratic organizations of the Academy (which were located in the Neskuchnyi Palace). The role of Vladimir Vladimirovich in this process was very important. I will not speak at length about the advantages of the transition of the Society, but they included jobs, provisions for regular publications of *Ezhegodnik*, *Trudy* [Transactions of the sessions], resumed membership in the International Paleontological Associations, and closer links between the two largest teams of paleontologists (Geological Survey and Academy).

Like the rest of the life of our country, the activity of the Society in the third 30-year period of its history was divided in half. In the first 15 years the Society continued to increase in the number of members and of regional branches in many towns. Previously separate branches in the towns of Ukraine were united in the Ukrainian Paleontological Society as a Division of the All-Union Society. The number of branches in those years reached 32. Collective members established in

1960 also increased in number, up to 25, and it was considered an honor to be a collective member of the Society. There were up to 1690 memberships in the Society. The total number of paleontologists in the Soviet Union was almost half of the total number of paleontologists in the world, or at least those included in the international index.

The plans of the Ministry of Geology of the USSR to begin the third stage of the geological studies in the country, i.e., the preparation of the 1 : 50000 scale State Geological Map should have sharply increased the need for paleontologists. This eventually happened, which had a positive effect on the Society branches. However, the intended work was impossible for the geological survey of the country to perform. The Society continued its activity in agreement with its Charter, regularly publishing *Ezhegodnik* and *Trudy* of the sessions, at which the most urgent problems were discussed. These included life on ancient continents (23rd Session, 1977), tasks of paleontologists in developing exploration of mineral resources (26th Session, 1980), in detailed stratigraphy (28th Session, 1982), and biotic events in the history of Earth (32nd Session, 1986). The reports from the annual session of the Society beginning from the 23rd are published in *Paleontological Journal* (N.V. Kruchinina, T.L. Modzalevskaya, and V.A. Gavrilova).

From 1980 the annual sessions were held by local branches of the Society in other places in Russia, alternating with St. Petersburg (then Leningrad), which proved to be a serious stimulus to the development of paleontological studies in regions and raised the authority of paleontology in the eyes of local administration. Seven of such sessions were held from 1980 to 1992 in Sverdlovsk, Tashkent, Lvov, Tallinn, Baku, Syktyvkar, and Novosibirsk.

At the 36th Session in Syktyvkar (1990) devoted to the refinement of biostratigraphic correlations, President of the Society B.S. Sokolov made a presentation entitled "Tendencies in the Development of Paleontology." The presenter made a review of those trends in paleontological research that define a "general level of paleontology in the World and its use in culture and education" (Sokolov, 1995, p. 10). There were ten major trends discussed, including micropaleontology and especially "oceanic" micropaleontology, substantiation of boundaries of the General Stratigraphic Scale, ecological crises in the geological past, paleontology of the Precambrian, paleobiogeographic and paleoclimatic reconstructions, computer analysis of paleontological data, regional paleontology, regional biostratigraphy, and popular paleontology.

It was not until five years later, in 1995, that the transactions of the 36th Session were published, and these were the last transactions to be published. Subsequently, only abstracts of the talks, published prior to the meetings have been published. However, the major

areas of paleontological research outlined by B.S. Sokolov have up to now retained their importance.

The Museum Section was organized in 1982 (led by O.A. Sobolev, Director of the TsNIGR Museum. This section worked for ten years until his death. By the beginning of the 1990s the remaining sections were gradually reducing their activities.

The publication of the first reference book *All-Union Paleontological Society* in 1984 was an important event in the history of the Society. This book contained, for the first time, a brief summary of the history of the Society, characterization of the activity of the Society's Council, sections and branches, and the Charter of the Society. The list of members and other necessary and useful information, including the places where paleontologists worked and subjects of their research followed the example proposed by I.A. Zanina in the reference book *Paleontologists of the Soviet Union* (1968), also published by the Society. The supplement to the reference book was prepared by L.V. Mironova (*All-Union Paleontological ...*, 1990). Probably, the gradual departure of paleontologists of the older generation somehow brought about an interest in the history of our science and primarily in the lives of the scientists. Following a proposal by G.Ya. Krymgholz, supported by the Society's Council, the names of the Russian scientists preserved in paleontological names were published from the 28th volume of *Ezhegodnik*, the list prepared by G.Ya. Krymgholz and N.G. Krymgholz.

A complete list was published by the Society as a separate brochure (Krymgholz and Krymgholz, 2000). The 24th volume of *Ezhegodnik* (1991) contained a new section "from the history of science," prepared by S.V. Lobacheva. Short articles in this volume were devoted to the birthdays of V.N. Veber, M.E. Yanishevsky, L.S. Librovich, and T.G. Sarycheva.

The Society Council supported the proposal for O.S. Vyalov (1981) to receive the highest personal award for Society members (honorary diploma that is given for outstanding achievements and long-time activity for the Society, this award was given to 27 honorary members).

At the beginning of the 1990s the Society became restricted to the Russian Federation because of the fundamental changes in life in the former Soviet Union. These changes resulted in the separation of the branches of former republics, i.e., approximately half of the members and many collective members. The Society lost the "All-Union" name and soon found itself outside the Russian Academy of Sciences. The number of paleontological and stratigraphic departments in scientific institutes and geological survey decreased sharply, and most of these were closed. Publication of *Ezhegodnik* and *Trudy* of the annual sessions was stopped, and the number of young scientists joining the Society decreased. However, the life and work of the Society go on. In 2003 the Moscow Branch was established and remains active (Chairman A.N. Solovjev).

Branches in Yekaterinburg (N.Ya. Antsygin), Kazan (V.V. Silantiev), Novosibirsk (A.V. Kanygin), Perm (V.V. Ozhgibesov), Saratov (G.V. Kuleva), and Tomsk (S.A. Rodygin and V.M. Podobina) continue working despite many difficulties. Members of the Society conduct their studies, read lectures in educational institutions, and continue cooperative research with foreign colleagues. Annual sessions are regularly held in St. Petersburg, in the All-Russia Geological Research Institute, discussing urgent problems of paleontology and biostratigraphy: ecosystem turnovers and evolution (39th Session, 1991), dynamics of diversity of the organic world in time and space (40th Session, 1994), paleontology in the system of natural sciences (45th Session, 1999), biosphere processes (50th Session, 2004). The 49th Session in 2003 with the topic "Paleontology and Use of Natural Resources" was organized by A.Yu. Rozanov and was held in Moscow in the Paleontological Institute. It is planned to continue the annual sessions not only in St. Petersburg.

Due to help of collective members and heroic efforts of the scientific secretaries N.G. Krymgholz and T.N. Bogdanova, and previously of N.V. Kruchinina, abstracts of presentations at the sessions continue to be published. Annual reports that were previously published in *Ezhegodnik*, from 1996 are published in the annual informational volumes "Izvestiya VSEGEI" (Proceedings of VSEGEI), together with annual reports of the Interdepartmental Stratigraphic Committee. It was possible to publish a new reference book containing, in addition to a small historical review, current information on membership, structure and other issues, as in the previous reference books (*Paleontological Society ...*, 2001). From 2001, on the initiative of N.V. Kruchinina and S.V. Lobacheva, the agenda of the annual meetings includes announcements about memorable events of the current year, which are published in the abstract volumes and in *Paleontological Journal*.

In April 2006, in the same building of the All-Russia Geological Research Institute, the 52nd Session was held. It was dedicated to the 90th anniversary of the Paleontological Society and had the topic "Modern Paleontology: Classical and Traditional" (Gavrilova, 2006). This session began with the introductory speech by B.S. Sokolov (read by V.I. Krasnov) and a report by A.I. Zhamoida, in which he briefly described various aspects of the Society. A.Yu. Rozanov made a presentation about the Paleontological Institute in connection with its 75th anniversary. Reports covered a broad scope of problems concerning the Precambrian, role of modern paleontology in paleobiogeography, paleoclimatic, and paleotectonic reconstructions, in paleobasinal and sedimentary research, in search of mineral resources, etc. The session was attended by paleontologists from Belarus, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Tajikistan. The introductory speech of B.S. Sokolov (2006) emphasized the multidisciplinary role of paleontological data for many Earth sciences. The annual sessions of the Society always pointed this out and facilitated the use

of the achievements in regional stratigraphy (stratigraphic paleontology), geological mapping, reconstructions of the development of the stratisphere on the planet and development of the International (Global) Stratigraphic Scale beginning from the Early Precambrian, in the documentation of biological evolution and ecosystem turnovers, paleobiogeographic and paleoclimatic reconstructions, and in the characterization of the biospheres of the past.

Essentially, this list of major fields in which paleontological and stratigraphic studies are used, supplemented by the refinement of systematics of various groups of organisms and development of paleontological methods, especially of so-called “new” little studied taxa should be the program of further work of paleontology in this country as a whole and of the Society in particular (leading up to its 100th anniversary).

In conclusion, I will say once again that success of the Paleontological Society in Russia has always resulted from the enthusiasm with which members of the Society responded to the new requirements of our science.

Let us join the wish of the first Chairman of the Society N.N. Yakovlev, who also pronounced it in a difficult time “looking earnestly to the future, let the great work begin!”

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