

## A Russian doctor in exile: Vladimir Aleksandrovich Levitsky (1883–1953)

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In domestic and foreign historiography, much attention has been paid to the phenomenon of Russian scientific emigration. The work of many emigrants who left Russia after the revolutionary events of 1917 and the Civil War was associated with medicine. V.A. Levitsky was an outstanding surgeon and organizer of medical work among Russian émigrés in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (KSCS). After graduating in 1910 from the Imperial University of Moscow, he worked as a supernumerary ordinator of the surgical department of the Red Cross's Iberian community in Moscow. In 1912, he took up the post of assistant professor at Professor V.I. Alexinsky's Department of Surgical Pathology. He later became a well-known surgeon and a no less famous figure among Russian émigrés. During World War I, Levitsky was in charge of one of the Russian Red Cross Society's hospitals and was on record as a colonel. In 1918, he was chosen as a teacher at Moscow University at the Department of Surgical Pathology and received the title of assistant to the propaedeutic-surgical clinic. In 1920, Levitsky emigrated to the KSCS, where he became a head surgeon, and from 1927, he was director of the hospital-sanatorium in Pančevo, which until the summer of 1945 served both Russian émigrés and the local population. It was in Yugoslavia that Levitsky fully revealed himself as a brilliant organizer of the medical care, and as a surgeon and a public figure. Using the example of his activities in Yugoslavia, the authors of the article demonstrate the influence of Russian medical émigrés community on the formation of the KSCS's health system, and subsequently Yugoslavia's. The general problems of Russian emigration to KSCS are considered, the features of the Russian medical diaspora are described, as are the activities of the Russian hospital-sanatorium in Pancevo, in which Levitsky worked. Archival materials that have become available to researchers of the Russian diaspora since February 2017 are introduced into scientific discourse. The research was carried out on the basis of materials from the archives of the collections of the Solzhenitsyn House for the Russian Diaspora in Moscow.

**Keywords:** *V.A. Levitsky, Russian emigration, Russian doctors in emigration, the history of Russian surgery*

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The kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (KSCS), which became Yugoslavia in 1929, was a unique European state, the borders of which were open to a huge number of Russians who emigrated from the Russian Empire in the early years of the revolution and after the Civil War [1–7]. A transit route in constant use from Turkey and Bulgaria ran through Yugoslavia to the European countries. Historians distinguish

several waves of Russian emigration to the KSCS. The first wave began almost immediately after the October Revolution of 1917 and lasted until the end of November 1919. During this period, about 1,600 people fled their homeland (mainly through Odessa). The second wave came in the first half of 1920 (7,000–8,000 refugees from Odessa and Novorossiysk), the third from 27 October to 17 November 1920 (2,053 refugees), the fourth from 25 November to 23 December 1920 (21,343 refugees of the “Crimean” evacuation), the fifth in 1921, February 1922 and May 1923 (11,750

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people, trains of troops of General P.N. Wrangel's Russian Army) [5, pp. 112–113], [8, p. 59].

The population in the Russian colonies in the KSCS was highest from 1922–1923 (according to most researchers reaching 44,000 people). In subsequent years it decreased slightly: by the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s there remained about 30,000 Russian émigrés in Yugoslavia. By 1940, their number had fallen to 18,000–19,000, and it continued to decline during the Second World War [5, pp. 112–113]. Immediately after the war, as a result of changes in the political system of Yugoslavia, the number of Russian emigrants decreased significantly.

The overwhelming majority of Russian immigrants who arrived in the KSCS were people with education and professional skills [1], [2], [5], [8], [9]. The so-called Russian World (Russian diaspora in the KSCS, then Yugoslavia) was mainly of urban origin and well educated. Thus, even full medical professors from Russia numbered more than 10 in the KSCS. They included obstetricians A.A. Riedlich and G.E. Rein and internist V.N. Sirotinin, professors of the Military Medical Academy; dermatovenerologist V.I. Terebinsky, professor of the University of Kiev; and internist A.I. Shcherbakov, pathologist D.P. Kishensky, court physician and pathologist D.D. Krylov, surgeon K.M. Sapezhko and others, professors of Novorossiysk University. In total 140–180 doctors from Russia arrived in Yugoslavia [8, pp. 59–60]. Some researchers reference 200 immigrant Russian doctors [10, p. 456]. Serbian researcher S. Litvinenko indicates that there were 435 Russian émigré doctors in Serbia and Montenegro and gives information about their settlement in different cities and regions of the country and their professional affiliation (medical specialties) [11, pp. 31, 43].

The number of physician emigrants from 1920–1930 was not constant: in 20 years one in five of them died, and many moved from one state to another. Professors A.A. Riedlich, V.N. Sirotinin and V.I. Terebinsky settled in Paris. After graduating from the University of Zagreb, N.A. Bulgakov, brother of the writer M.A. Bulgakov, went to Paris as well [8, pp. 59–60]. Other doctors moved to friendly Serbia and it was there that they found their place of service and the opportunity for professional growth. With some confidence, we can say that

the formation of the healthcare system in the KSCS and then Yugoslavia took place with the direct participation and under the leadership of Russian immigrant doctors, although initially the doctors with Russian diplomas were allowed to work only in public institutions. They were looking for jobs in the most remote corners of the country. The right to private practice was granted to immigrant doctors only in 1924 [8, p. 60].

The government, the pro-russophile political parties, the bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church and influential intellectuals, especially King Alexander Karageorgevich, managed to create the most favorable conditions for the Russians in the country, allowing them to actualize their creative, academic and practical professional opportunities. Alexander Karageorgevich had received his education in Russia in the Corps of Pages, had an excellent knowledge of the Russian language and was well-versed in Russian culture; he was able to appreciate unlike anyone else the intellectual potential of the representatives of the Russian Diaspora. In the eyes of Russian emigrants, he was always “The Knight King” – the personification of the Orthodox Christian monarch. Serbian scholars, as well as domestic researchers, speak about the so-called five major waves of Russian refugees in the KSCS from May 1919 to May 1923 [5, p.112–114].<sup>1</sup>

Both Belgrade and many other cities across the country saw the emergence of Russian schools, libraries, parishes and churches, orphanages, hospitals, cadet corps, theatrical, literary and musical societies, publishing houses, branches of diaspora military and political organizations during this period. One of these geographical centers of the Russian diaspora in the KSCS became the city of Pančevo. There was created and successfully operated a sanatorium hospital of the Russian Red Cross Society (ROKK), which had surgical, therapeutic, gynecological and obstetric

<sup>1</sup> Taking this opportunity, the authors express their sincere gratitude to the remarkable researcher of Russian emigration history in Yugoslavia and Serbia, author of numerous publications in Russian and Serbian, descendant of the first wave of Russian emigrants, son of the cadet corps graduate, academic editor of the collections “Russian Emigration in Serbian Culture of the 20th Century” (Belgrade, 1994) and “Russian emigration in Yugoslavia” [12] and honorary donor of the Solzhenitsyn House for the Russian Diaspora – Alexey Borisovich Arsenyev.

units. At the hospital there were three operating rooms, a wound-dressing room, a delivery room, a laboratory, a pharmacy, a radiology room and a photo-therapy room. The best medical staff were concentrated in Pančevo at the Russian sanatorium hospital, which became a major medical center of professional practical medicine. The hospital was opened in March 1920 and until the summer of 1945 served both Russian immigrants and the local population. It was there that Vladimir Aleksandrovich Levitsky worked as a chief surgeon, and from 1927 to October 1944 he was the director [13, pp. 1–24], [14, pp. 127–134] (Fig. 1).

The record of Vladimir Aleksandrovich Levitsky's birth was made 25 December 1886<sup>2</sup> in the register of Church of Elijah the Prophet on the Vorontsov field in Moscow. In his personal file, sent to the Office of Student Affairs of the Imperial Moscow University (IMU), it is stated that he was a hereditary nobleman, and information is provided about his father's rank and residential address.<sup>3</sup> His father, Aleksandr Mihaylovich Levitsky, was a land surveyor, chief surveying assistant. The family lived on Arbat street, in the Chulkov Residence.<sup>4</sup>

V.A. Levitsky finished the 7th male gymnasium, organized in Moscow in 1905 in memory of Alexander III. The tuition fee was 80 rubles a year, which could be afforded by wealthy

citizens.<sup>5</sup> The gymnasium was located on Passion Monastery Square (now Pushkin Square); its building has not been preserved.<sup>6</sup> The All Moscow address book for various years provides a detailed list of the gymnasium teachers.<sup>7</sup>

Young Vladimir Levitsky's achievements were not outstanding, as evidenced by his graduation grades transcript. However, on 27 June 1905 he filed a petition addressed to the Rector of IMU to let him enroll in medical school.<sup>8</sup>

On 20 December 1910 V.A. Levitsky received a certificate stating that from 1905–1910 he studied at IMU [14, p. 130]. He finished the general course of theoretical and basic sciences (mostly with satisfactory results) and 2 March 1911 at a Testing Medical Commission meeting he was awarded the medical doctor degree.<sup>9</sup> During his studies at the University, V.A. Levitsky trained at the bacteriological department of F.M. Blumenthal Institute,<sup>10</sup> and immediately after gradu-

ating from the medical faculty, he worked as a



**Fig. 1. V.A. Levitsky (1950s).**  
*House for the Russian Diaspora archives.*  
*F. 114. Op. 1. D.4. L.2*

<sup>2</sup> January 6, 1887, new style.

<sup>3</sup> It should be noted in advance that, unfortunately, in the funds of the Central State Archives of the City of Moscow (hereinafter referred to as TsGAM), very few documents relating to the biography of V.A. Levitsky have survived. The only exception is Collection No. 418 – “Moscow Imperial University”, which stores personal files of its students and professors.

<sup>4</sup> TsGAM. F. 418. Op. 319. D. 743. L. 13; Archives of the House for the Russian Diaspora, named after Alexander Solzhenitsyn (further on in HRD Archives). F. 114. Op. 1. D. 6. L. 1.

<sup>5</sup> The gymnasium was given its name on April 23, 1900, when the Supreme Order “On the Assignment to the Moscow 7th Gymnasium the name of Emperor Alexander III”// Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire. Collection 3. Vol. 20. 1900, Saint-Petersburg, 1902. Page 387. No. 18501.

<sup>6</sup> TsGAM. F. 436. Moscow 7th Male Gymnasium School, named after Alexander III. Documents of 1884–1918.

<sup>7</sup> All of Moscow for 1906 (handbook). 13th year of publishing (35th.) Moscow: Novoye vremya, 1906.

<sup>8</sup> TsGAM. F. 418. Op. 319. D. 743 L. 1. (The petition was accompanied by data from the school matriculation certificate, a grade transcript for the last three years of study and other documents).

<sup>9</sup> TsGAM. F. 418. Op. 319. D. 743 L. 18–18 ob., 19

<sup>10</sup> TsGAM. F. 418. Op. 319. D. 743. L. 20; HRD. F. 114. Op. 1. D. 6. L. 6. In 1891 in Moscow, in Keller's pharmacy on Myasnitkaya Street, a private chemical and bacteriological lab was opened by F.M. Blumenthal. It was a diagnostic center, which in the scope of its activities left behind all the bacteriological institutions of Russia of that time. Today it is the N.F. Gamaleya Institute of Epidemiology and Bacteriology.

supernumerary intern at the surgical department of the Iberian Red Cross community in Moscow.

On 19 April 1911 certificate No. 4263 issued by the Office of IMU indicated that V.A. Levitsky's papers would be sent to a military office for his admission to an officer reserve of the military-medical department.<sup>11</sup> On 9 June 1911 the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Moscow City Committee of Conscription notified the Office of the IMU that V.A. Levitsky's doctor's diploma had been delivered to him.<sup>12</sup>

In 1912–1913 V.A. Levitsky became an assistant in the Department of Surgical Pathology with Professor V.I. Alexinsky (later a known surgeon and a no less renowned figure among the Russian émigrés) [14, p. 96], [15, p. 130], [16, pp. 55–72].

During the First World War, V.A. Levitsky was in charge of one of the ROKK hospitals and was listed as a front-line colonel.<sup>13</sup> The details of his service, unfortunately, are not known, but it is telling that his coworkers made Dr. Levitsky a memorable gift – a silver cup holder with an “AB” engraving and the inscription “To our favorite doctor, from the squad. 15/VII 1915”.<sup>14</sup> He kept this gift all his life, despite the numerous times he had to move towns.

In 1916, V.A. Levitsky opened his own surgical hospital with 30 beds in Moscow [14, p. 96]. From 1909–1917, he published a few research papers, which are now stored at the Central Research Medical Library and are a bibliographical rarity. They give an idea of the young surgeon Levitsky's academic and professional preferences. His monograph and earlier articles reflect the obvious influence of his teacher, Professor V.I. Aleksinsky [7, p. 13], [17, pp. 607–610], [18, pp. 41–43].

In 1918, Levitsky was elected professor of the Moscow University and got tenure at the Department of Surgical Pathology; he was also made an assistant at the propaedeutics-surgical clinic [13, p. 4]. Levitsky was married<sup>15</sup> and had a daughter<sup>16</sup> (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2. V.A. Levitsky and A.M. Levitskaya (the late 1940s).  
House for the Russian Diaspora archives.  
F.114. Op.1. D.4. L.7.

In 1920, Dr. V.A. Levitsky emigrated to the KSCS, where he became the chief surgeon of the sanatorium in Pančevo and in 1927 its director, combining both economic and administrative duties with a surgeon's tasks. He authored more than 29 academic papers in the field of surgery [7, pp. 17–19].

In the early 1920s in the KSCS the refugee doctors organized the Russian-Serbian Medical Society with a center in Belgrade (sometimes called the “Russian-Serbian Doctors Association”). It paid special attention to confirming academic credentials, as many refugees from Russia did not possess diplomas of higher education. Prior to 1 January 1922, 180 medical licenses were issued. The chairman of the society was Professor of Medical Military Academy V.N. Sirotinin, and the secretary was Professor A.A. Redlich. The other aspect of the society's activity were academic meetings, which in the early 1920s were carried out every two weeks. They featured paper presentations and discussion on current medical research issues [8, pp. 59–60]. V.A. Levitsky presented his papers at the Russian-Serbian and the Serbian Medical Society in Belgrade [20, p. 52], [21, p. 139].

Soon after the formation of the Russian-Serbian Medical Society, members began publishing a scientific medical journal in Russian titled “Physician Review” – a monthly medical journal, edited by Professor S.S. Abramov in Berlin with the participation of the Berlin Society of Russian doctors on the editorial board. “Physician Review”, as well as some other Russian

<sup>11</sup> TsGAM. F. 418. Op. 319. D. 743. L. 22.

<sup>12</sup> TsGAM. F. 418. Op. 319. D. 743. L. 25.

<sup>13</sup> HRD Archives. F. 114. Op. 1. D. 1 L. 4 ob.

<sup>14</sup> HRD Museum. The barrel-shaped cup holder with a loop-shaped handle. Rus. Empire. 1915 (?) Silver, engraving. Height 10 cm. Length 7.3 cm. CPof. 1113.

<sup>15</sup> His spouse was Anna Mikhailovna (1900–1995, USA).

<sup>16</sup> HRD Archives. F. 114. Op. 1. D. 1. L. 4; D. 4. L. 7.

medical journals, can be considered the body of all Russian medical diaspora [11, p. 386]. From the autumn of 1920 until the spring of 1921, nine academic meetings were held. Their organization was entrusted to Professor A.I. Ignatovsky. Seventeen academic presentations were made. The fourth (after the papers of Professor V.I. Terebinsky, A.I. Shcherbakov, and Professor A.A. Redlich) was a report presented by assistant professor V.A. Levitsky "On the question of the treatment of chronic empyema". It dealt with an original method of treating chronic empyema by suction with a special device designed by the speaker. The method was applied to a large number of patients [19, p. 43].

Numerous refugees from the first wave of Russian emigration that arrived in the KSCS in the spring of 1919 were placed mostly in the Banat, Bačka, Baranya (Vojvodina). Located 20 km from Belgrade, at the confluence of the Tamish River into the Danube, Pančevo became one of the centers of Russian emigration.

On 10 March 1920, in Pančevo a Russian hospital-sanatorium opened its doors after 750 Russian refugees arrived in the city from Crimea on a single day in February. Locals were informed in the newspapers about the arrival of this group. It was noted that among those who had arrived were many Russian civilians and cadets who on 25 January (old style) had evacuated in three groups from Odessa aboard "Rio Negro" to Thessaloniki, and then taken the train to Pančevo [22, pp. 127–134].

Among those Russians in Pančevo in February 1920, there were many doctors (and many cases of typhoid fever). As a result, the authorities of the City of Pančevo (Captain Serenovats; medical inspector of the town of Pančevo, Dr. Dragicevic and the chief of Pančevo Hospital, Dr. Shambek) invited the representatives of the Russian colony to occupy an empty building of the former Austrian hospital (Upper Tsar Dusan Street, 12, nowadays St. Sava Street).

Russian emigrants immediately organized a sanatorium hospital with a medical staff of three doctors (I.A. Belousov, Smirnov<sup>17</sup> and E.M. Raczkowski) and four nurses, who gratuitously assumed the obligation to care for the sick with typhus [22, pp. 127–134]. The money



**Fig. 3. Pančevo Hospital-Sanatorium.**

*House for the Russian Diaspora archives. F.114. Op.1. D.5. L.1*

needed for repairs, meals for the patients and staff fees were allocated by the representatives of Russian authorities in the KSCS, led by General P.N. Wrangel. The hospital-sanatorium was funded thus until June 1920, and later by the ROKK Administration (which was headed by Commissioner V.D. Evreinov) [13, pp. 2–3]. The hospital was aided by the American Red Cross and the British ROKK Committee. After the elimination of epidemic typhus in the hospital, internal and obstetrical-gynecological departments were opened.

In the late 1930s, the hospital-sanatorium was named "Russian Red Cross Sanatorium, named after the Knight-King Alexander I Unifier in Pančevo" [21, p. 76] (Fig. 3).

The first chief of the hospital was Dr. Ivan Afanasyevich Belousov, later replaced by Dr. Vladimir Aleksandrovich Voronetzky, and in 1927 his position was taken by Dr. V.A. Levitsky.

Under the leadership of V.A. Levitsky, the Knight King Alexander I Russian Sanatorium became one of the best medical institutions in the KSCS, and then in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The Kingdom's Ministry of Defence gave the building of the sanatorium to Russian refugees; Russians thought it was their duty to treat all military families for free (not only Russian refugee patients were admitted, but also the inhabitants of Yugoslavia) [23, p. 133]. After 10 years, the sanatorium already had more than 110 beds, 60 of which were free. In the following years, the activities of the sanatorium were financed by the funds of the State Commission for Russian Refugees headed by Academician and Professor in the University of Belgrade Aleksander Belich and his colleague B.M. Oreshkovich.

<sup>17</sup> Unfortunately, the initials could not be restored.

By 1930, the hospital-sanatorium employed surgical, therapeutic and gynecology departments, which had the latest medical equipment, hospital wards and three operating rooms, a dressing room, a delivery room, a laboratory, a pharmacy, an advanced primary care clinic (outpatient) with special cabinets, an X-ray cabinet and a large room with electron-beam devices for physiotherapy and hydrotherapy. The delivery room had 10 beds; in 10 years more than 900 children were delivered there [13, p. 4]. V.A. Levitsky's brilliant surgical operations and his ability to wield a scalpel attracted to Pančevo Hospital not only Russian emigrants in KSCS, but also patients from all over Yugoslavia and even from neighboring European countries [24, pp. 263–264], [10, p. 76].

In 1930 the sanatorium employed Dr. V.A. Levitsky (director), Dr. E.F. Danchakov (senior intern), M.P. Metalnikov, S.Y. Kapralov (intern), A.D. Dobasevich (head of physiotherapy), E.B. Tsimbalistova (head nurse), O.F. Lagin (masseuse nurse), M.I. Lobanova (midwife) and 14 more nurses [21, pp. 73–76].

In 10 years, the sanatorium admitted 9,339 inpatients and 48,269 outpatients. 8,682 surgical operations were performed. Of the total patients, 32% were not Russian emigrants [23, pp. 133–134]. These data indicate the demand for such a medical institution, as well as the good organizational skills of the management. From 1931–1939, Professor V.A. Levitsky also received patients in the ROKK clinic in Belgrade [25, pp. 130, 131].

The twentieth anniversary of the sanatorium hospital was noted in the local Yugoslav press. For example, "Pančevo Week" of 10 March 1940 contains information that over 20 years, more than 20,000 patients had been treated in the sanatorium. An important source of information, necessary for analysing the activity of that institution, is also the Russian press, published at the time in Belgrade. For example, "Russian Voice" from 18 February 1940 provides information about 12,000 surgeries performed at the hospital (9,000 of which were complex), 75,000 wounds dressed, 60,000 various tests conducted, 5,000 X-rays made, 1.5 million various injections performed and 1,250 Russian children delivered [23, pp. 127–134], [21, pp. 75–77].

At the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the sanatorium, the royal entourage in the name

of His Majesty the King of Yugoslavia awarded its director, V.A. Levitsky, the 3rd Class Order of the Yugoslav Crown. The Solemn Liturgy was performed by the High Priest Metropolitan Anastasius. The priest handed Prof. Levitsky a certificate awarded by the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia, as well as an ancient icon [23, p. 133].

Soon after the sanatorium was opened, a church of St. Nicholas of Myra, in which Levitsky served as a "starosta" (community head), was built there at the expense of the Russian community. After the war, Levitsky served as a churchwarden.

Hard times for the Russian sanatorium in Pančevo began in 1940. In connection with the coming crisis and the outbreak of the Second World War, prices for medical supplies and drugs increased; the financial state of the Russians, especially of the sick and elderly who needed assistance, deteriorated markedly. In the sanatorium many people were treated for free, and the costs far exceeded the budget. V.A. Levitsky did not want to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the sanatorium, but friends and patients established the Organizing Committee, which was able to provide financial assistance to the hospital [23, pp. 133–134].

During the war, the situation became more complicated in the hospital, and in October 1944 it ceased to be a Russian hospital, as it was converted into a hospital for those with minor wounds. The organization was entrusted to Dr. Elizabeth Berkovich-Matveeva (Major of Medical Service of the Red Army). The hospital was under her supervision until the summer of 1945; at the end of January 1946 it was abolished, and the building was turned into a barracks.<sup>18</sup> In these circumstances, which were also affected by the political changes in Yugoslavia after the Second World War, many of the doctors of the Russian hospital in Pančevo had to leave the country [5, p. 164].

On 9 January 1945, according to his army booklet, V.A. Levitsky voluntarily joined the Russian Liberation Army (ROA) – the headquarters of the Air Force of the Armed Forces of the Peoples of Russia (VSNR) as a doctor (specializing in surgery) and chief of the health department in the rank of Lieutenant Colonel<sup>19</sup> (fig. 4, a–b).

<sup>18</sup> In 2008, it was the Youth House [23, p. 134].

<sup>19</sup> HRD Archives. F. 114. Op. 1. D. 1.

Книжка военнослужащего Удостоверение личности	Soldbuch zugleich Personalausweis
№ 335	№ 335
Чин или звание: (см. стр. 5) Подполковник Д. Левитский	Dienstgrad: Oberfeldarzt (s. auch Seite 5)
Фамилия: Д. Levitsky	Familiennamen: D. Lewitsky
Имя и отчество: Владимир	Vorname: Weadimir
Медальон: 314	Erkennungsmarke: 314
Группа крови:	Blutgruppe:
Время рождения: (год и месяц) 1886г. 25. 12	Geb. (Mon., Jahr): 25. 12. 86
Национальность: русская	Nationalität: russisch
Гражданская специальность: профессор университета	Beruf: Universitätsprofessor
2	2
Семейное положение: женат	Ledig — verheiratet: verh.
Число детей: 1 дочь	Kinder: 1 Tochter
День добровольного вступления: 9.1.45	Tag der freiwilligen Meldung u. Aufnahme: 9.1.45
В какую часть: Штаб ВВС ВСНР	In welchen Verband: Stab d. Lw. d. Str.-Kr. d. V.R.
Время принятия присяги:	Vereidigt am:
Список №:	Listen-Nr.:
Запасная часть: OR-Propaganda-Ausb.-u. E.-Komp. d. Lwkw. Neuern/Bohmerwald	Ersatztruppenteil: OR-Propaganda-Ausb.-u. E.-Komp. d. Lwkw. Neuern/Bohmerwald
Военное образование, специальность: хирург	Militärische Ausbildung: Chirurg
3	3

Fig. 4. Pages from the ROA soldier book, issued to V.A. Levitsky (1945).  
House for the Russian Diaspora archives. F.114. Op.1 D.1. L. 1 ob. — 2; 2 ob. — 3.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Text on the picture:

A Soldier's Book.

Identity card number 335. Rank (see page 5):

Lieutenant-Colonel.

Surname: D. Levitsky

First name: Vladimir

Medallion: 314

Blood type:

Time of birth (year and month): 1886, 25.12

Ethnicity: Russian

Civil specialty: university professor

Marital status: Married

Number of Children: 1 daughter

Voluntary admission day: 9.1.45

In which unit: the People of Russia Air Force Headquarters

Time of taking the oath:

List No:

Reserve unit: OR-Propaganda-Ausb.-u. E.-komp. N.Lukw.

Neuern/Bohmerwald.

Military training, specialty: surgeon.

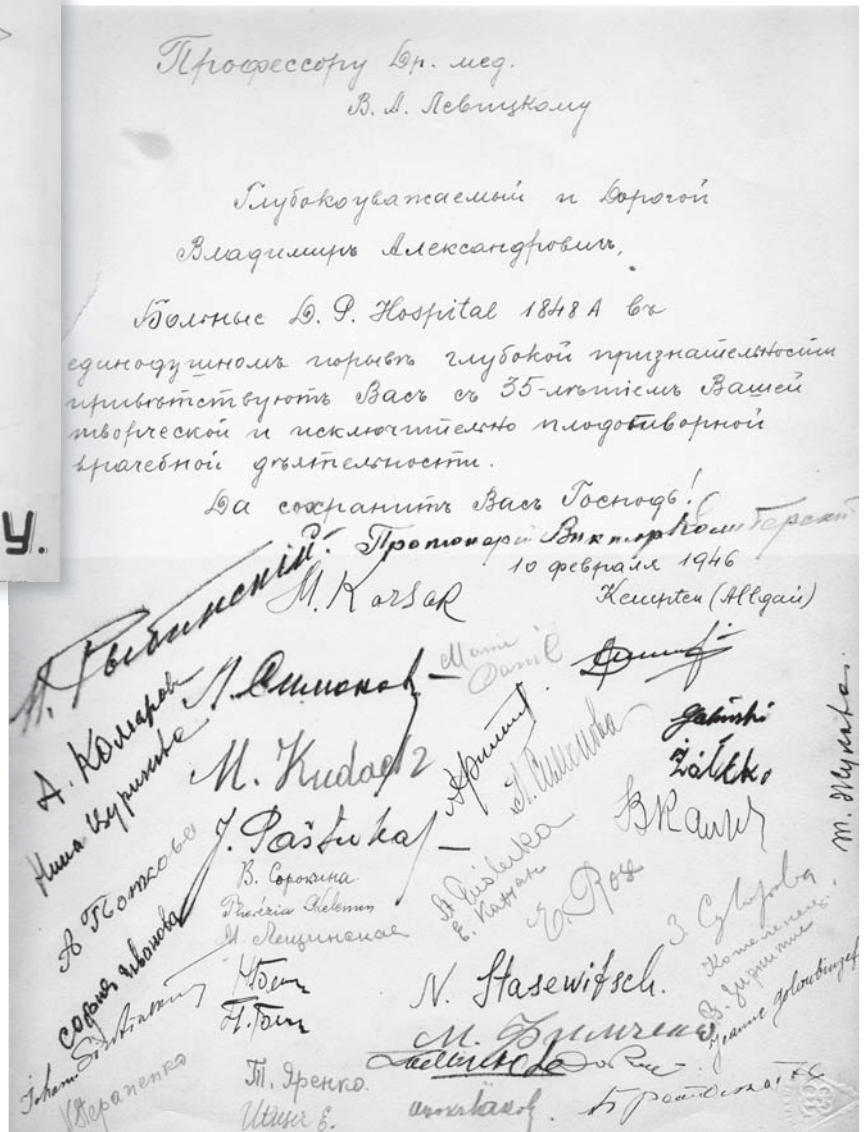


Fig. 5. Congratulatory address to V.A. Levitsky towards the 35th anniversary of his medical activity from his patients: a – title, b – text.

House for the Russian Diaspora archives. F.114. Op.1. D.3. L.1, 4.<sup>21</sup>

From February to July 1946, Levitsky found himself in the camp for displaced persons, in the American occupation zone. He was listed as a professor and medical doctor in hospital number

1848 in Kempten (Bavaria).<sup>22</sup> At this time, his colleagues (fig. 5, a–b), nurses and patients congratulated him on the 35th anniversary of medical practice:

“Dearest Vladimir Aleksandrovich! Nurses of DP Hospital 1848A heartily greet you at the occasion of the 35th anniversary of your glorious medical labors. Combining a great God-given

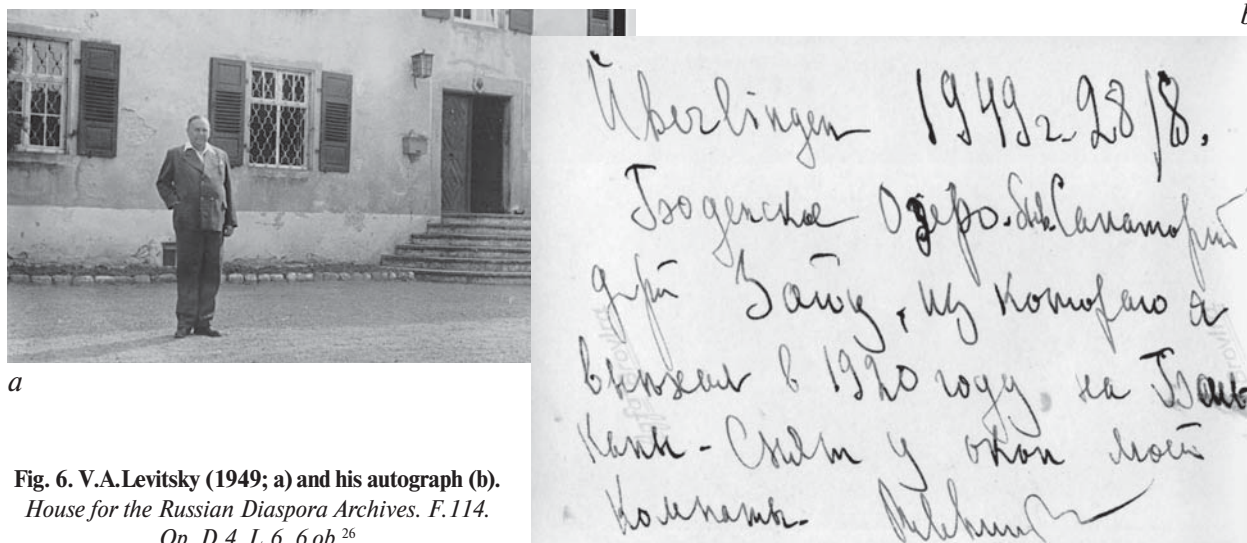
<sup>21</sup> Text on the picture:

To Prof. V.A. Levitsky, MD

Dearest Vladimir Aleksandrovich, the patients of DP Hospital 1848A, in a unanimous burst of deep gratitude send their greetings to you on the occasion of the 35th anniversary of your creative and exceptionally fruitful medical endeavors. May God save you! February 10, 1946 Kempten (Allgäu) (signed: Archpriest Victor [Kolitersky], N. Rybinsky, A. Komarov, Nina Tsurikova, A. Potkova, Sofya Ivanova, L. Simonov, V. Sorokin, M. Leshchinskaya, T. Yarenko, Perapenko, Z. Suvorova, Kozhelenets, V. Zirnitits, M. Fimchenko, T. Žulová, then illegible.)

<sup>22</sup> The authors do not possess reliable information regarding whether Levitsky defended his doctoral thesis on the territory of Yugoslavia. But that is how he was called, and how his status was determined by colleagues and coworkers. We can assume that this is not a scientific title, but rather one indicative of his position, such as are quite common in the West and in our time.





**Fig. 6. V.A. Levitsky (1949; a) and his autograph (b).**  
House for the Russian Diaspora Archives. F.114.  
Op. D.4. L.6, 6 ob.<sup>26</sup>

talent, profound scientific knowledge and an extensive practice, you are an adornment to Russian medicine, and your creative method of work is an excellent school for your assistants.

Especially, we are happy to note that you always hold the sacred traditions of Russian doctors which were bequeathed by the ever memorable N.I. Pirogov.

In collaboration with you, all of this always transforms our hard work into inspired service for the benefit of the suffering and is a bright illumination of a tortuous path of sisters of mercy (signed: Olga Alskneva,<sup>23</sup> Lyudmila Otlinf, Nina Yarskaya, Mihailova Tatyana, Lisa Treibich, T. Burachek, Elena Lupinovich, illegible<sup>24</sup>).

On 18 December 1947 Vladimir Aleksandrovich Levitsky received a letter of blessing, signed by the metropolitan of Berlin and Germany, Seraphim<sup>25</sup>:

“A charter of blessing. We call upon God’s

all-powerful blessing upon Vladimir Levitsky, a parishioner of St. Panteleimon church in the Orthodox Diocese in the town of Kempten, Germany, as a reward for his efforts and sacrifices for the benefit of the saints of the Orthodox Christian Church.

We testify this by the present letter with our own handwritten signature and seal.

Metropolitan Seraphim of Berlin and Germany.

Given in the diocesan city of Berlin, in the year of Our Lord 1947, the month of December, 18th day. No. 2690.”<sup>27</sup>

In the Levitsky Collection, stored in the archives of the Solzhenitsyn Home of Russian Diaspora, are photographs dated January 1948 (Kempten) and August 1949 (Überlingen) (fig. 6, a–b).<sup>28</sup>

Dr. V.A. Levitsky, who had radical anti-Bolshevik views,<sup>29</sup> did not consider the possibility of the return to the USSR. From the European DP camp, he moved to the United States.

Dr. Levitsky’s career in America was not successful. About the American period of Levitsky’s life, the honorary donor of the House

<sup>23</sup> His surname apparently had two alternate spellings: “Levitsky” and “Levitzky.” In the description of the HRD Fund 114, presented on the official website, it says “Levitsky.” See: <http://www.bfrz.ru/?mod=arhiv&search>

<sup>24</sup> HRD Archives. F. 114. Op. 1. D. 3. L. 1–8.

<sup>25</sup> Metropolitan Seraphim (born Karl Georg Albert Låde; June 4, 1883, Leipzig, Germany – died September 14, 1950, Solln, near Munich) – Bishop of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR), of German origin. Beginning in 1938, Metropolitan of Berlin and Germany.

<sup>26</sup> *Text on the picture:* Überlingen 1949 28/8 Lake Constance. Former Dr Zajc Sanatorium, from which I left in 1920 to the Balkans – shot by the windows of my room.

<sup>27</sup> HRD Archives. F. 114. Op. 1. D. 3. L. 10.

<sup>28</sup> Überlingen – a city in Germany, the regional center, located in the state of Baden-Württemberg. Subject to the administrative district of Tübingen. Part of the Lake Constance area.

<sup>29</sup> This is evidenced by his extremely harsh statements. See: HRD Archive. F. 114. Op. 1. D. 2. L. 24.

for the Russian Diaspora N.S. Tregubov<sup>30</sup> stated that his parents knew Levitsky: his father, a doctor, was acquainted with him, and his mother worked for him as a nurse in Pančevo. N.S. Tregubov's father left in 1953 for the United States and then met with V.A. Levitsky. N.S. Tregubov heard that Dr. Levitsky did not practice in the US; they said that in the later years of his life he could no longer operate without having to drink a glass of vodka before the operation, because he allegedly had shaking hands, but "then he brilliantly performed the operations" and "he died, loved by all who knew him".<sup>31</sup>

V.A. Levitsky died on 4 April 1953 in the US and is buried in Elizabeth (NJ) at the Rose Hill Cemetery.<sup>32</sup>

On 28 March 1954 "The New Russian Word"<sup>33</sup> published Levitsky's obituary, authored by Dr. Helena Zhern [14, p. 96].

Modern historians of science and medicine use the term "Russian medical diaspora". According to various researchers, the diaspora community may total several thousand people, forming one of the most popular and numerous strata of Russians abroad.

Medical scientists in exile were able to create a system of clinics and laboratories that were a part of various medical schools and institutions. The demand for the professional medical knowledge and skills of the subjects of the former Russian Empire in the 1920s–1940s was high, especially

in the countries of the Balkan Peninsula and the KSCS. Belgrade, Zagreb, Novi Sad and Pančevo were centers of the practical medical knowledge and professional activity of Russian doctors. One important center was a medical facility in Pančevo, which at various times was called by different names: Russian Hospital, Russian Sanatorium Hospital, Pančevo Sanatorium Hospital of Russian Red Cross in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, Russian Red Cross Sanatorium of Knight King Alexander I the Unifier. Its changing names did not affect the main activities of this wonderful medical establishment, which for many years was headed by V.A. Levitsky.

Biographies of many Russian émigrés in general can be "blank spots" in history. For historians of science any references to the life and work of Russians in foreign countries are important.<sup>34</sup>

V.A. Levitsky was to some degree fortunate: among the things recently donated to the Solzhenitsyn House for the Russian Diaspora by Russian emigrants of the second wave and descendants of those of the first, was his small collection.<sup>35</sup> Levitsky's Fund was systematized and processed and became available to researchers only in late February 2017.

One aspect of the historical development of Russian medicine is a high degree of continuity among existing scientific schools and loyalty to the idea of serving the public, even in difficult historical and geopolitical conditions. In Russian historiography, considerable attention is paid to the phenomenon of Russian emigration, an important aspect of which were emigrant scholars. Many of the emigrants were those whose vocation was medicine. One of them was V.A. Levitsky – a graduate of the Medical Faculty of the IMU, a First World War veteran, an emigrant, a brilliant surgeon, a medical administrator among Russian emigrants who

<sup>30</sup> Nikita Sergeevich Tregubov (New City, USA) came from a medical family; he was an MD, an American military physician, a retired colonel, chairman of the Russian-American cultural and educational society "Otrada" (Rejoicement), one of Meshchersky Princes, honorary donor of HRD and a long-term member of the "Books for Russia" committee. His wife, Maria Kirillovna Tregubova (née Neklyudova) (New City, USA), was born in Belgrade, Yugoslavia and educated in Rome, where she graduated from the Faculty of Mathematics. Successor to an ancient noble family, she was a descendant of Paul Golenishchev-Kutuzov, the governor-general of Saint Petersburg (1826–1830). She was an honorary donor to HRD and a long-term member of the "Books for Russia" committee. The HRD Archives received V.A. Levitsky's documents and memorabilia from the Tregubov couple (USA) on November 9, 2009, according to an act of donation number 56.

<sup>31</sup> From N.S. Tregubov's response to the authors.

<sup>32</sup> HRD Archives, F. 114, Op. 1. D. 4. L. 1–1 ob.

<sup>33</sup> New York, 1954, March 28, number 15310.

<sup>34</sup> It is no coincidence that many books on immigration and immigrants of different waves bear the following titles: "The fate of the 1920–1930's generation in emigration," "Unnoticed Generation", "Wild historical period", "Fate of the Russian academic emigration to Europe", etc.

<sup>35</sup> Among his personal documents are his ROA Colonel book, a few photographs, poems of various years, as well as greeting addresses of his colleagues from the hospital in Pančevo and the DP camp, and the silver cup holder that Dr. Levitsky kept from the days of the First World War.

settled in the KSCS. He was one of the active organizers of the Russian hospital-sanatorium in Pančevo, which was one of the major medical institutions in the country in which he worked as a chief surgeon and which he led beginning in 1927. It was in Yugoslavia that V.A. Levitsky

fully manifested his gifts as a brilliant medical manager, a surgeon and a public figure. The example of his work in Yugoslavia shows the effect that the Russian medical diaspora has had on the formation of the healthcare system in the KSCS and then Yugoslavia.

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