

On Some Indiscretions of the Mathematical Community

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On request of my 2016 FAU audience, I will describe several cases, vividly painting the moral portrait of the mathematical community in Russia during my years there. I will try to refute popular wisdom, such as “What can I do alone” and “By doing nothing, one does nothing wrong.” For example, by doing nothing, the world’s mathematical community lost one of its brightest stars, Grigory Perelman, who on his way out of mathematics explained his departure as follows: *Of course, there are many mathematicians who are more or less honest. But almost all of them are conformists. They are more or less honest but they tolerate those who are not honest.*

In my 2015 Springer book “The Scholar and the State: In Search of Van der Waerden” I protested the Rolf Nevanlinna Prize given to some of the best applied mathematicians at the International Congress of Mathematicians. This protest is alive, and I will update you on its state in 2016–2017.