

## Richard Fronshtein: unknown facts of biography. Student years (1900–1907)

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This article is dedicated to the study of the professional biography of R.M. Fronshtein (1882–1949), who entered medical history as the founder of the Russian school of urology. In their comprehensive work on creating a historically reliable picture of the establishment and development of the clinical and fundamental specialties in the history of Russian medicine, the authors, using a historical-biographical method, have made an attempt to reconstruct and analyze the circumstances related to R.M. Fronshtein's studies at the Medical Department of Imperial Moscow University (1900–1907). The study was based on material from various Russian archives (the Moscow Central State Archive, the State Archive of the Ryazan Region, the State Archive of the Russian Federation). By analyzing the historiography and archival material the researchers established new facts about R.M. Fronshtein's biography from the abovementioned period. The researchers were able to clarify the circumstances surrounding his temporary dismissal from the university in 1904, to determine the reason why a case was filed against him at the university's Professor's Disciplinary Court, to discover information about his stay in the Ryazan Region in 1905–1906 and to verify the dates when he was rehabilitated among the students of the Imperial Moscow University and when he completed his studies. The article offers various scholarly theories and the authors clarify the separate facts of R.M. Fronshtein's biography based on information obtained during their work with the sources. More complete historical-biographical information about one of the leading urologists of the Soviet Union will help us study the history of the development of the Russian school of urology and shed light on the important events in the history of Russian medical science in general.

**Keywords:** *history of medicine, Richard Fronshtein, scientific biography, Russian school of urology, Imperial Moscow University*

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### Introduction

The formation and development of urology as an independent discipline and medical specialty began to unfold most dynamically in the first quarter of the 20th century, in the course of

its separation from general surgery.<sup>1</sup> Russian urology began to develop purposefully and independently in the Soviet period, in large part thanks to the activity of Richard Mikhailovich

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<sup>1</sup> In our country, the first person to propose splitting off urology into an independent discipline was Ivan Matyushenkov (1813–1879), who repeatedly took the floor with this initiative at the board meetings of the Imperial Moscow University medical school in the 1860s; his cause was subsequently taken up by Fyodor Sinitsyn (1835–1907) and Sergey Fedorov (1869–1936). See [1, pp. 10–13], [2, p. 34], [3, pp. 8, 24].

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Fronschtein (1882–1949), director of the Urology Clinic and head of the Department of Urology at I.M. Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University. Despite his importance in Russian medicine, comprehensive information concerning his scientific biography is lacking in the professional literature. In medical history publications, one encounters only references to the highlights of his life and professional activity. This shortage of biographical information prevents us from defining Fronschtein's role in the development of Russian urology in a historically accurate and complete manner.

The monograph and introduction to the collection of his selected works can be considered the primary accessible publications about Fronschtein [4, 5].<sup>2</sup> Essentially all information on Fronschtein's professional activity that is available in the Russian historiography is based on these publications [3, pp. 37–46], [6, pp. 583–584].<sup>3</sup> Despite Fronschtein's active collaboration with his colleagues in the German urological school and his large number of innovations in the evolution of the specialty, at the present time we have not been able to uncover any foreign publications dedicated to analysing his contribution. In this article, analysing information in the historiography and archival materials according to the biographical historical method, we have for the first time in the medical history literature reconstructed the main events in Fronschtein's life as a student (1900–1907). Many of the sources that became the foundation of our study had for a long time been classified as "secret" in the archives, substantially obstructing medical historians' work and making it impossible to expand the base of sources concerning the history of the Russian urological school's development. This study represents a first attempt to restore a historically accurate picture of the life and work of the eminent doctor and healthcare official Richard Mikhailovich Fronschtein.

### **The Pre-University Period**

The starting point for our research was the Central State Archive of the City of Moscow

<sup>2</sup> Both works were written by students of his.

<sup>3</sup> Certain aspects of his work were described briefly in other sources as well, for instance, [7, pp. 36–37, 48–49] and [8, pp. 10–11].

(TsGAM), where we were able to locate Fronschtein's personal student record from Imperial Moscow University (IMU).<sup>4</sup> This became one of the key sources that shaped our strategy for seeking out further sources and elaborating our research plan. Unique documents were discovered in the file that enabled us to clarify certain biographical facts. For instance, a copy of a baptism certificate found in the file states that Richard-Johann Mikhailovich Fronschtein was born on March 8 (March 21) 1882 to the family of Mikhail Abramovich Fronschtein (1853–1906) and Evgeniya Frantsovna Kun.<sup>5</sup> The file also contained his father's service record, which was attached to Fronschtein's application for enrollment in IMU medical school.<sup>6</sup> From it, we learned that his father, Mikhail Fronschtein, graduated from the Taganrog Gymnasium,<sup>7</sup> studied at IMU medical school from 1871 to 1876, participated as a doctor in the Serbian-Ottoman and Russo-Turkish Wars (he was awarded the Order of the Crest of Takovo, second class,<sup>8</sup> and the Order of Saint Stanislaus, third class with swords<sup>9</sup>) [10, p. 78], and then worked in a Moscow clinic for the poor. Mikhail Fronschtein later became a specialist in treating diseases of the ear, nose, and throat; he had a private clinic in Moscow on Petrovskaya street [11, p. 473]. He was actively engaged in scientific research<sup>10</sup> and took part in the 12th International Medical Congress (in the otorhinolaryngology section) [12]. The Fronschtein family lived in Moscow on Myasnitskaya Street, in the Sytovs' house. Richard was the family's oldest child.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>4</sup> TsGAM. F. 418. Op. 314. D. 872. Record of the Imperial Moscow University student inspector's office on the acceptance of Fronschtein, Richard Johann.

<sup>5</sup> TsGAM. F. 418. Op. 314. D. 872. L. 5.

<sup>6</sup> TsGAM. F. 418. Op. 314. D. 872. L. 6–7 ob.

<sup>7</sup> Another interesting fact is that his family rented an apartment in the Chekhovs' house in Taganrog, and Mikhail Fronschtein was on familiar terms with Anton Chekhov. For more, see [9, pp. 124, 129].

<sup>8</sup> A state award in Serbia.

<sup>9</sup> A state award in the Russian Empire.

<sup>10</sup> According to the Russian State Library card catalogue, he was the author of 24 works.

<sup>11</sup> Richard Fronschtein's younger sister was Margarita-Alisa-Izabella. Nothing authoritative is known about Richard Fronschtein's mother and sister apart from their names.

This information gives us reason to suppose that Richard Fronshtein's choice of profession did not occur by chance and was possibly tied in large part to his father's example.

### Student Years and Suspension From IMU

In 1900, after finishing gymnasium,<sup>12</sup> Fronshtein enrolled in IMU medical school (fig. 1). He studied with renowned Moscow professors – anatomist Dmitry Zyornov, histologist Ivan Ogniov, anatomic pathologist Mikhail Nikiforov, physician Vasily Shervinsky, obstetrician-gynecologist Vladimir Snegirev, and surgeons Aleksandr Bobrov and Pyotr Dyakonov [4, p. 5].<sup>13</sup> The file mentioned above contains information that during his studies he was awarded a silver medal for the work “Harvey's Significance in the History of the Discovery of Blood Circulation”.<sup>14</sup>

During our analysis of the literature we found mention of Fronshtein's possible involvement in the student protests that occurred at the time of his studies at IMU. There is information to the effect that he was among students who staged a strike “in response to the reactionary policy of the tsarist government and as a sign of protest” and refused to take the state exams, and that he then left to work in Ryazan [5, p. 5]. Another source says that in 1905 Fronshtein “completed the fifth year and passed all his exams, but did not take the state exams in connection with a student strike protesting the reactionary policy of the tsarist government and left for the Ryazan Governorate, where he worked for a year first as a district doctor and then as an attending physician at a district zemstvo hospital” [4, p. 5]. In fact, mass student actions did take place during Fronshtein's university studies. This period in the history of Russian higher education is characterized as one “of crisis, both in terms of the relations between higher education and the state and in terms of intra-university relations between teachers and the students” [14, p. 158]. Student actions took place in many universities in the Russian Empire, and they were generally directed “against the



**Fig. 1. High-school student R.M. Fronshtein. Photo with a personal signature.**

*Moscow City Central State Archive (TsGAM).  
F. 418. Op. 314. D. 872. L. 10.*

inspectorate, against excessive administrative surveillance, often taking on a political character.” In response, the government adopted a series of measures, one of which was the establishment of the Professors' Disciplinary Court (PDC) in 1902. At IMU, trying exclusively student cases fell within the PDC's purview. After the PDC was established, “university students came under threefold control: they were monitored by the police and two university authorities, the university inspectorate and the PDC” [15, p. 251].

Having studied the information available, most of which supports the idea that Fronshtein left for Ryazan, we tried to establish the real reasons for his departure. In order to confirm our working hypothesis, formed through an analysis of the historiography – that Fronshtein harbored revolutionary sentiments and participated in student protests – we began more thorough research in the TsGAM collections and the State Archive for the Ryazan Region (GARO).<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup> For more on the gymnasium where Fronshtein studied, see [13].

<sup>13</sup> His teachers may also have included Sergey Fedorov and Fyodor Sinitsyn, who were working at IMU at that time.

<sup>14</sup> Medical school decree of December 1, 1903. TsGAM. F. 418. Op. 314. D. 872. L. 29 ob.

<sup>15</sup> We chose these archives due to the fact that IMU collection (No. 418) is at TsGAM, and GARO is the only archive in Ryazan.



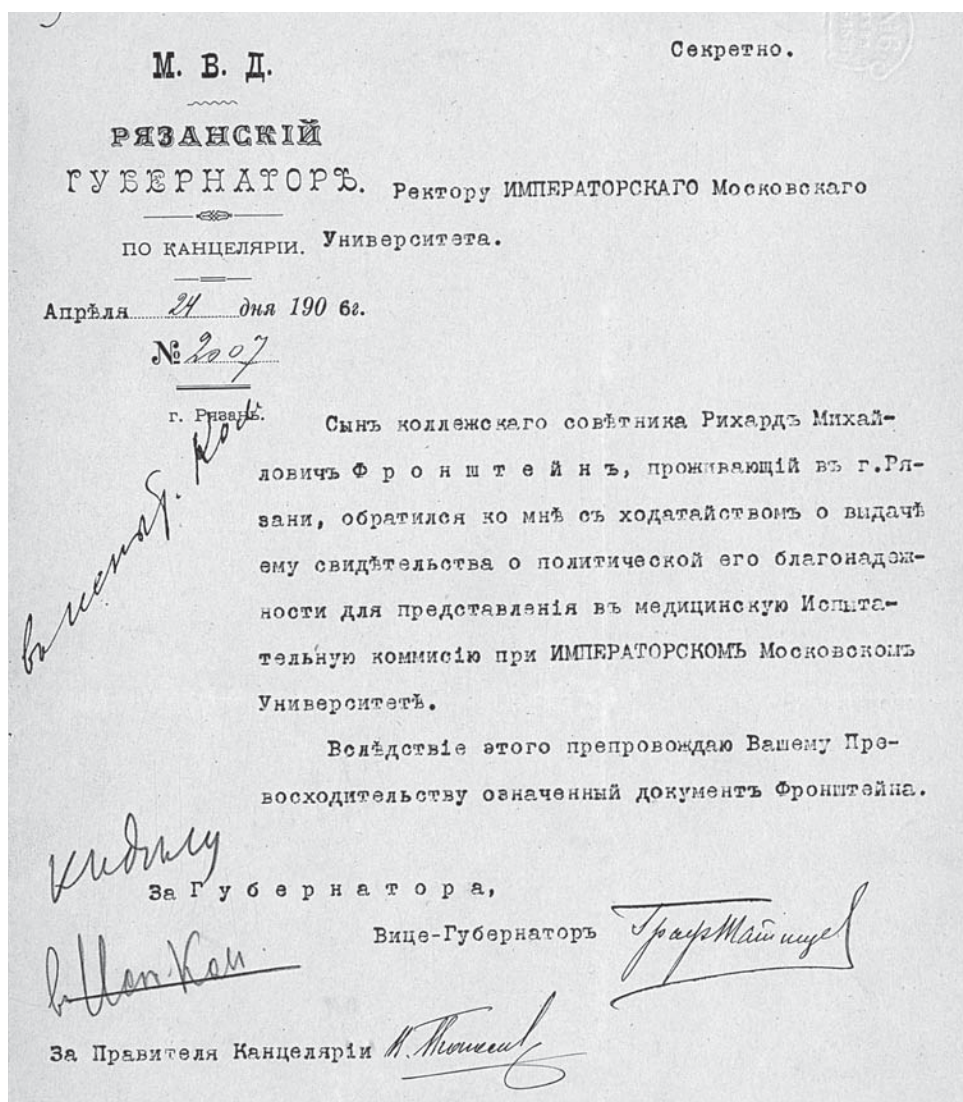


Fig. 2. R.M. Fronshtein's certificate of political reliability, issued by the Chancery of the Ryazan governor.  
TsGAM. F. 418. Op. 314. D. 872. L. 25.<sup>16</sup>

By examining TsGAM's records of student protests at IMU, we were able to establish that Fronshtein had at no point in the entire period of his studies (1900–1907) been named as

<sup>16</sup> Text on the picture:

Ministry of Internal Affairs Confidential Ryazan governor. Chancery. April 24, 1906. № 2007. The city of Ryazan. Rector of IMPERIAL Moscow University. The son of the collegiate adviser, Richard Mikhailovich Fronshtein, who lives in Ryazan, approached me with a request to issue a certificate of his political reliability for submission to the Medical Testing Commission at IMPERIAL Moscow University. Consequently, I forward to your Excellency the above-mentioned Fronshtein's document. On behalf of the Governor, Vice Governor [signature]. On behalf of the Head of the Chancery [signature].

a participant in the student protests or as one of those subject to searches, arrest, or expulsion from IMU for participation in them, nor was he among the students who were under police surveillance.<sup>17</sup> There was no information testifying to Fronshtein's revolutionary sentiments in his student record. On the contrary,

<sup>17</sup> TsGAM. F. 418. Op. 514. Records of the student revolutionary movement include the following: those on the arrest, banishment, and expulsion of students from the university and on surveillance of students; on persons who did not have the right to enroll in the universities; on student admission, provision of deferrals of compulsory military service to students, and the activities of the university board. In particular, D. 30A, 52, 54–56, 62–64, 95–96.

among the archival documents we found a certificate of his political reliability issued by the office of the Ryazan governor (fig. 2), which, on the one hand, confirmed that Fronshtein was in the Ryazan Governorate in 1906,<sup>18</sup> and on the other, again forced us to focus on the search for records that might indicate his involvement in the student protests.

Searching further in the archives enabled us to find previously unknown information to the effect that in his fifth year, Fronshtein was suspended from IMU on a PDC decree issued November 18, 1904 (fig. 3). According to this document, he was suspended from the university for a year and barred from enrolling in another institution of higher learning for that period. Here it is important to specify the procedure that governed the PDC's activities. The rector was in charge of bringing cases and collecting material to be reviewed at court hearings. In turn, the court's activities were regulated by the "Procedural Order of the Professors' Disciplinary Court at Moscow University," within which framework a panel of judges delivered its verdict based on the opinion of the majority of its members. The hearings were closed, and the PDC's decisions went to the rector and the IMU board. The PDC had the authority to hear student cases in four categories: "offenses committed within the university walls," conflicts between students and officials of IMU or other institutions of higher learning, immoral offenses, and also cases with general jurisdiction rulings [15, p. 257].

To ascertain the reasons for Fronshtein's suspension, we studied the PDC proceedings from 1904–1905. Among the materials at TsGAM containing information on the PDC's activities (inventory No. 500, collection No. 418), two distinct records were discovered that clarified the situation with Fronshtein's suspension and enabled us to describe the real circumstances of his suspension for the first time in the medical history literature: "IMU PDC Case of Fifth-Year Medical Student Richard Fronshtein" and "Proceedings of the IMU PDC Hearings

<sup>18</sup> Certificate No. 2007 (marked "secret") of the Ministry of Internal Affairs from April 24, 1906. It was issued at the request of Fronshtein himself and sent to IMU by the office of the Ryazan governor. The governor of the Ryazan Governorate at that time was Vladimir Levashov (November, 1905 – August, 1910).

for the 1903–1904 Academic Year." This new information enabled us to fine-tune the direction of our further inquiry and to approach the interpretation of available sources in a new way.

According to archival materials, on October 19, 1904, a letter addressed to the rector of IMU (a post then held by Leonid Lakhtin) arrived from L.V. Smirnova of Sevastopol.<sup>19</sup> She reported that Fronshtein had blackmailed her husband (extorted him for 100 rubles). According to her version of events, Fronshtein threatened Smirnov<sup>20</sup> that in the event of his refusal, he would forward to Smirnova her husband's love letter to another woman.<sup>21</sup> She asked the rector to "order" Fronshtein "not to barge into other people's families with some information that was already known without him," and to "admonish heedless young men who engage in a trade unworthy of the honorary student uniform they wear." This letter was the cause for bringing an extortion case against Fronshtein, a fifth-year student, in the PDC.<sup>22</sup>

Fronshtein's letter of explanation has survived.<sup>23</sup> It says that he was living in Yalta in 1904 (presumably during the summer holidays), met an actress there, and "entered into a relationship with her." The letter does not identify the woman by name, but it could be referring to his future wife, the operetta actress Anna Fyodorovna Zorinova [16]. Then the woman "left for her place of employment in Sevastopol," where a married man (Smirnova's husband) began importunately courting her. She informed Fronshtein of this. After receiving her letter, he wrote to Smirnov and asked him to stop his "insulting attentions." Afterward, the woman did not mention Smirnov in her letters. But later, Fronshtein learned from her colleagues that "Mr. Smirnov not only did not stop his courtship, but even followed her to Simferopol." Then, "wishing to free her from these unpleasant attentions," Fronshtein wrote Smirnov another letter, in which, he says, "by mentioning money... I wanted to present

<sup>19</sup> TsGAM. F. 418. Op. 500. D. 38. L. 12–12 ob.

<sup>20</sup> The surname "Smirnov" is noted in the file, but his initials are not given.

<sup>21</sup> The name of the woman because of whom this situation arose is not mentioned once. Smirnov's letter to this woman was returned to L.V. Smirnova at her request.

<sup>22</sup> TsGAM. F. 418. Op. 500. D. 38. L. 11.

<sup>23</sup> TsGAM. F. 418. Op. 500. D. 38. L. 5.



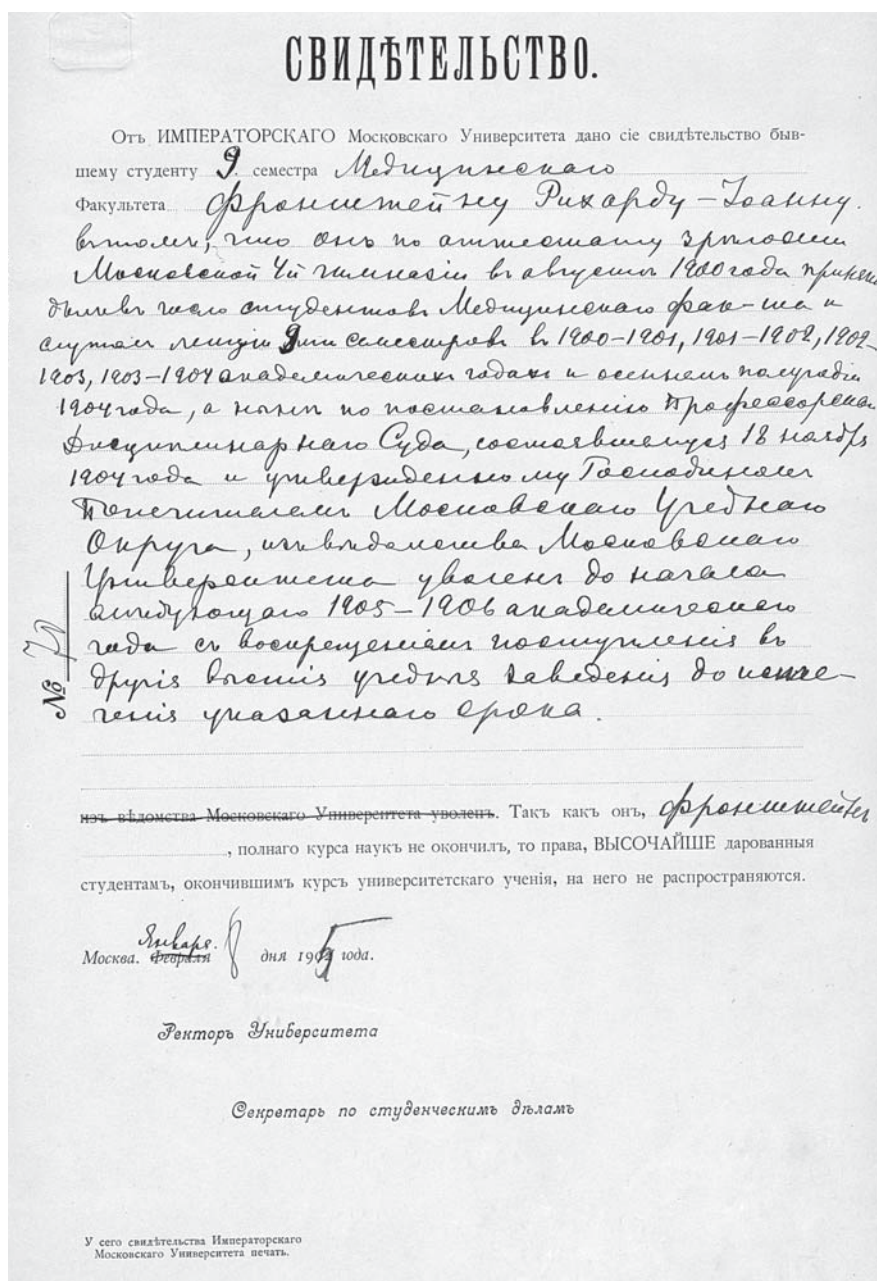


Fig. 3. R.M. Fronshtein's certificate of temporary exclusion from IMU.  
TsGAM. F. 418. Op. 314. D. 872. L. 15.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Text on the picture:

#### Certificate

This certificate from IMU has been provided to a former ninth-semester student of the medical faculty, Richard-Johann Fronshtein, according to which on the basis of a school certificate from the 4th Moscow Grammar School, in August, 1900, he was admitted together with a number of students to the medical faculty and attended lectures of nine semesters in 1900–01, 1901–02, 1902–03, 1903–04, and half the year of 1904, and now, by the decision of the Professorial Courts of Discipline of November 18, 1904, and approved by the Trustee of the Moscow Academic District, and the Moscow University department, was suspended before the following 1905–1906 academic year with a prohibition to enter other institutions of higher education before the expiration of the specified term.

Since he, Fronshtein, did not complete the full academic course, he did not receive the rights bestowed on students who completed the university course.

Moscow, January 8, 1905.

University Rector.  
Secretary for student affairs.

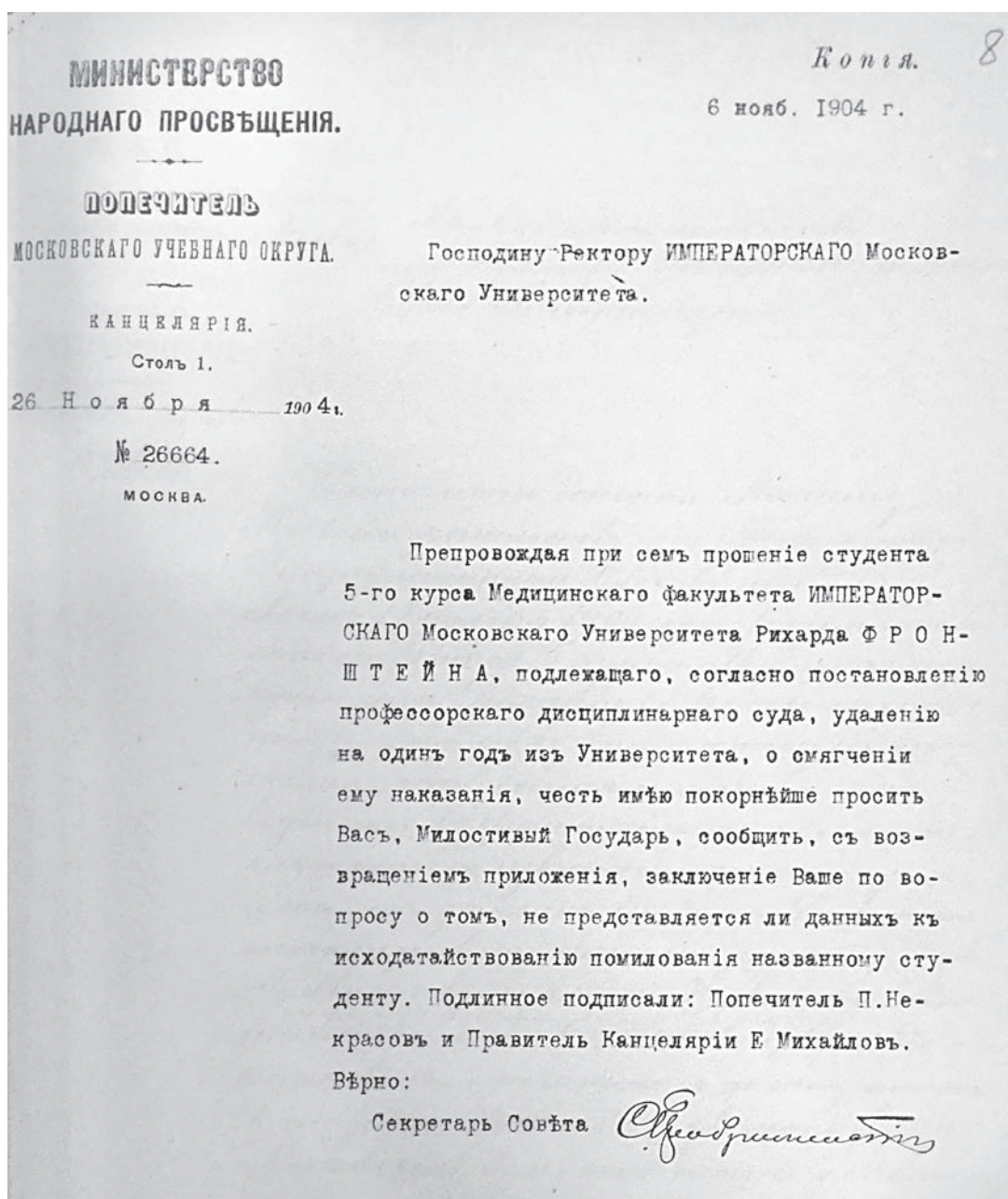


Fig. 4. A copy of the Trustee of the Moscow Academic District's application for the mitigation of R.M. Fronshtein's punishment

*TsGAM. F. 418. Op. 500. D. 38. L. 8.*<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Text on the picture:

Ministry of Public Health. Trustee for the Moscow Academic District. Chancery. Table 1.  
November 26, 1904. № 26664. Moscow

Copy. November 6, 1904.

To the Rector of IMPERIAL Moscow University.

Forwarding herewith the petition of a student of the 5th course of the medical faculty Richard Fronshtein who, according to a decision of the professors' disciplinary court, has been excluded for one year from the University, on the reduction of his punishment, I have the honor humbly to request you, sir, to report, with the return of the application, on your decision on the question of whether there is information on the provision of a pardon for the named student. Authentically signed: Trustee P. Nekrasov and Ruler of the Chancery E. Mikhailov. Certified by: Secretary of the Council [signature].

myself as a man who would stop at nothing and in this way force him to halt the correspondence.” According to the information available in the file, Smirnov did not react in any way to this letter from Fronshtein. How Smirnova came to know of the situation is also unknown.

From the “Proceedings of the IMU PDC Hearings for the 1903–1904 Academic Year,”<sup>26</sup> we learned that Fronshtein’s case was handled on November 18, 1904. Zyornov was the chairman; the members of the court were N.D. Zelinsky and professors I.T. Tarasov, N.S. Suvorov, and B.K. Mlodzevsky. Three documents were studied: 1) Smirnova’s letter of October 19, 1904; 2) Fronshtein’s letter to her husband, in which he demanded 100 rubles for not informing Smirnova “of the love letter to another woman”; 3) a telegram from Smirnova, in which she asked the rector to “let the matter go without consequences.” Pursuant to point 18 of the “Temporary Rules of the PDS,” the panel of judges decided to suspend Fronshtein from IMU until the beginning of the following academic year (1905–1906) with a prohibition on enrolling in another institution of higher learning before the period was up.<sup>27</sup> This punishment was one of its strictest.<sup>28</sup>

Eight days after the court hearing (November 26, 1904), petition No. 26664 on the mitigation of Fronshtein’s punishment (fig. 4) addressed to the rector of IMU arrived from the trustee of the Moscow educational district. The rector sent it to the PDC for consideration, along with Fronshtein’s application for his penalty to be amended.<sup>29</sup> However, on December 9, 1904, the court, due to “the absence of new information that might justify changing the order of suspension that was issued,” refused to grant both the petition and application.<sup>30</sup> We, therefore, did not succeed in confirming that he was involved in the student protests during his studies at IMU. It is highly probable that this piece of information was inserted into Fronshtein’s scientific biography, which is

based on the memories of his closest pupils as a tribute to the Soviet tradition of creating biographies for eminent scientists.

### **Fronshtein’s “Ryazan Period” and Graduation from IMU**

The next stage in our work was to clarify the circumstances of Fronshtein’s stay in Ryazan after his suspension. According to the recollections of his pupils, he “worked for a year, first as a district doctor and then as an attending physician at the district zemstvo hospital” [4, p. 5]. However, in an autobiography discovered in the State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF), Fronshtein does not mention his work in the Ryazan Governorate, nor does he mention his expulsion in his fifth year.<sup>31</sup> Five months after his suspension, on April 19, 1905, Fronshtein received confirmation from IMU that he had completed five years of instruction at the medical school and had received credit for nine semesters.<sup>32</sup> Apparently, Fronshtein presented this certification to the board of the Ryazan zemstvo and they recruited him into one of the zemstvo institutions in Ryazan. To confirm the hypothesis advanced at this stage of the work that Fronshtein served as a doctor in the Ryazan Governorate from 1905–1906,<sup>33</sup> which was based on information from the historiography and the archival materials at TsGAM (the certificate of Fronshtein’s political reliability from the Ryazan governor, the certification for the zemstvo board), a research was conducted in the collections of the State Archive for the Ryazan Region (GARO). While examining the collection of the Ryazan governor’s office, on whose letterhead the certificate of Fronshtein’s political reliability was written, we found in the collection’s inventories neither a duplicate of this certificate nor information on Fronshtein’s place of work.<sup>34</sup> The archival search was extended; during the search, materials in the

<sup>26</sup> TsGAM. F. 418. Op. 500. D. 45.

<sup>27</sup> TsGAM. F. 418. Op. 500. D. 45. L. 21–22.

<sup>28</sup> The PDC could also have decided to suspend him from IMU indefinitely with a prohibition on enrolling in any other educational institution for a particular period.

<sup>29</sup> TsGAM. F. 418. Op. 500. D. 38. L. 7.

<sup>30</sup> TsGAM. F. 418. Op. 500. D. 45. L. 24–24 ob.

<sup>31</sup> TsGAM. F. 418. Op. 500. D. 38. L. 7.

<sup>32</sup> TsGAM. F. 418. Op. 500. D. 45. L. 24–24 ob.

<sup>33</sup> His choice to work in the zemstvo was likely a result of the fact that, not having completed his advanced medical education, Fronshtein could only find work in zemstvo medical establishments, where the shortage of medical staff at all levels (both doctors and medical assistants) was considerable.

<sup>34</sup> GARO. F. 5. Op. 1, 2, 3 T. 1–2, 4 T. 1–2.



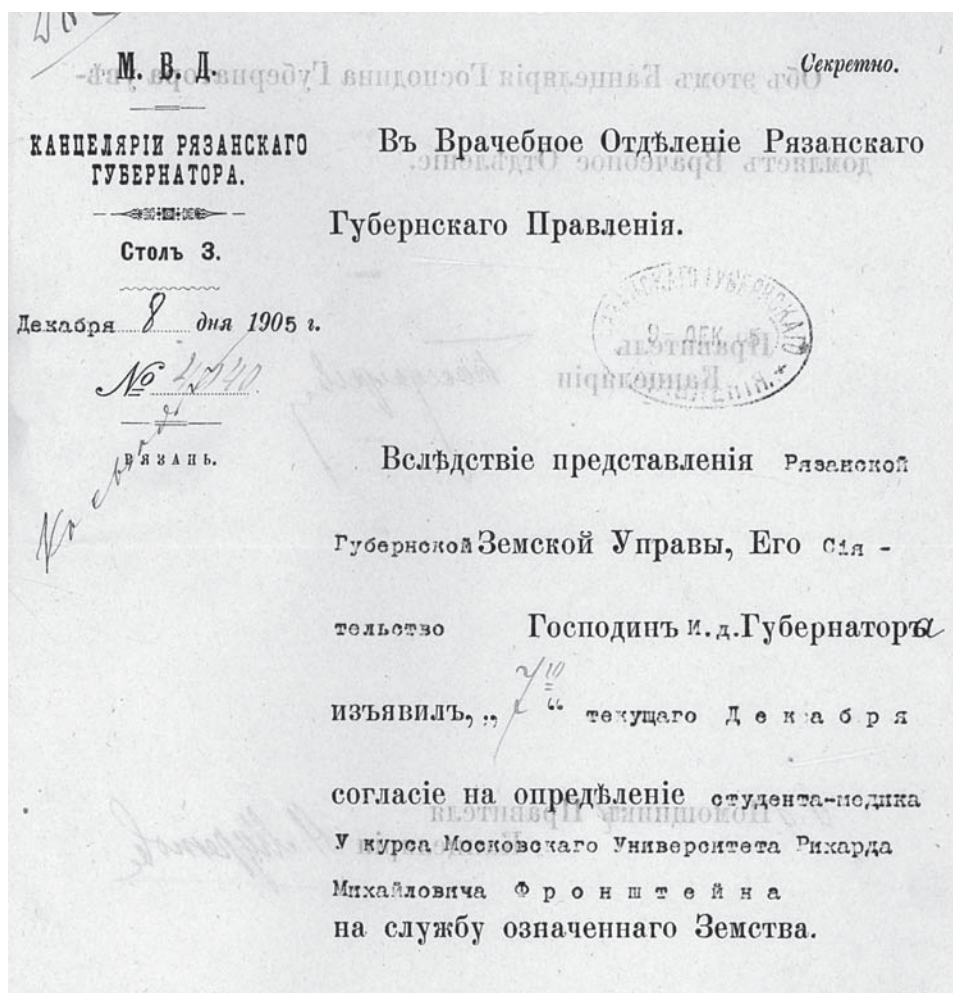


Fig. 5. The Ryazan governor's consent for R.M. Fronshtein's service in the Ryazan provincial zemstvo. GARO. F. 4. Op. 611. D. 99. L. 80.<sup>36</sup>

Ryazan provincial government's collection were studied that could potentially have contained some information on Fronshtein.<sup>35</sup> From the record "On the governor's expression of consent to the appointment of doctors, medical assistants,

and midwives to zemstvo service for 1905," we learned that on December 8, 1905, the governor approved the Ryazan provincial zemstvo board's recommendation of Fronshtein for service (fig. 5).<sup>36</sup> This document corroborates information to the effect that Fronshtein worked in Ryazan

<sup>35</sup> Records on the recruitment of doctors, medical assistants, and midwives to zemstvo service in 1905–1906, on lists of the service records of medical staff across the Ryazan Governorate in 1906, on all civil service hospitals in the Ryazan Governorate in 1906, on registered doctors and dentists in the Ryazan Governorate in 1905–1906, on doctors in reserve in 1906, on the service of members of the medical department in 1905–1906, on people serving in the medical unit and exercising the powers of government service in 1905, on the salaries of hospital employees in 1906, on the salaries of town doctors in the Ryazan Governorate in 1905, and on doctors residing in the Ryazan Governorate in 1906. GARO. F. 4. Op. 47, 603–615, 719, 763–787, 802–877.

<sup>36</sup> Text on the picture:

Ministry of Internal Affairs Office of the Ryazan governor. Table 3. December 8, 1905. № 4040. Ryazan.

Confidential  
To the Medical Department of the Ryazan Provincial Board.

Following on from the submission of the Ryazan Provincial Zemstvo Administration, His Excellency Vice-governor expressed his consent on the 7th of December of this year to the provision of a fifth-year medical student at the Moscow University, Richard Mikhailovich Fronshtein, to the service of the aforementioned Zemstvo.

from 1905–1906. The governor’s authorization was sent to the medical department of the Ryazan provincial government, but it does not specify Fronshtein’s place of work. In accordance with the procedure then in effect, this information could be in either the medical department of the Ryazan provincial government,<sup>37</sup> the inbound documents of the Ryazan governor’s office,<sup>38</sup> or the collection of the Ryazan provincial zemstvo board.<sup>39</sup> But in our study of the collections of the Ryazan governor’s office and the Ryazan provincial government, no information to the effect that Fronshtein worked in a medical establishment in the Ryazan Governorate was found. In the materials of the Ryazan provincial zemstvo board, we examined records that could have clarified the matter.<sup>40</sup> We were not able to find information on Fronshtein’s place of work in them, either.

At the time when Fronshtein was in the Ryazan Governorate, zemstvo medical assistance comprised three levels: the zemstvo medical station,<sup>41</sup> the district hospital, and the provincial hospital. However, these structural units did not exist in all districts due to a lack of inpatient medical facilities, doctors, and other medical personnel.<sup>42</sup> Officially, the zemstvo boards brought on doctors only for medical work, but in fact, the range of their duties was a great deal wider. In the Ryazan district, where Fronshtein was assigned to service, there were 10 doctors working in 1904 and 19,000 people to each doctor [18, p. 693]. In the Ryazan district, there were two zemstvos – the provincial zemstvo and the district zemstvo, whose spheres of responsibility were separate. In this article, we only discuss the activities of the provincial zemstvos, as Fronshtein was assigned by the governor to one of them.

The structure of the Ryazan provincial zemstvo’s healthcare facilities from 1905–1906 was represented by the Ryazan provincial zemstvo hospital (in the city of Ryazan) and the Hospital for the Mentally Ill (in the village of Golenchino, Ryazan provincial zemstvo).<sup>43</sup> Information on the zemstvo medical stations in the Ryazan zemstvo (other than the Retkino medical station) was not found in the medical department of the Ryazan zemstvo board.<sup>44</sup> Based on the document that was found testifying to Fronshtein’s assignment to service in the Ryazan provincial zemstvo, the supposition emerged that his place of work was the Ryazan provincial hospital. The hospital had provincial status due to the fact that it was financed by the governorate and was under the jurisdiction of the provincial zemstvo [19, pp. 213–214]. From 1905–1906, it had seven specialized wards: internal medicine for men, infectious diseases, surgery, obstetrics and gynecology, internal medicine for women, medical care for prisoners, and ocular health. Fronshtein was not listed among the workers in this hospital,<sup>45</sup> but he may not have been officially registered because he had not completed his medical education, nor did he have a physician’s diploma. The Hospital for the Mentally Ill was least likely to be Fronshtein’s place of work, as it was located in Golenchino, not Ryazan.<sup>46</sup> He could not have worked in the zemstvo medical stations because they were under the control of the district zemstvo, not the provincial one. Our search in the archives was continued and we established that Fronshtein was not officially registered in Ryazan (his name does not appear in the documents of the tax commission office).<sup>47</sup> However, in one of the letters to IMU, he identifies his place of residence as the village of Stenkinino in

<sup>37</sup> GARO. F. 4. Op. 603–615.

<sup>38</sup> GARO. F. 5.

<sup>39</sup> GARO. F. 39.

<sup>40</sup> Records of reports on the Ryazan hospital for 1905, of the circulars of the Ryazan Governorate for 1906, of the Ryazan district board’s sessions in 1906, of the yearly report on the Retkino medical station in the Ryazan district for 1904 (no information was found regarding other medical stations in 1904–1906), and of the general ledger of the Ryazan district zemstvo board for 1905. GARO. F. 39. Op. 1. D. 746, 747, 748, 782, 788, 789, 801, 816, 819, 853.

<sup>41</sup> The medical station had to include a district clinic.

<sup>42</sup> In accordance with administrative territorial divisions, the Ryazan Governorate consisted of 12 districts (Dankovsky, Egorevsky, Zaraysky, Kasimovsky, Mikhaylovsky, Pronsky,

Ranenburgsky, Ryazhsky, Ryazansky, Sapozhkovsky, Skopinsky, and Spassky) [17].

<sup>43</sup> GARO. F. 4. Op. 612. D. 2. The chief medical inspector’s circular for conveying information on all civil service hospitals in the Ryazan Governorate for 1906.

<sup>44</sup> It is possible that the records did not survive due to a fire in the GARO archive, which employees mentioned during our research, or that they were not kept by the employees of that zemstvo.

<sup>45</sup> GARO. F. 4. Op. 611. D. 91. 194; F. 4. Op. 612. D. 65; GARO. F. 4. Op. 197. D. 3.

<sup>46</sup> The certificate of Fronshtein’s political reliability from the Ryazan governor indicates that Fronshtein lived in Ryazan.

<sup>47</sup> GARO. F. 4. Op. 875–876.

the Ryazan district.<sup>48</sup> We were also able to establish that Fronshtein's name was not mentioned in files on the revolutionary sentiments of Ryazan Governorate residents and politically unreliable people, which, in addition to the circumstances of his suspension that we had previously established, gave us cause to exclude any conjectures that he was active in revolutionary-minded student groups.<sup>49</sup>

In our subsequent work, we conducted a comparative analysis of the information on Fronshtein's stay in Ryazan in these archival sources. According to documents from TsGAM, this period totaled ten months (from July 1905 to April 24, 1906).<sup>50</sup> The only document discovered at GARO that confirms Fronshtein's work in Ryazan is dated December 8, 1905. A natural question emerged: where was Fronshtein actually from July to December 1905? In his student record, there is information to the effect that during that period he filed three applications addressed to the rector of IMU with the request to be reinstated as a student (on July 22, 1905; November 1, 1905; and November 22, 1905); there are also two petitions from the trustee of the Moscow educational district to the rector of IMU on the possibility of permitting Fronshtein to appear before the testing board to receive a doctor's diploma (July 22, 1905) and on the possibility of reinstating him for further studies at IMU (November 22, 1905).<sup>51</sup> The applications and petitions were all rejected by the rector (July 27, 1905, and November 25, 1905). In one of the rejection letters, the rector explains that Fronshtein committed a reprehensible offense (extortion) and did not "fall into the category of students who are entitled to be reinstated ahead of schedule."<sup>52</sup> This information testifies to the fact that Fronshtein was in Moscow at that time and undertook multiple attempts to be reinstated at IMU. But there is a document which says that, under a PDC decision of November 18, 1904, he was able to proceed with his studies at the start of the 1905–1906 academic year.

<sup>48</sup> TsGAM. F. 418. Op. 314. D. 872. L. 22.

<sup>49</sup> GARO. F. 5. Op. 4. D. 3944. Op. 5. D. 5659.

<sup>50</sup> TsGAM. F. 418. Op. 78. D. 3467. Fronshtein, Richard Johann, March 18, 1906 – May 28, 1907. Testing board of the medical school: records on students passing exams, materials on the issuing of diplomas.

<sup>51</sup> TsGAM. F. 418. Op. 314. D. 872. L. 20, 22, 23.

<sup>52</sup> TsGAM. F. 418. Op. 314. D. 872. L. 21–21 ob., 24–24 ob.



**Fig. 6. Photo of R.M. Fronshtein, given to the Medical Testing Academy.**

*TsGAM F. 418. Op. 78. D. 3467. L. 12.*

These circumstances require further clarification through historical archival research.

After receiving the certificate of Fronshtein's political reliability from the office of the Ryazan governor on April 29, 1906, the rector of IMU passed this document on to the medical testing board.<sup>53</sup> On March 8, 1906, Zyornov, the board's chairman, "pursuant to the order of the Honorable Minister of National Education," granted Fronshtein, as a student "having credit for nine semesters," admission to the exam for the title of physician.<sup>54</sup> In the packet of documents that Fronshtein submitted to the board was his student photograph (fig. 6), a second certificate

<sup>53</sup> TsGAM. F. 418. Op. 314. D. 872. L. 27.

<sup>54</sup> TsGAM. F. 418. Op. 78. D. 3467. L. 1–2.



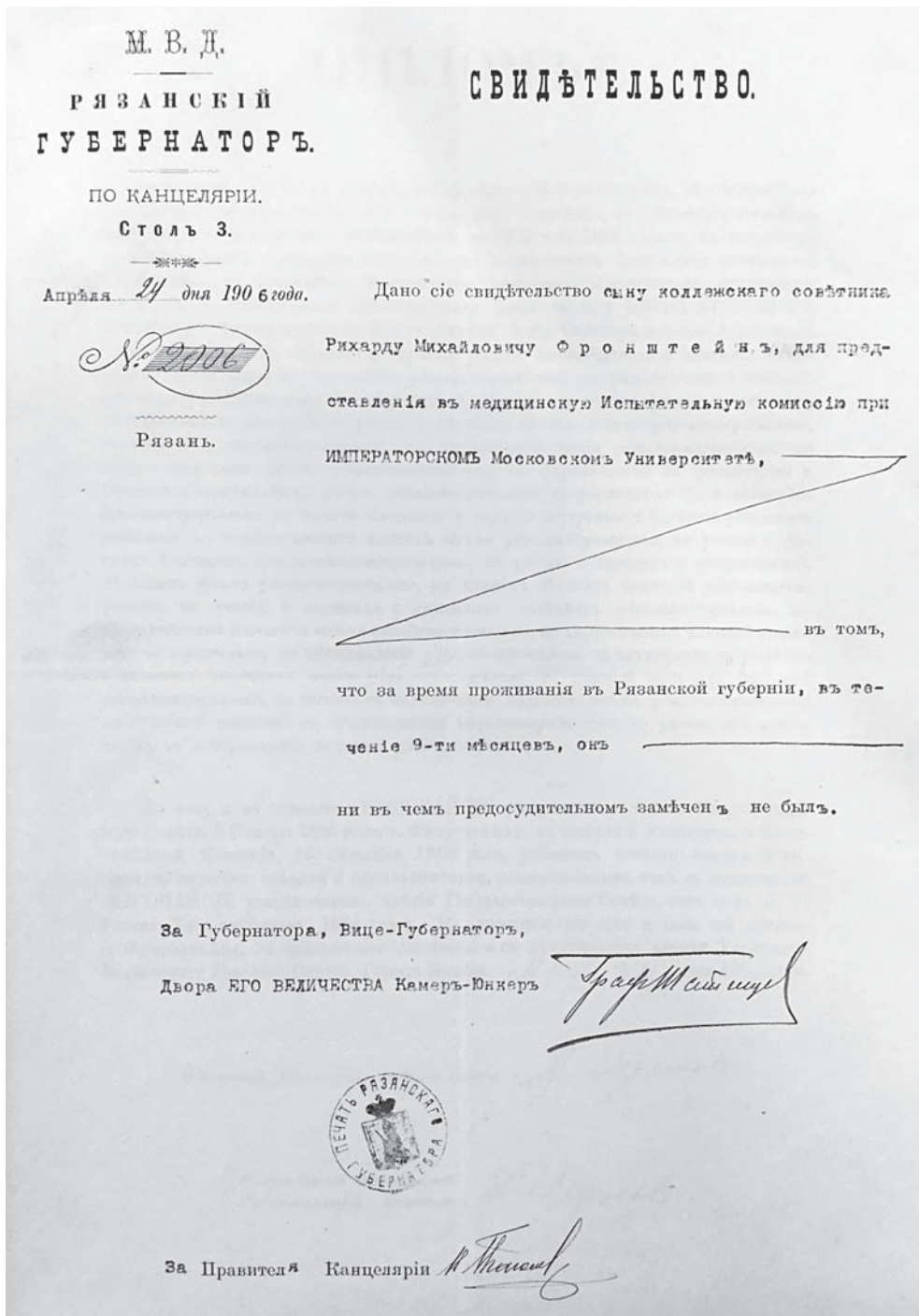


Fig. 7. R.M. Fronshtein's certificate of reliability, issued in the Chancery of the Ryazan governor.  
TsGAM. F. 418. Op. 78. D. 3467. L. 4.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Text on the picture:

Ministry of Internal Affairs Ryazan Governor. Chancery. Table 3. April 24, 1906. No. 2006. Ryazan.

Certificate

This certificate is given to the collegiate advisor's son Richard M. Fronshtein, for presentation to the Medical Testing Commission at the IMPERIAL Moscow University, stating that during his stay in the Ryazan province for nine months, he was not in any way censurable.

On behalf of the Governor, Vice-Governor, Court of His Majesty Kamer-Yunker [signature]. On behalf of the Ruler of the Chancellery [signature].

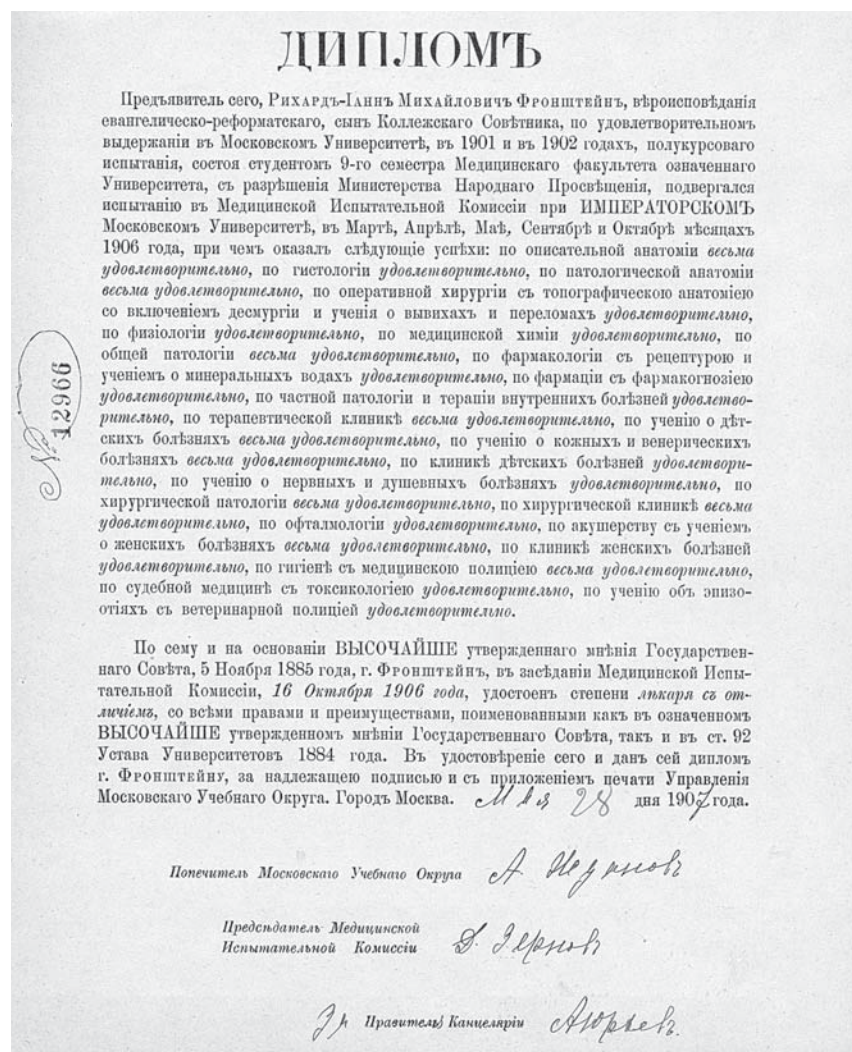


Fig. 8. Diploma conferring the rank of physician to R.M. Fronshtein.  
TsGAM. F. 418. Op. 314. D. 872. L. 32.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Text on the picture:

#### DIPLOMA

The bearer, Richard-Johann Mikhailovich Fronshtein, religion, Reformed Evangelical, the son of a Collegiate Advisor, for satisfactorily passing at Moscow University in 1901 and again in 1902, the half-year test, being a student of the ninth semester of the Medical Faculty of the aforementioned University, with the permission of the Ministry of Education, was tested at the Medical Testing Commission at IMPERIAL Moscow University, in March, April, May, September, and October in 1906, with the following passes: descriptive anatomy – very satisfactory, histology – satisfactory, pathological anatomy – very satisfactory, operative surgery with topographic anatomy with inclusion of desmurgy, and dislocations and fractures – satisfactory, physiology – satisfactory, medical chemistry – satisfactory, general pathology – very satisfactory, pharmacology with prescription and mineral water theory – satisfactory, pharmacy with pharmacognosy – satisfactory, private pathology and therapy of internal diseases – satisfactory, therapeutic clinic practice – very satisfactory, childhood diseases – very satisfactory, skin and venereal diseases – very satisfactory, clinical practice for childhood illnesses – satisfactory, nervous and mental illness – satisfactory, surgical pathology – very satisfactory, surgical clinical practice – very satisfactory, ophthalmology – very satisfactory, midwifery with study of female diseases – very satisfactory, clinic practice for female diseases – satisfactory, hygiene with medical police – very satisfactory, forensic medicine with toxicology – satisfactory, epizootics with veterinary police – satisfactory.

Based on this and the HIGHEST approval of the State Council, on November 5, 1885, Mr. Fronshtein, at a meeting of the Medical Test Commission on October 16, 1906, was awarded the degree of a doctor with distinction, with all the rights and benefits, and is named so in the HIGHLY approved opinion of the State Council and in Art. 92 of the Statutes of Universities of 1884. In recognition of this, this diploma is issued to Mr. Fronshtein, signed and with the application of the seal of the Moscow Department of Education. Moscow. 1907.

Trustee for the Moscow Academic District.  
Chairman of the Medical Testing Commission.

from the Ryazan governor (of April 24, 1906) to the effect that during his residence in the Ryazan Governorate he had not been observed in any reprehensible activity (fig. 7), and also a certificate of his academic performance at IMU<sup>56</sup> and physician's diploma (fig. 8). We were thereby able to establish that Fronshtein graduated from IMU not in 1906, but in 1907.

### Conclusion

By dint of the research that was conducted, we came to the conclusion that there was no substantive information on Fronshtein's life as a student in the existing literature. Based on our analysis of archival documents (TsGAM, GARO, GARF) and use of the biographical historical method, we were able to reconstruct a number of facts regarding the period of Fronshtein's studies at IMU (1900–1907). Specifically, scattered information available in the literature on Fronshtein was made more precise; the hypothesis that he participated in student protests,

which was advanced before we began work with the archival materials on the basis on information from an analysis of the historiography, was set aside; the fact, not previously mentioned, of Fronshtein's suspension from IMU in 1904 was established and its circumstances examined; the fact of Fronshtein's presence in the Ryazan Governorate was confirmed; additional information on the "Ryazan period" in his biography (the length of his stay in Ryazan, his places of residence and service) was obtained, which at the same time demands further clarification; the circumstances of Fronshtein's reinstatement at IMU (in 1906) and the date of his graduation (1907) were ascertained. Consequently, in light of the new biographical information on Fronshtein obtained in the course of our research, it became clear that it is necessary to continue reconstructing his scientific biography, which in the long run will enable us to transition to an analysis of the formation and development of the Russian urological school in the first half of the 20th century – one of whose founders was Richard Fronshtein.

<sup>56</sup> TsGAM. F. 418. Op. 314. D. 872. L. 29.

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