

Dr Vladimir Terentievich Zaytsev Flying through Time

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The twentieth century turned to be contradictory and hopeful, inspiring and tragic... No one could ever imagine the challenges and hardships brought by the new menacing and unpredictable era. Against such background of dramatic events and conflicts, the past decades, especially those in the second half, have boosted science in the name of humanity and paved the way to the most productive economic and social developments. That time of global significance and intellectual empowerment became the moment of truth in the private and professional life of the prominent Ukrainian surgeon Dr Vladimir T. Zaitsev.

One's look, expression and mystery of eyes, the inner light of one's mind may not always reflect one's charisma and mission. But when they do, the personality is outstanding. Dr Vladimir T. Zaitsev seems to be such a heroic giant in his life and in the life of his followers and students who fly his flag now. Early grey hair usually talking of one's deep commitment and awareness of duty, incredible kindness, and charismatic harmony in one's hands and look... may be a classical etching of a surgeon but it is a very true, bright and modest portrait of Dr Vladimir T. Zaitsev.

He brought reforms to surgery in the industrial and scientific heart of Ukraine, the city of Kharkov, and has become a son of this incredible city with its intricate, fierce but glorious past. In the first years of post-war revival (1948), eighteen-year-old Vladimir Zaitsev entered Kharkov Medical Institute (Fig. 1). It certainly took some time for him to make his final choice — surgery had become his passion for ever. His choice was determined to some extent by outstanding Kharkov schools of surgery led by prominent researchers such as

Dr N. P. Trinkler, Dr A. G. Podrez and Dr A. A. Shalimov. In 1954, Vladimir Zaitsev graduated from Kharkov Medical Institute, Department of General Medicine, with honours and started his professional career as a resident surgeon at one of academic departments of surgery. He undoubtedly had strong passion for science and art of operative surgery. In 1955, he published his first research "Excision of the Left Lobe of Liver due to Cavernous Angioma" in the Collection of Research Papers of Kharkov Medical Institute. Even the title of this publication shows that the young author, the first doctor in a family of workers, was not a novice in surgery.

The years slid by. A teaching and research paper marked an important milestone in involvement of a surgeon who has brilliantly mastered all the methods of chest and abdomen operative surgery. Dr Vladimir T. Zaitsev worked on this research first as an assistant lecturer and then as an assistance professor at the Chair of Thoracic and Abdominal Surgery at the Ukrainian Post-Graduate Medical Institute (Kharkov) headed at that time by a surgeon with outstanding scientific knowledge and technical skills and future academician of the National Academy of Sciences and the Academy of Medical Sciences of Ukraine — Professor Alexander Alekseyevich Shalimov. The fruitful cooperation between the outstanding teacher and one of his best students and followers characterises both of them as a line of fortune. It was Dr Vladimir T. Zaitsev who picked up the slack and headed Kharkov Research Institute of General and Emergency Surgery (Fig. 2), the first Ukrainian institution helping patients in the most urgent medical conditions, when Dr Alexander A. Shalimov

moved to Kiev where the outstanding scientist founded his second Olympus of Science — the Research Institute for Clinical and Experimental Surgery. Dr Vladimir T. Zaitsev had led the Institute of General and Emergency Surgery for 25 years and, in parallel, the Chair of Hospital Surgery at Kharkov National Medical University for three decades. Many students, postgraduates, resident surgeons, master degree and doctoral students in Ukraine and other countries appreciate the valuable advice they heard from their teacher of surgery and remember his optimism and incredible kindness. His lecturing skills and unforgettable public speeches brought merited fame to Dr Zaitsev and authority of an outstanding teacher. Under his guidance, a students' scientific circle had functioned successfully for many years and brought together many future talented surgeons of the new generation.

Dr Vladimir T. Zaitsev started his thesis research “Blood Oxygen in Intravenous Blood Transfusion and Administration of Blood Substitutes in Surgery” in 1963 and successfully defended it under the supervision of Prof A. A. Shalimov. The focus of his research on physiology and surgery was determined by his passion for experiments and technicism. He focused his researches on methods of electrooximetry in 1959–1962 and was almost the first scientist who introduced this method into surgeon's practice. Dr Vladimir T. Zaitsev faced many twists and turns in his professional life as a surgeon — he mastered surgical operations on mediastinal tumours, reconstructive stage of surgical relaxation therapy and diaphragmatic hernia repair, introduced in practice isolated partial perfusion for different types of urgent and non-urgent surgical pathology. Fighting for people's life day by day, he started working on the doctoral thesis (1974) “Choice of the Method of Operative Treatment for Gastroduodenal Ulcer” which correlated with Dr A. A. Shalimov's credo of applying organ-sparing approaches and principles.

Two lines, two domains of the outstanding Kharkov surgeon — management of leading chairs of surgery (theoretical and hospital surgery at the Department of Paediatrics and hospital surgery at the Department of General Medicine) at his *alma mater*, on the one hand, and his continuous efforts in organization of the unique surgical centre for a huge megalopolis, one the other, —

certainly characterise Dr Vladimir T. Zaitsev as an incredibly talented architect of modern medicine willing to benefit his home city. It was there where almost the first in Ukraine Surgery R&D Association was established to incorporate surgical departments of the Medical Institute, today's Kharkov Medical Academy of Postgraduate Education and the newest emergency care hospital. Upon Prof Zaitsev's initiative, this medical hub hosted specialized centres focused on the treatment of particular medical conditions such as gastrointestinal bleedings, cardiovascular diseases, shock and multiple traumas, liver and biliary tracts, purulent surgical infections, myasthenias, heart arrhythmias and other present-day diseases. In fact, it was a large centre of surgical solutions to everyday dramas of life and death and, if one looks more closely, it was an eternal memorial to Dr Vladimir T. Zaitsev. To implement all these giant ideas by combining research and practical solutions, Dr Vladimir T. Zaitsev had no more than a few decades, while the scope of urgent scientific problems to be solved was absolutely colossal. Traumatic shock and multiple trauma, burn disease, development and improvement of care to patients with surgical infections (peritonitis, sepsis, purulent wound, and intestinal fistula), surgical treatment of complicated peptic ulcer, surgical hepatology and pancreatology, acute cardiovascular pathology, optimization of urgent surgical aid to the public, just to name a few. Looking at such a wide range of research studies, we see his true heroic deeds and the living epitome of heroism in the field of surgery.

More than 700 research papers were published by Dr Zaitsev, including 32 monographs and 3 teaching aids. He held 59 inventor's certificates and patents. Seventeen doctoral and 61 Ph. D. theses had been defended under his supervision. Many innovations proposed by Dr Vladimir T. Zaitsev and his followers are now widely used in surgical practice in Ukraine and other countries. Today, the most Dr Zaitsev's monographs serve as a valuable guide to surgeon's practice such as “Clinical Findings, Diagnostics, and Treatment of Chest Trauma, Chest Organs and Vessels” (1984), “Emergency Surgery of Abdominal Cavity” (1989), “Surgical Tactics and Treatment of Patients with Bleedings from Penetrating Pyloroduodenal Ulcers” (1992) and many others.

The Ukraine's medical community knew Dr Vladimir T. Zaitsev as a Vice Chairman of the Scientific Society of Surgeons of Ukraine, Chairman of Kharkov Regional Society of Surgeons, Editor-in-Chief of General & Emergency Surgery Inter-institutional Digest, editorial board member of Clinical Surgery Journal, expert of the Higher Attestation Board of Ukraine, and a standing member of many *ad hoc* commissions on surgery in the UkrSSR and former USSR. He was a member of the European Surgical Association. It was a brilliant and versatile surgeon who successfully completed many operations on heart, lungs, mediastinum and abdominal cavity organs (more than 10,000 surgeries in total!) and brought thousands of patients back to life. His patients will remember him all their life long. For his selfless hard labour as a surgeon, a scientist and a teacher, Dr Vladimir T. Zaitsev was honoured with many government awards: Order of the Red Banner of Labour (twice), Medal for Valorous Labour, Lenin Anniversary Medal, and badges of honour such as Best Healthcare Professional and For Excellence in Work. Furthermore, he was honoured with the Certificate of Merit by the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the UkrSSR.

In 2000, a memorial plate was built into a wall of the house where Dr Vladimir

T. Zaitsev had lived for his last two decades (Fig. 3). Under the Resolution of the Presidium of the National Academy of Medical Sciences of Ukraine No. 7/4 dd. April 26, 2013, the Institute of General and Emergency Surgery of the National Academy of Medical Sciences of Ukraine was named after Dr Vladimir T. Zaitsev in honour of this outstanding surgeon, scientist and teacher, his contribution to the development of Kharkov school of surgery and many years of his fruitful labour.

We are peering into faces on photos in the bibliographic book "Vladimir T. Zaitsev: a Surgeon, a Scientist, a Teacher..." published in Kharkov by the Institute of General and Emergency Surgery of the National Academy of Medical Sciences of Ukraine now led by one of Dr Zaitsev's students — Prof V. V. Boyko. This book was published in commemoration of the 80th birthday of the brilliant surgeon, 11 years after his decease. All those photos demonstrate Dr Zaitsev's life and his generous but modest soul, his dedication and commitment to the labour he loved. The titular photo shows Dr Vladimir T. Zaitsev immediately before an operation: he is in surgical overalls, he is concentrated and focused and his pre-operative concentration and absorption strikingly resembles Dr Alexander A. Shalimov. That is certainly a sign of fortune and succession.