

On the Biography of Professor and Psychiatrist Anatoly Kotsovsky (1864–1937)

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Presents materials about the life and work of A. D. Kotsovsky, a psychiatrist and assistant professor of Novorossiysk University and professor of the Odessa Medical Institute. In 1922, Kotsovsky emigrated to Romania (Bessarabia), and as a result his biography was incomplete and contained numerous errors. An attempt has been made to fill gaps and correct inaccuracies, primarily related to the Odessa period of life.

Keywords: *Kotsovsky, Russian scientific emigration, the history of psychiatry*

The publication "Memorable and anniversary dates in the history of medicine in 2014," prepared by the National Research Institute of Public Health, rightly included information about Anatoly Dmitrievich Kotsovsky. [1, p. 61] However, during the Soviet period, his biography did not attract the attention of medical historians, as in 1922 he emigrated from the Soviet Union to Bessarabia (a part of Romania at the time). Only Moldovan historians wrote about Professor Kotsovsky – naturally focusing on the Moldovan period of his life and work. [2-3] In connection with this there were inaccuracies in the accounts of his life. In the post-Soviet era, biographies of Kotsovsky are beginning to appear in biographical reference books, both in Russia and in Ukraine. [4; 5, p. 359-360] The purpose of this publication is to record into scientific discourse previously unpublished archival materials that provide a more full account of the activities of Professor Kotsovsky and eliminate errors and incorrect statements.

Kotsovsky was born June 19 (July 1), 1864, in the village of Tyrnovo in the Soroksky region of Bessarabia (now Moldova Donduşeni District) into a family of an Orthodox hereditary nobleman. In his employment records Kotsovsky recorded that neither he himself nor his parents had an inherited or acquired estate. [6, p. 2 ob.] We also note that the spelling of his name in Russian was "Katsovsky," but later, apparently following the example of his brother, Nikolai Dmitrievich Kotsovsky (1853-1910), a professor of the Mining

Institute of the Empress Catherine the Great, Anatoly changed it to "Kotsovsky."

Kotsovsky received his secondary education in an Odessa non-classical secondary school, from which he graduated in 1883. He wanted to go to university and in order to do so he had to pass a final exam at a Chisinau gymnasium. Only after that, in 1884, was he able to enroll in the natural science department of the physics and mathematical faculty of the University of Novorossiisk. Four years later, Anatoly Kotsovsky graduated from university in Odessa with the title of candidate. At that time many natural scientists were not content with a single diploma and continued their education in the medical faculty, especially given that in this case, they were immediately enrolled into third year. There was no medical faculty at the Novorossiysk University in those years, so Kotsovsky moved to Kharkov. In 1888-1891 he studied at Kharkov University's medical faculty. [7]

Pathologist Vladimir Platonovich Krylov (1841-1906) had a special influence on Kotsovsky as a student. Later, Kotsovsky wrote: "If a school has a well-known fixed world view, in the course of anatomical thinking, the method of analysis of the object and postmortem autopsy technique – then the deceased, of course, created a school; but, like the ancient Greek teachers, Vladimir Platonovich [Krylov] did not record in the annals all of the provisions and abstracts of his teachings."¹ [8, p. 357] Kotsovsky counted himself

¹ Hereinafter citations have been used retaining their original formulation.

among Professor Krylov's school. He recalled his student years: "When I was sketching out these lines and my pen with weak strokes tries to draw a figure of the late teacher, the best memories of the pores of life, when the mind and heart was beating with a single desire of abstract truth, stand out as particularly vivid. ... I remember a small, poor autopsy room at the Alexandrovskaya Hospital, cramped and stuffy with a crowded audience and among all these memories there is a bright image of the person who taught us to find the signs of life that recently flowed in the half-decayed bodies. Who on these disparate, dissected parts of the human body taught us to form the whole idea of a living organism." [8, p. 363-364]

His first published work was created at Professor Krylov's department of pathological anatomy. Students of the last course – fifth year – were, according to the university charter in 1884, required to submit to the teacher of pathological anatomy a description of the work carried out on anatomical and histological examination of a corpse or samples, extracted surgically, with a disease history and the results found via the study of pathological changes. Some of these mandatory postmortem studies were edited and then printed as a collection of works titled "School Chronicle" using Krylov's personal funds. From 1890 to 1895 inclusive, the professor published a series of 20 of these collections, which contained a wealth of interesting and scientifically anatomopathological casuistic materials. The benefits provided by the School Chronicle to higher education were that it accustomed young science adepts to independent literary work, forced a deeper and more conscious look at research, awakened in them an interest in scientific medicine and promoted their scientific development. [9] In the fifth series of Krylov's School Chronicle, (in 1891) there was an article titled "Intoxicatio oxycarbonica" by the student Kotsovsky.

It is no coincidence that, after receiving a diploma as a doctor, Kotsovsky decided to defend a dissertation on pathological anatomy. He prepared it under the guidance of the Head of the Department of Pathological Anatomy at the St. Petersburg Military Medical Academy Professor K.N. Vinogradov (1847-1906), who, along with Professor Krylov, was a disciple of St. Petersburg pathologist Professor M.M. Rudnev

(1837-1878), who belonged to an international school of the great R. Virchow (1821-1902).

Dr. Kotsovsky investigated changes in the peripheral nervous system as a result of poisoning. [10] Professor Vinogradov suggested this dissertation topic. His successful defense of the dissertation was held at the St. Petersburg Military Medical Academy and on 7/19 May 1894, Kotsovsky was awarded the degree of Doctor of Medicine.

In 1895, Kotsovsky joined the psychiatric department at the Odessa City Hospital as an intern. The birth of his son occurred at this time – Dmitry (1/13 January 1896 – not earlier than 1951), who became a physiologist and gerontologist. [5, p. 360] His wife was home teacher Leonida Ivanovna, born Leontovich (Orthodox). [6, p. 3]

On February 21 / March 5, 1898, Dr. Kotsovsky entered service as an acting intern at the Chisinau District Hospital with public service rights, but on 4/16 June 1898 he was appointed director of the Kostyuzhenskoy Psychiatric Hospital at the Bessarabia Zemstva District, which was located in the Chisinau district village of Kostyuzheny (now a psychiatric hospital at the city of Kody in the municipality of Chisinau). During his time in this post, Kotsovsky rose to the rank of State Councillor (1909) and received numerous acknowledgments: from the Bessarabian provincial zemstvo district assembly – "for productive activities, not only in his specialization, but also in saving zemstvo funds" (1906); from the provincial zemstvo district council – "for fruitful and useful service in the interests of the zemstvo for nine years" (1907) and "for arduous and very useful 10-year work as director of the Kostyuzhenskaya Hospital for the mentally ill." (1908) The Bessarabian provincial zemstvo assembly expressed "deep gratitude for the excellent conditions created by the special work of A.D. Kotsovsky of the zemstvo patronage at the Kostyuzhenskaya Hospital, as well as for correct hospital management and particularly attentive medical supervision" (1909). [6, p. 3 ob.-4 ob.]

This period of Kotsovsky's life and work included his research on the distribution of pellagra in Bessarabia, including pellagrous psychosis. [11] He studied pellagra's pathological changes [12-14] and specifically investigated

variations in the nervous system [15] and the morphology of blood in cases of pellagra. [16] As a result of his microscopic studies a new method of staining nerve fibers of the central nervous system was proposed. [17]

While working at the Kostyuzhenskaya Hospital, Kotsovsky carried out a thorough review of the charities for the mentally ill in the Russian Empire, which remains a valuable source in the history of Russian psychiatry. [18-20]

In 1915, a vacancy opened for a senior doctor at the Odessa City Psychiatric Hospital, which was founded in 1900 through the separating off of the psychiatric department of the Odessa City Hospital into an independent administrative unit. Kotsovsky decided to take up the new job and moved from the suburbs of Chisinau to Odessa, the fourth most populous city of the Empire at the time (after St. Petersburg, Moscow and Warsaw). By resolution of the Odessa city council, he was appointed to the post on 1/14 March 1916, and by the decision of the Bessarabian provincial zemstvo assembly, he was assigned a life-long allowance of 1,500 rubles a year, while as senior doctor of the Odessa City Psychiatric Hospital (a position he held up to 1921 inclusive) his salary was 4,200 rubles a year.

In the same year of 1916, Kotsovsky became assistant professor at the University of Novorossiysk. The procedure for his election to this position was as follows. On April 20 / May 3, 1916, the medical faculty of the University of Novorossiysk received a petition from Dr. Kotsovsky for their approval to grant him the title of assistant professor for psychiatry at the University of Novorossiysk. In the submission, his biography listed 31 scientific works and "individual examples" and stated: the professors assigned to evaluate his work were A.V. Korsh, V.N. Obraztsov, V.V. Voronin, D.P. Kishensky, N.N. Kostyamin, L.I. Uskov, N.M. Popov, A.F. Mankovsky and assistant professor M.M. Tizengauzen. Upon the receipt of the reviewers' comments and after they were presented at a meeting of the medical faculty on December 9/22, Kotsovsky was allowed to read a first trial lecture on a topic chosen by the graduate student himself, at the next meeting of the faculty – December 16/29, 1916. Kotsovsky's first trial lecture ("On the issue of localization of the brain on the basis of one clinical case") was

found to be satisfactory and the graduate student was relieved from having to read a second lecture on a topic chosen by the faculty. At the same meeting, the faculty of medicine held a closed ballot using black and white balls and Kotsovsky received 14 white and one black (the board of the faculty of medicine were all professors and only they took part in the vote). On the basis of this, the faculty decided to: consider Dr. Kotsovsky as approved for the post among assistant professors of psychiatry at the University of Novorossiysk and applied to the trustee of the Odessa School District to approve the position. [6, p. 26-26 ob.] The trustees confirmed Kotsovsky as a lecturer from the date of his approval by the faculty.

In February 1917, Assistant Professor Kotsovsky headed the department of psychiatry at the Odessa Higher Female Medical Courses. Heads of these courses' departments did not receive the title of professor, so the statement that he became a professor in 1916 is a fallacy. [2]

Only in 1920 – after the establishment of Soviet power in Odessa, when the Odessa Higher Female Medical Courses were merged with the medical faculty and became a separate institution, the Odessa State Medical Academy (since 1921 renamed the Odessa Medical Institute, the present day Odessa National Medical University) – did Kotsovsky become a professor. In Soviet times, he was also a professor of psychiatry at the Odessa Clinical Institute (1920-1922), which had been created for the professional development of physicians, and the director of the "pedological institute." [21]

In the difficult post-war years, devastation, hunger and fear of the Red Terror (in 1919 in Odessa therapist Professor S.V. Levashov was shot without trial and awaiting the same fate in the dungeons of the Cheka were professors and therapists S.S. Gruzdev and A.I. Shcherbakov), the uncertainty of the era of the "Beginning of the Unknown Century" (K. Paustovsky) – the whole atmosphere of the time pushed intellectuals to look for an opportunity to leave the Soviet Union.

On January 28, 1922, Professor Kotsovsky filed an application addressed to the rector to allow him a two-month vacation overseas for treatment of "severe angina pectoris." [6, p. 14-15 ob.] The decision of the board of the main committee for specialized scientific and technical and vocational

education of the People's Commissariat of Education of the Ukrainian SSR of February 22, 1922, granted him this. ("Professor Kotsovsky of the Odessa Medical Institute is taking a two-month-long vacation abroad for treatment." [6, p. 46]) At the request of Kotsovsky, the Odessa Medical Institute gave him a certificate confirming that he was going on vacation, but thus "the premises he occupies at 36 Zhukovskogo Street, Apt. 4, rooms No. 3 and 4 should remain vacant for him, Professor Kotsovsky, without the right by any strangers to occupy these rooms." [6, p. 19 ob.] (The present-day number of this house remains the same. [22]) Kotsovsky lived with his wife ("his dependent wife Leonida Ivanovna, serving her husband without servants." [6, p. 21])

The psychiatric clinic, which Professor Kotsovsky headed, was transferred to Professor Obratsov during his vacation abroad. [6, p. 20-21 ob.]

On July 24, 1922, Kotsovsky and his wife left Odessa on vacation [6, l. 11], and on December 1,

1923, the rector of the Odessa Medical Institute, wrote that "his whereabouts (*Kotsovsky*. – *author of the article*.) are currently unknown by the medical institute." [6, p. 47]

Kotsovsky decided not to return to Odessa, and settled in Chisinau, then part of Romania. He was engaged in private practice, opened the Sanatorium of Professor Kotsovsky for Nervous Patients (now at Bldg. 2 on the corner of Lazo and Kegelnichanu) and in 1925-1930 he published the Bulletin of the Doctors Trade Union in Chisinau. He knew Russian literature well and, being a good speaker, lectured on the work of A.S. Pushkin and L.N. Tolstoy. That is why in 1933, Kotsovsky was invited to provide opening remarks at three evening events of Igor Vasilevich Severyanin, which took place on March 17 and 31 and April 28 when Severyanin stopped in Chisinau while traveling from Warsaw to Belgrade. [23]

Kotsovsky died on February 27, 1937, and was buried at the central cemetery in Chisinau.

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