

## Delayed recognition of Shubnikov

Sharma and Sen<sup>1</sup> have stated that the contribution of Shubnikov and collaborators in the discovery of type-II superconductivity 'was almost universally ignored, not only in Europe, but also even in the Soviet Union. He received some attention after 1957, when another Russian physicist Abrikosov compared his theory of type-II superconductivity with the experimental data of Shubnikov'.

We disagree with the authors on this statement, because it was just after the International Conference on the Science of Superconductivity<sup>2</sup> that the discovery under discussion<sup>3,4</sup> started to gain triumphant recognition by leading scientists of many countries. It is sufficient to mention the clear opinion of the only two-time Nobel Laureate in Physics, Bardeen<sup>5</sup>, the recognized authorities in the low-temperature physics Gorter<sup>6</sup> and Mendelssohn<sup>7</sup>, and Nobel Prize winners De Gennes<sup>8</sup>, Anderson<sup>9</sup> and Ginzburg<sup>10</sup>. Needless to mention the corresponding references in all present-day monographs on superconductivity.

It will be more exact to treat the case as a 20–25-yr delay in the recognition of the discovery, rather than about its 'non-recognition'. And this fact may be attributed to both a number of historical cir-

cumstances (a part of which have been indicated by Sharma and Sen<sup>1</sup>) and the then dominant (over more than a quarter of a century without sufficient grounds<sup>11</sup>) Mendelssohn's 'sponge model'<sup>12</sup>.

It should be also taken into account that the articles by Shubnikov *et al.*<sup>3,4</sup> were published in scientific journals that are difficult of access. The scientific contacts of the USSR scientists with their foreign colleagues were interrupted in the mid-1930s and during the 'Cold War' period. Shubnikov was executed at the age of 36, while his first postgraduate student, Shepelev, who defended his Ph D thesis on the topic under discussion<sup>13</sup>, was killed during the Sevastopol defence; he was also 36.

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## On journals' copyediting

Bhatia<sup>1</sup> writes, 'The issue of falling standards of editing and refereeing [...] needs to be discussed more openly'. Having observed the same problems in statistics-related journals, I completely share Bhatia's opinion. Recently, I had a discussion on this topic with a colleague of mine who edits an international journal. He claims that it is not the editors' job to take care of language of the papers published in their journals, pointing out

that it is the authors' responsibility. I do not agree with him. Of course, authors are responsible for the language of their articles. Poorly written papers should not be accepted, but what if a paper is good but suffers from poor language? It might be better to accept such papers and suitably edit them, instead of outright rejection. And what if a paper is written well but has a few grammatical errors? Is rejection the best option?

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