HISTORY AND ACTIVITIES OF THE U.S.S.R. ACADEMY OF SCIENCES DURING THE PAST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

By FREDERICK E. BRASCH

CONSULTANT IN THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The Library of Congress has appropriately taken steps to recognize the heroic efforts of the Russian people, who are making a stand to safeguard their borders and their civilization. This effort is being made according to the most logical and modern concept of defense and progress, namely, through concerted scientific, technical and cultural development. The past twenty-five years has taken on the aspect of a new "Renaissance" of Russian culture.

At the Library of Congress there has been installed an exhibition portraying this new "Renaissance." The exhibition centers principally about the history and work of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences. The Academia Imperiale des sciences de Saint-Petersbourg, Imperatorskaya Akademiya nauk, was projected in 1718 by Peter the Great in cooperation and with the advice of German scholars of that period, principally Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz and Baron Chretien Wolff. Peter died in 1725 and his widow, Catherine I, ordered the opening of the academy according to prepared plans. The first meeting was held on December 27, 1725, with Laurent Blumentrost (1692-1764) as the first president, and with a large and distinguished group of foreign scholars in attendance. Catherine furthered Peter's plan by appointing a faculty of mostly German-Swiss scholars to the university, which was at the same time the academy. Included in the large number of scholars appointed and associated with the academy were Jacques Hermann, 1675-1733, professor of mathematics from Switzerland; Chretien Goldbach, 1690-1764, professor of mathematics from Germany; Leonard Euler, 1707-1783, professor of mathematics from Switzerland; Nicolas Bernoulli, 1696-1736, professor of mathe-