250TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ACADEMY OF SCIENCES OF THE USSR

By a degree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of February 7, 1974, the Academy of Sciences of the USSR has been awarded the Order of Lenin. This high award has been conferred upon it for outstanding service in the development of Soviet science and culture, in the training of highly-qualified scientific cadres, and in increasing the economic and defensive power of the country.

Created 250 years ago, on February 8, 1724, the Academy has provided all-round aid to the state in the study of the country, its population, geography, climate, and natural riches, and in the creation of new industries. The Academy has participated in the training of cadres of science and culture, of education, and in the opening of new scientific institutes and societies, including Moscow University, which bears the name of its founder – M. V. Lomonosov.

Among the first academicians was the brilliant Lomonosov whose activity, astounding in its brilliance, breadth, and fruitfulness, determined the whole work of the Academy in the XVIIIth century.

In the XIXth century, the Academy played an outstanding role in all the main branches of science, and was one of the main centers of scientific thought. A notable chapter in the history of world science was formed by work in the field of chemistry, namely by the investigations of D. I. Mendeleev – the creator of the periodic law and of the system of chemical elements – and those of academicians A. M. Butlerov – one of the creators of modern knowledge on the structure of organic compounds – N. N. Zinin, N. N. Beketov, and others.

For two centuries, the destinies of Russian science and enlightenment were continuously connected with the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. In spite of the reactionary politics of the autocracy, the Academy, which included no small number of leading scientists, was the focus of Russian science and the storehouse of its progressive traditions of connection with the practical requirements of life.

However, the period of the true and unprecedented flowering of the Academy began only after the Great October Socialist Revolution. In a socialist society, science enjoys all the necessary conditions for its flowering, which is unthinkable in a class society, and only under socialism do science and culture become accessible to all the people.

In 1917, the Imperial Academy of Sciences was renamed the Russian Academy of Sciences, and in the same year for the first time in its history its president was not appointed but was chosen from among the academicians. The first elected president was the outstanding Russian scientist and geologist A. P. Karpinskii. V. L. Komarov, S. I. Vavilov, and A. N. Nesmeyanov were elected as the next presidents, and at the present time the Academy of Sciences of the USSR is under the leadership of academician M. V. Keldysh.

The Communist Party considers science to be closely associated with the conditions for creating socialism, and its development has become an affair of the whole state. The history of the development of the Academy of Sciences in the Soviet period is indissolubly connected with the name of the great leader of the revolution, V. I. Lenin, who devoted exceptional attention to the flowering of the Academy. In April, 1918, he drew up the famous "Outline of a Plan of Scientific and Technical Work," where he clearly laid down the task of the Academy: the study of the productive forces of the country and of the principle of their rational distribution and use, and the solution of the problems of developing the economy. Scientists were actively involved in work of the industrial development of the northeastern regions, the basic coal and metallurgical industry, power systems, and the investigation of the Arctic.

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In meeting the requirements of the republics, territories, and regions of the Soviet Union, the Academy of Sciences of the USSR has undertaken the organization of its branches and bases in these areas. In the course of a short period, the republican Academies, the Siberian Branch of the Academy of Science of the USSR, and the Far Eastern and Urals Scientific Centers were organized.

The scientists of the Academy have created modern apparatuses for investigating the moon, Venus, Mars, and cosmic space and the depths of the oceans; and they are studying glaciers, volcanoes, deserts, and the Arctic and Antarctic.

In the field of the chemical sciences, considerable successes have also been achieved. Academician N. D. Zelinskii was responsible for investigations in the field of the catalysis of organic compounds, synthetic fuel, and methods of petroleum processing. Academician N. S. Kurnakov and his school developed the theory of physicochemical analysis in order to apply it in the metallurgical and chemical industry. Distinguished service in the creation of a powerful Soviet synthetic rubber industry has been performed by academician S. V. Lebedev. Academician N. N. Semenov formulated the basic laws of chain reactions. New methods for the synthesis of organic compounds were developed by academician A. E. Favorskii. The work of academicians A. E. Arbuzov, S. S. Nametkin, A. N. Nesmeyanov, A. E. Porai-Koshits, V. M. Rodionov, and A. P. Orekhova in organic chemistry, etc., has become famous.

Work on the chemistry of natural compounds, especially in the field of alkaloid chemistry, is being intensively developed: a prominent part in these investigations is being taken by the Order of the Red Banner of Labor Institute of the Chemistry of Plant Substances of the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR.