

# A page in the history of Soviet clinical medicine: the establishment of the USSR Academy of Medical Sciences and the formalisation of the therapeutic elite (1944–1948)

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## Abstract

The article considers the issues of the formation of the therapeutic elite and its role in the development of the clinic of internal diseases in the USSR. Specific examples show the multifactorial process of elite formation at the congress of Russian therapists. The article discloses the role of the creation of the Academy of Medical Sciences (AMS) and the subsequent election of academics as an important factor in the formalisation of the elite. The analysis of numerous archival documents allowed the authors to revise the clichéd ideas about the long process of creation of the AMS, the main departments and people involved, and the role of J.V. Stalin in the process. It transpired that the main role in the development and refinement of the project was played by the People’s Commissar of Health care of the USSR, G.A. Miterev, his deputy for science, V.V. Parin, and the responsible employees of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union B.D. Petrov and S.V. Suvorov, with the active participation of Chairman of the Scientific Medical Council of the People’s Commissariat of Health of the USSR N.N. Burdenko and Head of the Main Military Sanitary Administration of the Red Army E.I. Smirnov. The process of appointing academics turned out to be drawn-out, riddled with conflict and “infighting” of interests. The academic fate of the therapist V.F. Zelenin can be a good example – he was included in the list of candidates, excluded from it, and eventually appointed Academic Secretary of the clinical medicine department. The final list of appointed academics was approved in November 1944 – not by Stalin (as it is usually assumed), but by deputy chairman of the Council of People’s Commissars V.M. Molotov. The article shows that the final selection of the therapeutic elite after the first elections at the Academy of Medical Sciences was finally determined at the 13th All-Union Congress of Therapists (1947) – the first congress after the Great Patriotic War.

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## Keywords

clinic of internal diseases, USSR Academy of Medical Sciences, congresses of therapists, therapeutic elite, M.P. Konchalovsky, G.F. Lang, N.D. Strazhesko

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Successful at the beginning of the 20th century, the development of the scientific and public life of domestic therapists ended with the events of the First World War, the collapse of Russian statehood and the Civil War in Russia (1914–1922). During those years, only the 6th Congress of Russian Therapists was held in Moscow (1916), with a limited number of participants and without the leaders of

the therapeutic elite of those years, and it was devoted to the specifics of the pathology of wartime. The regular congresses were resumed in 1922, when the so-called Extraordinary Congress of Therapists took place in Petrograd (with M.P. Konchalovsky as chairman). The beginning of the publication of the leading therapeutic journals of Soviet Russia – *Clinical Medicine* (1920, D.D. Pletnev et al)

and Therapeutic Archive (1923, M.P. Konchalovsky and G.F. Lang) – dates back to the same time.

By the end of the 1920s, the leaders of the therapy of the pre-revolutionary era and the first Soviet years were no longer alive, including N.Y. Chistovich, M.V. Yanovsky and A.A. Nechaev, as well as M.M. Volkov and G.Y. Yaveyn in Leningrad; V.P. Obraztsov, F.G. Yanovsky and K.E. Wagner in Kiev; L.E. Golubinin and M.I. Vikhert in Moscow; A.N. Kazem-Bek and S.S. Zimnitsky in Kazan; F.M. Openkhovskiy in Kharkov, S.V. Levashov in Odessa; V.N. Sirotinin (Borodulin et al 2016), as well as A.I. Ignatovsky and several other prominent therapists, emigrated from Russia and lived in Paris and other cities with Russian diasporas in foreign countries. The recognised head of Moscow therapists V.D. Shervinsky was by that time an honorary and not the acting leader.

Materials of therapeutic congresses and transactions of meetings of scientific societies, books and journals, statements of contemporaries, photographs of ceremonial sessions and other literary and archival sources allow us to outline the circle of the most influential people in the region of internal diseases who made up the new Soviet therapeutic elite, headed by D.D. Pletnev and M.P. Konchalovsky (Moscow), G.F. Lang (Leningrad) and N.D. Strazhesko (Kiev).

Along with the mentioned clinicians, the following then-metropolitan physicians were the most prominent domestic therapists: E.E. Fromgold (an “indispensable comrade”, i.e. a deputy of the chairmen – V.D. Shervinsky, M.P. Konchalovsky or D.D. Pletnev – in the Moscow Therapeutic Society; Faculty of Medicine of the 1st Moscow State University – 1st Moscow Medical Institute, 1 MMI), R.A. Luria and M.I. Pevzner (Central Institute of Continuous Professional Education), as well as V.N. Vinogradov, V.F. Zelenin, Y.G. Etinger and young (representative of the “forty-year-olds”) but rapidly climbing the career ladder E.M. Gelstein (2nd Moscow State Medical Institute – 2 MSMI).

M.I. Arinkin (Military Medical Academy, MMA, Leningrad) and M.V. Chernorutskiy (Pavlov First State Medical Institute, Leningrad), M.M. Gubergrits (Kiev), V.M. Kogan-Yasny (Kharkov), F.O. Gausman and S.M. Melkikh (Minsk), N.K. Goryaev and M.N. Cheboksarov (Kazan), M.G. Kurlov (Tomsk) – all of those specialists stood out and undoubtedly belonged to the therapeutic elite in other centres of clinical science. Well-known clinicians such as L.B. Buchstab (Odessa), G.Y. Gurevich-Ilyin (Smolensk, Moscow), I.V. Zavadskiy (Rostov-on-Don), D.O. Krylov (Saratov, Leningrad), A.M. Levin (Baku, Leningrad), N.I. Leporsky and N.A. Kurshakov (Voronezh), A.I. Yarotsky (Moscow) delivered presentations and chaired meetings at the 8th (1925) through to the 12th (1935) Congresses of Therapists.

The Great Patriotic War of 1941–1945 jumbled everything up: some prominent young representatives

of the therapeutic elite (M.S. Vovsi, A.L. Myasnikov, V.K. Vasilenko, E.M. Gelstein and others) made up the corps of chief army and navy therapists, others were evacuated from Kiev, Leningrad, Moscow, etc. (N.D. Strazhesko, G.F. Lang, M.P. Konchalovsky and others). Large irrevocable sanitary losses (war, illnesses, repressions) didn't pass the therapeutic elite by. So, D.D. Pletnev, repressed in 1937, was executed by firing squad in 1941 (Borodulin, Topolyanskiy 1989); in 1942, the repressed E.E. Fromgold died in a camp (Borodulin, Topolyanskiy 2013), and M.P. Konchalovsky, who had returned to Moscow from the evacuation, died of malignant hypertension (Shultsev 1973).

In 1944, against a backdrop of the ongoing war, the creation of the USSR Academy of Medical Sciences (AMS) was started by the decisions of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR of the 29–30th of June, 1944. The emergence of the Academy and its institutions meant (relating to the topic of this article) that in the second half of the 1940s the country's scientific medical elite was given its basic organisational structure and official status; the possibilities of its influence on the development of medical science had grown significantly. However, it would be a gross simplification to assume that the first selection of academics was fully consistent with the ranks of real members of the elite of Soviet medicine at that time.

The available literature largely mythologises the process of establishing (June 1944) and creating (December 1944) the AMS (60 let Rossiyskoy akademii meditsinskikh nauk 2004). It was possible to restore the real course of events on the grounds of the analysis of archival documents of the USSR People's Commissariat for Health, USSR Council of People's Commissars and the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks), the Scientific Council of the USSR People's Commissariat, the Main Military Sanitary Administration of the Red Army and the USSR Academy of Medical Sciences of different years (Glyantsev, Stochik 2018). Nobody elected the founding members of the AMS – their candidatures were approved by the government on the 14th of November, 1944, at the suggestion of the Organising Bureau for the creation of the AMS, which included Chairman G.A. Miterev, People's Commissar for Health of the USSR; academicians of the USSR Academy of Sciences A.N. Abrikosov and N.N. Burdenko; director of the All-Union Institute of Experimental Medicine and corresponding member of the USSR Academy of Sciences N.I. Grashchenkov; B.D. Petrov and S.G. Suvorov from the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks); later the list included A.F. Tretyakov, People's Commissar for Health of the RSFSR. We would like to emphasise that only candidates for the USSR Academy of Medi-

cal Sciences, and not its members, were approved on the 30th of June, 1944 – there were 56 full and 18 honorary members in total; by the 14th of November, however, there were 60 full members, and the institution of honorary members had been abolished.

The final draft of the first selection of academics in the People's Commissariat for Health (People's Commissar G.A. Miterev and his deputy for Science V.V. Parin) was prepared with the participation of the Academic Medical Council of the People's Commissariat for Health (N.N. Burdenko as chairman) and the Main Military Sanitary Administration of the Red Army (headed by E.I. Smirnov). Further refinement of the project was carried out with the participation of the apparatus of deputy chairman of the USSR Council of People's Commissars K.E. Voroshilov and Secretary of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) A.S. Shcherbakov (B.D. Petrov and S.G. Suvorov). The final list of the first members of the Academy was not signed by J.V. Stalin, but by deputy chairman of the USSR Council of People's Commissars V.M. Molotov.

The process of selection of candidates for future academics arouses particular interest. The selection took place under the conditions of the pressure of ideological dogmas in a long backstage fight (for example, V.F. Zelenin was excluded when the initial list was shortened, but reinstated at the next stage), but with careful bureaucratic "elaboration", which contributed to the fact that, as a result, the list of academics generally corresponded, to some extent, to the situation in clinical medicine of that time. However, there were many blunders, and the history of the appointment of academic therapists demonstrates it clearly.

It would seem that it wouldn't be very surprising, for example, to see this selection: academicians of the USSR Academy of Sciences N.D. Strazhesko, G.F. Lang (indisputable candidates); V.N. Vinogradov, M.I. Pevzner and, perhaps, M.I. Arinkin or M.M. Gubergrits. However, the announced results of the almost nine-month-long selection of academic therapists were almost shocking to the medical community. Five therapists were approved as full members of the AMS, but these were N.D. Strazhesko (Kiev), V.N. Vinogradov and V.F. Zelenin (Moscow), N.I. Leporsky (Leningrad) and L.A. Oganesyanyan (Yerevan). Apart from them, the list of candidates, which underwent significant changes including a sharp reduction during the development of the project in the People's Commissariat for Health and the apparatus of the Government and the Central Committee of the party, included M.M. Gubergrits (Kyiv), G.F. Lang (Leningrad), S.M. Melkikh (Minsk), M.I. Pevzner (Moscow) and M.I. Slonim (Tashkent). R.A. Luria was included in the list of applicants for the title of honorary member of the academy (as were N.F. Gamaleya, P.A. Hertsen, T.P. Krasnobayev and other prominent elders of the medical society); how-

ever, the category of honorary members was abolished in the final version of the project.

Of the Moscow therapists – unquestionable applicants for a place in the Academy – neither M.P. Konchalovsky, nor R.A. Luria (who died in 1944 of a serious illness) was alive by the time the AMS was finally created. N.K. Goryaev, Hero of Labour and Honoured Worker of Science, died in Kazan in 1943. The leader of Belarusian therapists, F.O. Gausman, had died, too, but his candidature could not be considered – he was a German, remained in the occupied Minsk and collaborated with the occupiers. A generally recognised leader, chairman of the board of the All-Union Society of Therapists G.F. Lang was still alive, but he wasn't on the list of approved academicians. An angry "clarification" by N.I. Grashchenkov, according to A.L. Myasnikov, followed the insistent request of a group of scientists to include him in the list of candidates for future academics: "How dare you talk about the German, he has a sister in Holland!" (Myasnikov 2001).

Of course, G.F. Lang became an academician in the very first elections to the academy in 1945. The correspondence of two leaders of the Soviet therapeutic elite – N.D. Strazhesko and G.F. Lang – contains some interesting information. Academic of two Academies of Sciences (USSR and Ukraine) N.D. Strazhesko rightfully entered the third, Medical Academy; he unconditionally recognised the same right for Lang and wrote to him after the Constituent session about the feeling of shame that tormented him so fiercely that it was almost enough for him to renounce the honorary title (Borodulin 1978). He wrote in one of the subsequent letters dated June 1945: "I also wanted to see you in order to talk about many things, particularly about the Academy of Medical Sciences, in which you and I, however difficult it might be for us, need to take an active part... because there is no one here who could take matters into their own hands... I refused to move to Moscow, but promised to come here more often and take part in organising the Academy without taking any important posts".<sup>1</sup>

Founder of deitology in the USSR, director of the therapeutic nutrition clinic and professor of the Institute of Continuous Professional Education M.I. Pevzner was on the People's Commissariat of Health's list of candidates for the first academy selection, but had a big fight with the Commissar and was removed from the list in the spring of 1944.

Apart from V.F. Zelenin, the well-known professors and therapists E.M. Gelstein and Y.G. Etinger worked at the time at the 2nd MSMI. The youngest representative of the therapeutic elite (along with Head Therapist of the Red Army M.S. Vovsi (born 1897)), a Bolshevik since 1920, E.M. Gelstein (born 1897) was nominated

<sup>1</sup> From a letter of N.S. Belonogova-Lang. From the personal archive of V.I. Borodulin.

and approved as professor and Head of the Department of Faculty Therapy of the 2nd MSMI in 1931, without defending his doctoral dissertation. The rapid rise of his medical, pedagogical (in 1940, together with V.F. Zelenin, he published the most popular therapy textbook for many years to come) and scientific career was based upon his personal qualities – a sharp mind, a gift of medicine and talent and determination of a researcher, and to a large degree upon the exceptional activity of his character, including in party affairs. He was the chief therapist of the Leningrad Front from 1941, and returned to Moscow in 1944 a seriously ill person – he suffered blockade hypertension and marasmus (severe malnutrition – he weighed about 40 kg), but he courageously fought the diseases and didn't reduce his creative activity.

In October 1945, the candidature of E.M. Gelstein at the by-elections at the AMS was discussed at a meeting of the Expert Commission of the Department of Clinical Medicine, consisting of 7 people. Academic Secretary V.F. Zelenin didn't participate in the commission, but attended the meeting. His story about this tragicomic episode survived to this day. The discussion was quite calm and generally amiable. N.I. Leporsky, a very authoritative academic, set the tone from the very beginning with his enthusiastic speech. So one can imagine the shock of those present when the chairman of the counting commission announced the results of the vote – 7 “nay”, 0 “aye”... Silence was followed by the deafening laughter of the members of the Commission who turned their eyes to the speaker, and the embarrassed groaning of the old academic “ahem...hm...ahem”... (Zelenin 2012, p. 52). E.M. Gelstein's disagreeable nature and the reputation of the party upstart contributed to the hostile attitude of prominent representatives of medicine towards him.

The candidature of Y.G. Etinger, an exceptionally popular physician (his services were wanted by the leaders of the state and the Communist International, the diplomatic corps and the artistic elite) and a prominent researcher, author of preeminent works on electrocardiographic diagnosis of myocardial infarction, etc., was not discussed either during the selection of the first academics or the election to the academy. Here the situation seems understandable – disregarding the atmosphere of general fear, Y.G. Etinger had the audacity to express opinions that testified to his dissent, and didn't hide the fact that he listened to “bad” radio in different languages and read foreign newspapers. He was known as a “chatterbox”, which removed the question of his inclusion in the list of candidates supervised by the central apparatus of the party.

An obvious contender for a place on the list of academics, pioneer of insulin therapy in the USSR and director of the country's first endocrinological clinic V.M. Kogan-Yasny might not have got on the list precisely because of his main specialisation – the Moscow

Institute of Endocrinology, which was due to enter the Academy, was excluded from the list of academic institutes with a very decisive wording – “domestic endocrinology has not yet achieved recognisable success”. It is less clear why M.M. Gubergrits – V.P. Obraztsov's lead student (along with N.D. Strazhesko) and one of the obvious leaders of the therapeutic elite – wasn't approved. He was recommended as a full member on the list of the People's Commissariat for Health (June, 1944), but was disapproved by the AMS in November the same year. By 1946 he was prevented from joining the Academy by the age limit – Protocol No. 1 of the Working Session at the Vice President of the USSR Academy of Medical Sciences A.I. Abrikosov's On the work of the Expert Commission, dated 17th of May, 1946, stated: “It is to be considered wrong for Expert Commissions to recommend persons aged 60 and above...” (M.M. Gubergrits was mentioned as born in 1886). This decision looks strange, considering that M.I. Arinkin, A.N. Kryukov, G.F. Lang, M.V. Chernorutsky and others weren't hampered by the same or even greater age (the moral damages were compensated to M.M. Gubergrits in 1948 when he was elected an academic of the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR). We have no reason to see anti-Semitism as the reason why the named Jewish professors didn't get on the list of academics: state anti-Semitism in the field of science would only become an issue in the following years.

It is clear that the official national policy was amongst the incentives for the selection of candidates for the project developers; only this factor, as well as major historical and medical works (which was of particular importance to one of the members of the bureau for creation of the Academy – the organiser of health care and medical historian B.D. Petrov) can explain the inclusion of L.A. Oganessian into the list of academicians. Of course, the colleagues had reasons to believe that the prominent therapist and historian of Armenian medicine L.A. Oganessian didn't occupy any positions in allunion arena that would correspond to his inclusion in the “priority” list. A.A. Melik-Adamyanyan (Yerevan State Medical Institute) and N.A. Kipshidze and M.D. Tsinamdzgvarishvili (Tbilisi State Medical Institute) could be equal contenders.<sup>2</sup>

Finally, though N.I. Leporsky belonged to the elders of the therapeutic profession, was amongst the clinicians who most successfully developed Pavlovian teaching, he still didn't have such scientific authority as did other Leningrad therapists – G.F. Lang and M.I. Arinkin. So, the list of nominated candidates for academicians (June 1944) and approved full members of the Academy (November 1944) rose questions that

<sup>2</sup> N.A. Kipshidze and M.D. Tsinamdzgvarishvili (Tbilisi Medical Institute) became academics of the Academy of Sciences of Georgia in 1946.

remain until this day. We'd also like to note that it was V.F. Zelenin, not N.I. Grashchenkov (who had been previously recommended for this position by the Organising Bureau), who was appointed Academic Secretary at the Constituent Session in December 1944.

A significant number of therapists came to the Academy as a result of the elections that took place in the years following the Constituent Session. The selection was multi-staged: the therapists' candidatures (both for full members and corresponding members) were successively scrutinised by the Expert Commission of the Clinical Medicine Department, the Presidium of the Academy of Medical Sciences and, finally, the session of the general meeting of the AMS. Apart from G.F. Lang, in 1945, therapists M.I. Arinkin, M.D. Tushinsky and M.V. Chernorutsky (Leningrad) became academicians; A.A. Bagdasarov, A.I. Nesterov and E.M. Tareev (Moscow), as well as V.M. Vadi and G.N. Udintsev became corresponding members. There were some peculiar happenings, too – for example, none of the minutes refers to the discussion of the candidature of M.D. Tushinsky, but he was appointed an academician. N.D. Strazhesko recommended M.I. Arinkin and A.N. Kryukov for full members as “brilliant haematologists” – M.I. Arinkin was elected right away, but A.N. Kryukov was only elected in 1948. E.M. Tareev was recommended for a full member, but he was elected a corresponding member (he wasn't elected a full member in 1946, either). V.N. Ivanov and A.L. Myasnikov were recommended for corresponding members, but didn't make it (they were elected a year later, in 1946). Apart from V.N. Ivanov (Kiev) and A.L. Myasnikov (Leningrad), V.K. Vasilenko (Lvov) and N.N. Savitsky (Leningrad) were elected corresponding members in 1946. So, as we can see, there was yet no concentration of the scientific clinical elite in Moscow, which was characteristic of the second half of the 20th century – it was composed of scientists from different cities of the country.

Repeated attempts to elect Chief Therapist of the Red Army M.S. Vovsi met fierce resistance from the full member of the AMS and a very influential surgeon S.S. Yudin, who didn't even attempt to hide the anti-Semitic subtext of his objections. Apart from M.S. Vovsi (S.S. Yudin was arrested a week prior to the 5th Session of the General Assembly of Academy of Medical Sciences of the USSR, and the former head of the Main Directorate of the Red Army, E.I. Smirnov, had been appointed Minister for Health of the USSR back in 1947) and A.N. Kryukov, in 1948, corresponding members A.L. Myasnikov and E.M. Tareev (Moscow) were elected academicians; K.K. Vlados and P.I. Yegorov (Moscow) and Z.I. Umidova (Tashkent) were elected corresponding members.

Amongst the therapists elected corresponding members of the Academy of Medical Sciences of the USSR during the first years of its existence were V.M. Vadi,

V.A. Ravich-Scherbo and G.N. Udintsev. Phthisiatrian V.A. Ravich-Scherbo was elected under the “therapy” specialty in 1946, since phthisiology wasn't yet an academic specialty – he was a very prominent clinician, but precisely as a specialist in pulmonary tuberculosis, not general therapy. Elected in 1945, V.M. Vadi and G.N. Udintsev were representatives of the Soviet republics – Estonia and Kazakhstan, respectively, and both left no significant traces in the history of the clinic of internal diseases; it seems that one of the main reasons for deviating from the principles of the formation of the AMS ranks in those years was reduced to party attitudes in the national question. It is clear that these three members of the Academy didn't belong to the therapeutic elite.

The draft Charter of the Academy of Medical Sciences, prepared in 1944 under the direction of G.A. Mitirev and N.N. Burdenko, provided the following requirements for academicians: “I. 8. Scientists who have enriched Soviet medical science with works of great scientific importance may be elected full members of the Academy of Medical Sciences of the USSR” (Ustav AMN SSSR 1946). It can be stated that until the mid-1960s, this general principle of staffing in medical science was all in all abided by. Then the practice of academic elections began to testify to a different approach – an academic, first of all, had to be an organiser of science, therefore, if you wanted to become an academic, first you needed to become the director of a scientific institute or the rector of a university...

The 13th Congress – the first post-war congress of therapists in the USSR – was held in 1947 (Leningrad) and placed important accents for the discussed topic. The group portrait of the members of the Presidium is very interesting (all are located in their assigned places): in the centre of the first row is the chairman of the congress, G.F. Lang, the nearest places to his right are taken by corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences of the BSSR S.M. Melkikh and academician of the Academy of Medical Sciences of the USSR V.N. Vinogradov; to his left we see academicians of the Academy of Medical Sciences of the USSR M.I. Arinkin and N.I. Leporsky; M.S. Vovsi, A.I. Nesterov, M.I. Pevzner and M.V. Chernorutsky are also in the same row. At the same time, E.M. Gelstein, V.N. Ivanov, B.P. Kuschlevsky, A.L. Myasnikov and E.M. Tareev are all in the second row (See Fig.). Leaders of Ukrainian therapists N.D. Strazhesko, M.M. Gubergrits and V.M. Kogan-Yasny, who delivered presentations at the Congress, were not included in the picture (apparently, they were absent during the shooting). G.F. Lang and N.D. Strazhesko were elected Honorary Members of the Society at the Congress.

The ranks of academicians who founded the Academy of Medical Sciences of the USSR and therapists included in it during the elections in 1945–1948, supplemented by the analysis of the materials of the 13th



**Fig.** Presidium of the 14th All-Union Congress of Therapists (1947). Front row: M.S. Vovsi, N.A. Kurshakov, A.A. Melik-Adamyany, M.I. Pevzner, V.N. Vinogradov, S.M. Melkikh, G.F. Lang, M.I. Arinkin, N.I. Leporsky, V.E. Predtechensky, A.I. Nesterov, M.V. Chernorutsky. From the personal archive of V.I. Borodulin.

Congress of therapists and other sources, suggests that the therapeutic elite in the second half of the 1940s was headed by G.F. Lang (Leningrad) and N.D. Strazhesko (Kiev) – recognised founders of the clinic of internal diseases in the USSR. Muscovites V.N. Vinogradov and V.F. Zelenin were very influential, and M.S. Vovsi and the first corresponding members of the AMS V.H. Vasilenko, A.L. Myasnikov, A.I. Nesterov and E.M. Tareev stood out from the “youth”. So, academic positions and titles “formalised” the real leadership of the leading representatives of the therapeutic elite.

The time for change in clinical elites came only a few years later, by the end of the 1940s. G.F. Lang died in 1948; the terminally ill N.D. Strazhesko wouldn't leave Kyiv; around that time, he also ceased to be the standard-bearer of Soviet clinical medicine – clouds of political disgrace began to thicken over him; he died in 1952. V.F. Zelenin consciously and voluntarily gave up the duties of Academic Secretary of the Department of Clinical medicine of the Academy of Medical Sciences and Director of the Academic Institute of Therapy in 1946–1948.

From the late 1940s, the therapeutic elite was led along the path of increasing differentiation of clinical medicine by V.N. Vinogradov, who “inherited” the role and authority of the chairman of the All-Union Society of Therapists and the Editor-in-Chief of the Therapeutic Archive journal from M.P. Konchalovsky and G.F. Lang, and who, most importantly, possessed the capabilities of the leading therapist at the Kremlin Hospital and was J.V. Stalin's personal physician;

A.L. Myasnikov, Academic Secretary of the Department of the Clinical Medicine of the Academy of Medical Sciences of the USSR (1948–1953) and Director of the Institute of Therapy of the Academy of Medical Sciences (after V.F. Zelenin); A.I. Nesterov, Academic Secretary of the Presidium of the AMS (1950–1953), Vice President of the Academy (1953–1957), and M.S. Vovsi – deputy chairman of the All-Union Society of Therapists, Editor-in-Chief of the Clinical Medicine journal and Chief Therapist of the Soviet Army. E.M. Tareev didn't hold equivalent posts, but he had a well-deserved fame as the author of many diverse and outstanding scientific works. This change of leadership is confirmed by the materials of Therapeutic Congresses: the 14th Congress in Moscow in 1956 was opened by A.L. Myasnikov and E.M. Tareev; M.S. Vovsi and A.I. Nesterov presided over the meetings; V.N. Vinogradov was the chairman at the 15th Congress in Moscow in 1962. The ranks of the elite were augmented in the 1950s and 1960s by V.H. Vasilenko, V.N. Ivanov, I.A. Kassirsky and B.E. Votchal. Since all the leaders of the new elite were students of F.G. Yanovsky, L.E. Golubin, D.D. Pletnev, G.F. Lang, M.P. Konchalovsky, N.D. Strazhesko and A.N. Kryukov, there was a clear continuity of clinical traditions.

However, the activities of these leaders unfolded by the second half of the century, in the 1950s–1960s. A narrower specialisation and design of many clinical sections as independent scientific and educational disciplines which branched off from the clinic of internal diseases and surgery was the primary task of the clinic

and the condition for its further successful development at that time. The leaders used their position, influence and connections to overcome formal and other organisational difficulties on the way to clinical medicine specialisation.

So, A.L. Myasnikov practically turned the Institute of Therapy of the Academy of Medical Sciences of the USSR into the Institute of Cardiology, founded the Cardiology journal, and acted as the initiator and organiser of the All-Union Society of Cardiologists. The Institute of Rheumatism of the Academy of Medical Sciences of the USSR, a network of cardio-rheumatology centres in multidisciplinary hospitals and clinics, as well as the All-Union Rheumatological Society were created at the initiative and under the leadership of A.I. Nesterov. The All-Union Centre for Nephrology and Haemodialysis, as well as the All-Union Society of Nephrologists were organised under the auspices of E.M. Tareev. V.H. Vasilenko founded the All-Union Research Institute of Gastroenterology and the All-

Union Society of Gastroenterologists. Moreover, all of them, unlike the next generations of leading clinicians, still remained therapists and led general therapeutic departments at universities.

In the last quarter of the 20th century, scientific clinical elites gradually lost their influence and significance due to the apparent lack of collegiality in taking decisions and the concentration of power in the hands of the sole leaders of clinical disciplines. In surgery, for example, B.V. Petrovsky became such a sovereign leader; V.I. Burakovsky took over cardiovascular surgery, N.A. Lopatkin dominated urology and A.V. Snezhnevsky – psychiatry. Of course, some leaders monopolised power functions in the therapeutic disciplines, too; in cardiology, it was E.I. Chazov, E.M. Tareev led nephrology, A.I. Vorobyov – haematology, and so on. That's why it is more reasonable to limit the use of the concept of “scientific therapeutic elite” to specific time frames, i.e. to the 10s and 70s of the 20th century.

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