

Patients of Russian Pre-World War I Homoeopathy

Alexander Kotok



Introduction

IN ANALYSING THE TOPIC OF HOMOEOPATHIC PATIENTS in pre-World War I Russia, it should be noted that homoeopathy in Russia had a strongly pronounced character of domestic medicine. The spread of homoeopathy in the Russian Empire from the 1830s was connected with the severe lack of medical staff, especially in the countryside and in the provincial cities, and not with the unsatisfactory conditions of medicine of that period, as was the case in other countries. Thus, homoeopathy in Russia found a rich soil for its further expansion mainly in the villages and in the small provincial towns. When homoeopaths established strong connections with high-ranking officials, the nobility and the high clergy at the end of the 1860s, this enabled the founding of homoeopathic societies, first in St Petersburg and after the 1890s in large Russian and Ukrainian metropolises. This paper will review some main supporters, providers and customers of homoeopathic treatment in Russia without claiming to deal in detail with Russian 'homoeopathic patients'.

Homoeopathic Treatment in the Russian Army

IT IS NOT BY CHANCE that the soldiers and officers of the Russian army, the subject of particular attention and care of the Russian tsars, were often also the subject of homoeopathic treatment.¹ The Tsar Nicholas I (1796–1855) and his brother Grand Duke Constantine (1779–1831) gave

their benevolent attention to homoeopathy, having seen examples of the successful homoeopathic treatment of military staff. Most probably Nicholas I first heard of homoeopathy while observing the treatment of cadets of the Naval College in Oranienbaum, near Petersburg, performed by the Prussian Dr E. Schering (d. 1864/65) in 1825, although Schering himself called his treatment 'specific'. According to Schering's assertion, Nicholas I was so satisfied with the treatment that he even proposed 'to promote it decidedly'.² However, at that time the 'promotion' of homoeopathy under Nicholas I, even when called 'specific treatment', did not go through.³

Nevertheless, some 25 years later, homoeopathy appeared again at the Russian Tsar's court with the German Dr Martin Mandt (1800–58), the founder of the so-called 'atomistic' system of treatment. Describing those events, Dr Bojanus wrote:

The Mandt's treatment during the epidemic of cholera in 1848, and later the similar treatment in some military hospitals, had had such a success that the Emperor Nicholas who had never been indifferent to the treatment of soldiers, became interested in this method. He ordered the translation of Mandt's brochure, in which Mandt's theory was set forth, from German into Russian, and had it distributed to management of all the military hospitals as well as to all the staff-physicians. The Tsar's will was carried out. However, for the zealots of the purity of medical education the 'atomistic doctrine' and homoeopathy were the same, hence it goes without saying that this idea could provoke neither approval nor encouragement ... As soon as the Emperor died [in 1855], both the authority of Mandt and his method of treatment disappeared. Moreover, the death of the Emperor was ascribed to the Mandt's groundless treatment ...⁴

Probably, Bojanus was not aware that the sympathy of Nicholas I towards 'atomistic treatment' went further than ordering the translation and the distribution of Mandt's writings. A prominent Russian physician Dr Yacov Chistovich (1820–85) left his diary in which he strongly criticised Nicholas I and his son, the Emperor Alexander II, for their 'blind atomistic dispositions'. According to the diary, Nicholas I had ordered the establishment of an 'Exemplary Hospital' where atomistic treatment was offered by Mandt and his closest Russian followers from 1853 to 1856. The virtual blindness of the deceased (Nicholas I) extended to such a rate 'that he brought in his pockets boxes with atomistic powders to guards' hospitals'.⁵ Chistovich, like some of his contemporaries, charged Mandt with poisoning the Emperor.

Returning to the 1820s and to military staff as patients for homoeopathy, a brother of Nicholas I, Constantine, had enjoyed the

services of his physician-in-ordinary, the French Dr Jean Bigel (b. 1769), and then entrusted him in 1829 with responsibility for 500 pupils at the school for cantonists⁶ in Warsaw where the treatment offered was exclusively homoeopathic.⁷ The third brother in this Tsar's family, Grand Duke Mikhail (1798–1848), having heard of the success of the treatment provided by the German physician Dr Herrmann, (d. 1836) who had arrived in St Petersburg in 1826 from Saxony, did not remain indifferent toward this new system. After obtaining the agreement of Nicholas I, in 1829 he invited Dr Herrmann to experiment with his method of treatment in the military hospital in the small town of Toulchin in the Podol district of the Ukraine. The experiment was continued in the St Petersburg land military hospital in the same year and, finally, was recognised by the Medical Department at the Ministry of Interior as unsatisfactory.⁸

Most probably, the Russian military authorities had no serious objections concerning homoeopathy. The land and naval hospitals were subordinated to the Military Department and not to the Ministry of Interior, like civil medical institutions. Thus, the military hospitals might adopt this or other systems of treatment *de facto* without prior compulsory approval from the high-ranking medical officials, as was inescapable in the case of a civil hospital. Although performing homoeopathic treatment in any state institution without prior approval of the senior physician had been prohibited by the Decision of the Medical Council at the Ministry of Interior in 1831, the higher commanders of the army ignored this law. This situation was especially evident in the provinces, where the provision of the hospitals with physicians had often been problematic. The story of Czech Dr Ivan Pribyl' (1772–1866), who had graduated from Vienna University and arrived in Russia in 1808 to work under contract with the Russian government and remained there till his death, may be seen as an example. When Dr Pribyl' was working in different military hospitals in the Caucasus, he had become interested in the law of similars and tested it in practice while treating fevers and plague in soldiers with arsenic. He was rewarded with the Order of Vladimir of Fourth Class for this successful treatment. As Chief Physician in the Neftlugi (now a district of Tbilisi) military hospital (1822–49) Dr Pribyl' practised homoeopathy openly, having learned it from books and periodicals to which he subscribed from abroad. Moreover, all Russian governor-generals of that period in the Caucasus, starting with the first, General Alexey Ermolov (1777–1861), and members of their families, were treated homoeopathically by Dr Pribyl'. While seeing Pribyl's success, General Alexey Vel'iaminov (1788–1832), the second in importance after General Ermolov in the Russian military administration in the Caucasus,

proposed that all the patients should be treated homoeopathically in the Neftlugi military hospital. Pribyl' rejected this proposal on the grounds that only he was familiar with homoeopathy and, thus, was afraid of discrediting the method if applied in the whole hospital.⁹

Another homoeopathic doctor, Dr Nicholas Ashurkov (1824–95), who headed the Lutsk military hospital (1880–91), openly used homoeopathic treatments. The soldiers who were his patients loved him and called him 'father'.¹⁰ Dr Ivan Nadezhdin (1823–c.1900) had been the chief physician in the military hospital in Frateshty in Moldova and, again, used homoeopathy before he retired to practise homoeopathy in Kiev, being the Chairman of the Kiev Society of the Followers of Homoeopathy from its establishment in 1889. It is known that the translator into Russian of the fifth edition of the *Organon*, Dr Vladimir Sorokin (1830–93), a naval physician, also treated with homoeopathy during his military service without interference. As indirect proof of a positive attitude by the military staff, especially of higher ranks, towards homoeopathy, many generals and colonels were members of homoeopathic societies, both metropolitan and provincial, whilst Colonel, later General, Nicholas Fedorovsky (1837–c.1918), the founder of several homoeopathic societies (Kiev, Chernigov, Poltava, Christ-Loving Society of Self-Help in Diseases) had been the chief Russian lay propagandiser of homoeopathy from the 1880s.

Railway Staff as Supporters and Patients

THE STORY OF THE ST PETERSBURG Charitable Society of the Followers of Homoeopathy, founded in 1881, is useful in understanding who were the most powerful supporters of homoeopathy, who were the patients for homoeopathic treatment and what obstacles were put in the way of homoeopaths. One of the founders of the Society and its Board Chairman from 1881 to 1887, Dmitry Zhuravsky (1821–91) fostered, from the very beginning, a benevolent attitude toward the practice of homoeopathy. He was a talented railway engineer and laureate of the prestigious Demidov Award in 1855 and, at the same time, the head of the technical department at the Ministry of Communications. He persuaded Admiral Constantine Possiet (1819–89), the Minister of Communications from 1874 to 1888 and a member of the State Council, together with his wife Rosalia, to participate in the activities of the Society. The Admiral was appointed an honorary trustee of the Hospital dedicated to the memory of Alexander II, whilst Rosalia Possiet was chosen to be an honorary member of the Society in 1883 'for her outstanding services rendered to the affair of homoeopathy.'

The two subsequent Ministers of Communications, Krivoshein (1888–95) and Khil'ko (1895–1905) were also adherents of homoeopathy and were elected honorary members of the Society. Among other 'railway members' of the Society were the prominent engineer, Academician Stanislav Kerbedz (1810–99), who had built bridges over the Neva in St Petersburg and the Visla in Warsaw, and a former railway engineer, senator Peter Fadeev. Yet the most famous of the Society's railwaymen was its honorary member, Sergey Witte (1842–1915), who made the first steps in his career as a promising young railway engineer.¹¹ In the 1880s and 1890s, the Society permanently enjoyed the highest donations which strengthened both its financial and social position. The 'railway members' of the Society provided their poorest railway workers with free homoeopathic treatment, while referring them to the out-patients' clinic of the Society.

After the assassination of the Tsar Alexander II on March 1, 1881, Russian railway engineers collected 58,000 roubles to build a hospital in his memory. As this sum was insufficient for the founding of a hospital, the Temporary Committee for Collection discussed different proposals and decided that the most worthy was that from the St Petersburg Charitable Society of the Followers of Homoeopathy. The Society pledged to build a hospital with 25 beds of which six would be designated exclusively for railway staff free of charge. Railway staff would have preference for the rest when needing to be hospitalised. The preliminary agreement between the Committee and the Society was transmitted to the Ministry of Communications for approval. When consulted, the pro-allopathic medical authorities strongly resisted this proposal as 'contradicting the initial project'. The Committee, in turn, did not accept this criticism as it had not been defined beforehand whether the proposed hospital should be allopathic or homoeopathic. While feeling that a mutually acceptable decision could not be achieved, the Ministry passed this discussion to the Board of Ministers. The Board, experiencing considerable pressure from both sides, passed the problem to the Tsar Alexander III. On October 18, 1885 the Highest Assent to open a homoeopathic hospital was received. General Otton Richter (1830–1908), an honorary member of the Society since 1884, and a head (1881–95) of the 'Commission for Requests submitted to the Highest Name', recommended that the Tsar should agree to this proposal. Commenting on the decision to pass the money to homoeopaths, the weekly periodical *Vrach* (issued in 1880–1901), a flagship of the Russian school of medicine, remarked:

We can understand that if the high-ranking persons in the Ministry of Communications do worship homoeopathy, there will always be a sufficient

number of those railway engineers able to believe in homoeopathy. But we cannot understand why at the very beginning of the collection [of money] no one announced that the money will be used to establish a homoeopathic hospital? One may guess that among the engineers there would be found many who would prefer a more practical use of the money, and more fit to the level of their mental development.¹²

Nevertheless, this was only part of the affair as the homoeopaths were in need of a plot of land in the centre of the city to establish the hospital. They approached the Tsar to cede a plot at Litseiskaia (now Rentgen) Street. At the end of the 1880s the position of homoeopathy at the Tsar's court had been consolidated by attracting Rear-Admiral at the suite of His Emperor Majesty, Vladimir Basargin, and a General of the General Staff, Dmitry Tsikeln (both elected as members of the Board of the Society in 1888), as well as by the appointment of Nicholas Durnovo (1834–1903), an honorary member of the Society since 1886, as Minister of Interior in 1889. Minister Durnovo submitted, with his support, the request of homoeopaths to the Tsar and the needed plot was obtained. The hospital was built under the supervision of another supporter of homoeopathy, the prominent St Petersburg architect Pavel Suzor (1844–1919), an honorary member of the Society since 1899. It was officially opened on 19 April 1898.¹³

Provincial Healers and Distribution of Homoeopathic Drugs

AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE ACTIVITIES of Russian homoeopathic pharmacies, which were situated exclusively in large metropolitan cities, was the distribution of homoeopathic manuals and kits to their provincial customers. The geography of the delivery of homoeopathic medicines and manuals reflects both the enlargement of the borders of the Russian Empire and the spread of the influence of the central power throughout the provinces and the frontier areas. The most influential Russian homoeopathic pharmacy was at the St Petersburg Charitable Society of the Followers of Homoeopathy. When the pharmacy was opened in 1881 almost all its customers were inhabitants of St Petersburg. However, because of the efforts of the Society, which aimed at disseminating information on homoeopathy throughout Russia from 1883, more and more people from the provinces wrote to the pharmacy requesting kits and domestic manuals. The Orthodox missionaries in the Trans-Baikal areas in East Siberia, supported by the high local Church authorities, reportedly used homoeopathic drugs received from that pharmacy for the treatment

of the native population and, thereby, attracted it to Christianity.¹⁴ The pharmacy received requests for kits and manuals from the Russian military and civil staff in Bulgaria, where the Russian army had entered during the war with Turkey (in 1877), and from the lands in the Trans-Caspian areas conquered in the 1820s. Requests from Russian pilgrims from the Greek Mount Athos were also received.¹⁵

It was repeatedly mentioned in the reports delivered at the annual meetings of the Society in the 1880s and 1890s that the number of rural priests treating with homoeopathy and turning to the pharmacy was growing from year to year. Homoeopathy in the Russian rural localities had first been spread by landlords, especially during the epidemics of cholera and diphtheria, and, from the last quarter of the nineteenth century, mostly by the rural priests. While seeing the effect of homoeopathic treatment with their own eyes, priests advised each other to add physical treatment to the spiritual one.¹⁶ Thus, in 1900, the priest Georgy Akimov of the village Staro-Burukshinskoe in the Stavropol' district reported:

Two years ago, according to the advice of my neighbour priest, who had been practising homoeopathy for 18 years, I ordered from St Petersburg a homoeopathic kit and a book by Laurie 'Domestic homoeopathic medicine'. In order to make me acquainted with initial data on homoeopathic pharmacology, the neighbour presented me with 'Pharmacology' of Deriker.¹⁷ ... I had started to treat myself against haemorrhoids, later I began administering drugs to my parishioners. The rumour that 'the father' had some medicines for various diseases and many people benefited from that, spread quickly, not only in my parish, but also far away ...¹⁸

After demonstrating several examples of successful treatment, the priest concluded: 'I am calling on all my spiritual brethren: homoeopathy is not harmful, on the contrary, it would be worthy for all priests to carry out the treatment of their sick parishioners with homoeopathic medicines, which are more effective, more harmless and cheaper than allopathic ones.'¹⁹

The 'saint' Russian cleric, Feofan the Hermit (1815–94), Vasily Govorov in the outside world, wrote to one of his ecclesiastic friends in 1883: 'Accept my congratulations on obtaining a homoeopathic physician as well as a kit. All the diseases will now be checked. It will be especially useful for the baby. You will see it by yourself. You have asked my advice on how to take these medicines. I have many homoeopathic books, the prescriptions being different in different sources ...'²⁰ In a letter to another correspondent, Feofan wrote in the same spirit: 'I have heard that you are going to rely on homoeopathy. Fine! I hear that the grains help many people. They also take them from me and, it seems that they are helpful.

There are many books about this. In my opinion, the following are the best ... I enclose Aconitum and Belladonna, take it in turn. During the attacks [no explanation of which kind], take them every 1, 2, 3 hours ...'.²¹

With the abolition of serfdom (1861) and the introduction of the Zemstvo system of local self-government (1864), the landlords' role in the spread of homoeopathy in the rural localities was decreasing. Nevertheless, in many places until the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, the landlords had used homoeopathy to treat the peasants; not any more as thoughtful owners but as charitable rich neighbours. So, Count Alexander Sheremetiev, in the village of Ulianovka, established a homoeopathic out-patient clinic and hired a physician exclusively to offer help free of charge to the local peasants. Another landlord, Count P. Kapnist in the Poltava province in the Ukraine, personally treated the local peasants during diphtheria epidemics, reportedly with very good results. Evidence of this 'homoeopathic fashion' among the landlords can be found in literature. For example, Chemistry Professor Alexander Engelhardt (1832–93) wrote in 1873, when he was in exile for his political views in a remote village in the province of Smolensk:

There is a mistress here who treats with homoeopathic grains, with occasional success. Siddor [a peasant] and other peasants are persuaded that this mistress 'knows' and conjures on the grains. Many times I have tried to convince him that they [the grains] are simply homoeopathic medicines which can be bought and given when somebody becomes ill and that everybody treats with homoeopathy because it is not difficult, and requires no specific knowledge, but he has refused to change his mind. [In his opinion]: what kind of medicine is that? There is no taste or smell, [the medicine] being hardly felt in mouth – no, this is no medicine. No doubt, she 'conjures' on the grains. A feldsher gives medicines, either bitter or sour. This is a drug, and that one [given by the mistress] is the 'conjuring'.²²

Two points attract attention from this quotation. First of all, before regular homoeopathic propaganda started in the 1880s with the establishment of the St Petersburg Charitable Society of the Followers of Homoeopathy, Engelhardt states that 'everybody treats with homoeopathy'. Although it cannot be known what 'everybody' means, Engelhardt must have been a witness to many homoeopathic experiences in the locality. Secondly, Engelhardt's conviction that homoeopathic treatment is 'not difficult, and requires no specific knowledge' testifies that his own knowledge on homoeopathy was obviously superficial. He seemingly based his statement on his experience of seeing lay people being treated exclusively with homoeopathic remedies. In Anton Chekhov's 1885 novel *Simulianty*

(*Malingers*) the image of a similar noble woman, the wife of a General, treating peasants homoeopathically can be found. Hanging over her is a picture of a priest who had treated her and, thereby, had converted her to homoeopathy although, in the story, the treatment is performed with 'electro-homoeopathic drugs' by an Italian, Caesare Mattei (1809–76).²³ Although the real attitude of Anton Chekhov (1860–1904), a physician himself, towards homoeopathy is not known, some details omitted in the final version of the story testify that he was familiar both with the leading domestic homoeopathic manuals of that period and with the practice of homoeopathic pharmacies of distributing medicines by mail.²⁴

Rural healers, priests and landlords played an important role as disseminators of homoeopathic information throughout the rural intelligentsia, especially for those young provincial physicians, who kept their minds open and who were ready to learn new things. Indeed, it was not unusual that physicians made their first acquaintance with homoeopathy from lay-people, especially priests. Dr Koisevich, a Polish homoeopath of Kotsk, first heard of homoeopathy after receiving a small homoeopathic kit of 16 medicines and a manual as a gift from an official in St Petersburg.²⁵ Another Polish homoeopath, Dr Ferdinand Dlugoborsky (1821–94), first became interested in homoeopathy after seeing a woman being successfully treated by a Catholic priest.²⁶

The conversion to homoeopathy of the distinguished Russian homoeopath, Dr Pavel Soloviev (1843–1911), one of the founders of the St Petersburg Charitable Society of the Followers of Homoeopathy and the Chief Physician of the Alexander II Homoeopathic hospital in St Petersburg from 1898 to 1911, is illustrative. The first time he became interested in homoeopathy was when he was working as district physician (1872–75) in the Syzran' district of Samara province. He saw homoeopathic domestic manuals and medicines in use by the rural clergymen and landlords. When he moved to the Viatka district, another provincial Russian locality, he again met many rural clergymen using homoeopathic treatments. He decided finally to convert to homoeopathy and received the permission of the Red Cross which hired him to use homoeopathy in his day-to-day practice. His success in the homoeopathic treatment of typhus, where he lost only 12 patients out of the 188 he treated, led to the Chairman of the Chief Department of the Russian Red Cross to send him a telegram of congratulation.²⁷

Although the Zemstvo authorities usually were hardly influenced by pro-allopathic Zemstvo physicians, sometimes they asked the rural intelligentsia, usually priests, to offer homoeopathic treatment in the distant

villages. So, the Belev Zemstvo in the Tula province supported for 15 years homoeopathic treatment offered by the local clerics and was 'completely satisfied with this treatment'.²⁸ The demand for any level of qualified medical support was so high, until the last quarter of the nineteenth century, that not only in villages but also in the provincial cities, medical services offered by educated people were welcomed. For example, the participators in the Decembrist revolt of 1825 and the members of their families,²⁹ who were exiled to Siberia, were often asked to provide medicines and medical advice. Dr Ferdinand Wolf (1796–1854), the only physician among the Decembrists, Mikhail (1788–1834) and Natal'ia (1803–69) Fonvizin, as well as Pavel Bobrishchev-Pushkin (1802–65), practised medicine in Tobolsk. Bobrishchev-Pushkin treated patients homoeopathically and, reportedly, was especially effective during the epidemic of cholera in 1847.³⁰

Russian Homoeopathic Societies

WHILST THE ST PETERSBURG SOCIETY of Homoeopathic Physicians, founded in 1868, proclaimed in its 'Regulations' that its chief aim was to be a scientific society to persuade physicians in the advantages of homoeopathy, all other Russian homoeopathic societies viewed themselves mainly as providers of homoeopathic treatment available to all. However, there was no difference in the activities of societies in offering homoeopathic treatment. The extremely low fee of 30 kopeck (i.e. 0.3 rouble) charged by all the societies for the visiting doctor-homoeopath hired by the society enabled almost everybody to receive homoeopathic treatment. The poor sick persons could also get treatment and medicines free of charge after evidence of poverty was presented. Approximately 30 per cent of all treatment and provision of homoeopathic medicines was free in the different societies. The 'charitable expenses' were covered mainly from private donations, from issuing homoeopathic literature and from the distribution of homoeopathic medicines by the pharmacies at the societies. This pronounced charitable character of homoeopathic societies engendered a benevolent attitude from the local municipal authorities who saw homoeopathy as a cheap ally in protecting the health of people. So, at one of the meetings of the Khar'kov Duma (municipal board) in 1900, a request from the Khar'kov Society of the Followers of Homoeopathy for a budget of 200 roubles was discussed. Naturally, the allopathic physician members of the board strongly opposed the request. The Mayor stated: 'We can discuss this problem exclusively from the point of view that the homoeopathic society serves the interests of some part of the inhabitants who find it more comfortable to turn to the

help of homoeopathy, freeing us partially from delivering medical support to the population'.³¹ Finally, the meeting decided not only to assign the 200 roubles requested, but also added 100 roubles to the budget. Apart from direct financial support, there were numerous instances where homoeopaths held their meetings in municipal halls. Mayors warmly greeted those meetings and, sometimes, were even members of homoeopathic societies, such as Grigory Marazli (1831–1907), the Mayor of Odessa from 1878 to 1895.³²

Many societies maintained a large correspondence with those asking for chargeable homoeopathic advice which represented a significant part of the budget of the societies. Nevertheless, when it was needed, the societies provided their advice and medicines free. So, the physicians of St Petersburg Charitable Society of the Followers of Homoeopathy maintained a permanent correspondence with the principals of the Raivolov and Tsarskoe Selo vocational orphanages and sent them homoeopathic medicines free of charge.³³ This was part of the charitable activity of the Society. The charity of homoeopathic societies attracted the participation of many high-ranking clergymen as it fitted the ideals of the early Christianity adopted by the Russian Orthodox Church. Unfortunately, the St Petersburg Charitable Society of the Followers of Homoeopathy was the only homoeopathic society which published a detailed annual report. Nevertheless, an analysis of the occupations of the patients treated in the homoeopathic out-patients' clinics of the societies, as reported in periodicals and brochures, discloses that it was mostly the lower middle class who turned to the clinics. Those from the nobility and the high-ranking officials who preferred homoeopathy turned to the same physicians but as private patients.

Russian Homoeopathic Literature

RUSSIAN HOMOEOPATHY HAD a strongly pronounced domestic character. The number of homoeopathic physicians in pre-World War I Russia had always been insignificant. There were about 100 openly practising homoeopathic physicians and the same number of others who were hiding their practice behind terms like 'specific' from among 16–18,000 doctors who were practising throughout the Russian Empire. So, the Russian homoeopathic literature reflected the demand of a wide public for 'understandable' homoeopathy. This is one of the reasons why Russian homoeopathy, which had not adopted the pure classical homoeopathy of Hahnemann, did not integrate the new ideas of John Henry Clarke

(1853–1931) and James Tyler Kent (1849–1916) at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. Neither Russian original authors and publishers, nor Russian homoeopathic societies, which were comprised almost exclusively of laymen, had any desire or possibility to issue or translate books destined for physicians as they would not have had a sufficient number of purchasers. Thus, no repertory was published in Russian until World War I. On the contrary, the domestic manuals (*lechebniki*) had enjoyed wide public demand. Of the foreign authors, the domestic manuals of the German physicians Clotar Müller (1818–77), Franz Hartmann (1796–1853) and Constantin Hering (1800–80) had been issued in large numbers and were especially popular among Russian adherents of homoeopathy. From the 1880s, the books of Richard Hughes (1836–1902), particularly his *A Manual of Pharmacodynamics*, enjoyed wide popularity. Among Russian authors the manuals of Vasily Deriker and Pavel Soloviev were republished up to five times. In addition, Russian homoeopathic societies provided a large number of brochures and pamphlets on separate diseases, especially those of an epidemic character from which Russia suffered, such as cholera, diphtheria and typhus. These brochures were either sold cheaply or distributed free. Being aware that homoeopathy was especially popular among clergymen, the homoeopathic societies also tried to attract provincial priests, using their close connection with the Chief Procurator of the Holy Synod, the highest Church authority, Constantine Pobedonostsev (1827–1907), and also the editors of principal church periodicals. So, the St Petersburg Society of the Followers of Homoeopathy issued a brochure on *Some brief information about homoeopathy* and attached it to *Tserkovnye vedomosti* (*The Church Gazette*) to which all parishes in Russia had an obligatory subscription. This attachment was done with the personal permission of Constantine Pobedonostsev. The Society was completely satisfied with the financial results:

The income of the pharmacy at the Society in 1890, grew by 4,333 roubles in comparison to 1889, due to an increased sale of homoeopathic drugs. This should be seen as a proof that the number of those following homoeopathy is growing year after year. The growth has been enabled by the publishing of the brochure entitled 'Some brief information about homoeopathy' issued in 50,000 copies. This brochure has been distributed free of charge among the rural clergymen, the rural teachers and all the people who wish to get it ... In 1890, 417 clerics and 72 rural teachers turned to the pharmacy in order to obtain homoeopathic drugs.³⁴

Coincidentally, the editor of the periodical, a dean of the Isaac Cathedral in St Petersburg, Father P.A. Smirnov, was an avowed and

committed adherent of homoeopathy. This publication increased noticeably the number of priests who practised homoeopathy. Another high-ranking churchman, Father A.P. Troitsky, the editor of the periodical *Kievskie eparkhialnye vedomosti* (*The Kiev Eparchial Gazette*), issued in thousands, was a member of the Kiev Society of Followers of Homoeopathy.

Summary

IN CONCLUSION, HOMOEOPATHY IN RUSSIA spread most actively in those places where allopathic control over medical affairs was either absent (distant villages and small provincial towns until the last quarter of the nineteenth century) or weak or weakened by specific conditions (army or navy). Thus, the main customers for homoeopathic treatment were peasants and military staff. In contrast, in the metropolitan cities, such as St Petersburg, Moscow, Kiev, Odessa and Kharkov, homoeopathy flourished mainly because of the support of high-ranking officials, the nobility, the higher clergy and the local authorities. This support reduced the resistance of allopathic institutions. The pronounced charitable character of homoeopathic organisations helped to attract supporters and to offer homoeopathic treatment to the poor sick. The main customers for treatment in cities were the representatives of the lower middle class. It is important to stress that the lay direction in Russian homoeopathy had been established as a natural course of things. The effort to ignore it and to establish a professional direction by founding a 'physicians only' homoeopathic society in 1868 was unsuccessful. In 1880, the society divided into professional and lay organisations. The lay society, the St Petersburg Charitable Society of the Followers of Homoeopathy, became the most influential and powerful Russian homoeopathic body, while the St Petersburg Society of Homoeopathic Physicians was insignificant until the mid-1890s when it decided to join the lay mainstream by issuing brochures, manuals etc. for laymen. Thus, the pronounced lay character of Russian homoeopathy remained unchanged from the emergence of homoeopathy in the Russian Empire to its breakdown at the time of World War I.

Notes

- 1 'During their stay in camps as well as during epidemics, the armies often had considerable losses in manpower and were especially interested in a successful therapy. At the same time, they were open to experiments and provided soldiers as easily available "patients' material'". M. Dinges, 'Die Internationalität der Homöopathie' in Martin Dinges (ed.), *Weltgeschichte der Homöopathie. Länder, Schulen, Heilkundige* (Munich, 1996), 384–85.
- 2 Carl Bojanus, *Gomeopatiia v Rossii* (Moscow, 1882), 14.
- 3 Bojanus, *Gomeopatiia*, 10 and 14.
- 4 Bojanus, *Gomeopatiia v Rossii*, 126. On Mandt and his 'system', representing a medley of Hahnemann's practical findings with Rademacher's ideas, see also Rudolf Tischner, *Geschichte der Homöopathie* (Vienna, 1998).
- 5 The diary of Dr Chistovich is kept in the library at the St Petersburg Military-Medical Academy. See E.N. Pavlovsky, K.M. Baer *i Mediko-Khirurgicheskaja Akademia* (K.M. Baer and the Medico-Surgical Academy) (Moscow and Leningrad, 1948), 201. Because Chistovich repeatedly demonstrates his negative attitude toward homoeopathy, and because of the strange style in which his diary is written (there is a strong feeling that the diary was written exclusively to be read by a wide public), these facts deserve thorough research.
- 6 Cantonists: the soldiers' sons who were obliged to undertake military service in the Russian Empire during the period 1805–65.
- 7 Bojanus, *Gomeopatiia*, 9.
- 8 Bojanus, *Gomeopatiia*, 14–24.
- 9 L. Reichenbach, 'Dr Pribyl', pervyi gomeopat na Kavkaze' ('Dr Pribyl', the First Homoeopath at Caucasus'), *Zhurnal St Peterburgskogo Obshchestva vrachigomeopatov* (Journal of the St Petersburg Society of Homoeopathic Physicians), 8 (1873), 239–50.
- 10 *Vrach-gomeopat* (Homoeopathic Physician), 3 (1895), 149.
- 11 Sergey Witte: a Russian state figure, Minister of Communications (1892), Finance Minister since 1892, Chairman of the Committee of Ministers since 1903, Chairman of the Board of Ministers in 1905–06.
- 12 *Vrach* (Physician), 46 (1885), 777.
- 13 Iliia Sundi, *Istoricheskaja zapiska o vozniknovenii i deiatel'nosti Sankt-Peterburgskogo Obshchestva posledovatelei gomeopatii za vremia so 2-go maia 1881 po 2-e maia 1891 g.* (Historical Writing on Emergence and Activity of the St Petersburg Society of the Followers of Homoeopathy During the Period from 2 May 1881 to 2 May 1891) (St Petersburg, 1892), 22–23 and 25. In 1818, the hospital was taken by the Bolshevik government and transformed into an Institute of Roentgenology. The memorial of Alexander II in front of the main entrance of the hospital was destroyed, and a memorial of Conrad Roentgen was erected instead. This building now houses the department of Roentgenology and Radiology of the

- St Petersburg Pavlov Medical Academy. For more detail on the Alexander II Hospital, see the chapter 'Alexander Homeopathic Hospital' in Alexander Kotok, *The History of Homoeopathy in the Russian Empire until World War I, as compared with other European Countries and the USA: Similarities and Discrepancies* (PhD thesis, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1999; published on the internet under: <http://www.homeoint.org/books4/kotok>); and Alexander Kotok, 'The Alexander II Hospital in St Petersburg', *The Homeopath*, 79, (2000), 8–11.
- 14 On this experience see Alexander Kotok, 'Homeopathy and the Russian Orthodox Clergy: Russian Homeopathy in Search of Allies in the Second Part of the 19th and Beginning of the 20th Centuries', *Medizin, Gesellschaft und Geschichte* 16 (1997), 176–77.
 - 15 Sundi, *Istoricheskaia*, 13, 18.
 - 16 Kotok, 'Homeopathy and the Russian Orthodox Clergy', 176–77.
 - 17 Vasily Deriker (1812–78): a prominent lay propagandist of homoeopathy, the virtual founder of the St Petersburg Society of Homoeopathic Physicians (established in 1868), the editor of the first Russian homoeopathic periodicals *Zhurnal gomeopaticeskogo lecheniia* (*Journal of Homoeopathic Treatment*) issued in 1861–63 and *Zhurnal St Peterburgskogo Obshchestva vrachei-gomeopatov* (*Journal of the St Petersburg Society of Homoeopathic Physicians*) issued in 1872–76. For a bibliography of Deriker's writings see Kotok, 'Homeopathy and the Russian Orthodox Clergy', 178.
 - 18 *Vrach-gomeopat* (1900), 106–07.
 - 19 *Vrach-gomeopat* (1900), 107.
 - 20 *Sobranie pisem sviatitelia Feofana* (*Collected Letters of St Feofan*) (Moscow, 1901), 73.
 - 21 *Sobranie*, 84.
 - 22 A. Engelhardt, *Dvenadsat' pisem iz derevni* (*Twelve Letters from the Village*), (Moscow, 1956), 155.
 - 23 On Mattei and his 'electrohomoeopathic' medicines see Robert Jütte, *Geschichte der alternativen Medizin. Von der Volksmedizin zu den unkonventionellen Therapien von heute* (Munich, 1996), 229–33.
 - 24 See *Vestnik gomeopaticeskoi meditsiny* (*Homoeopathic Medicine's Herald*), 2, 6 (1997), 86–91.
 - 25 *Zhurnal St Peterburgskogo Obshchestva vrachei-gomeopatov*, 5 (1873), 149.
 - 26 *Vrach-gomeopat*, 10 (1894), 493.
 - 27 *Vestnik gomeopaticeskoi meditsiny*, 8 (1909), 254–55.
 - 28 *Vrach* (1886), 264. For a detailed discussion of this and other zemstvo homoeopathic experiences, see the chapter 'Homeopathy and Zemstvo Medicine' in Kotok, *History of Homoeopathy in the Russian Empire*.

- 29 The Decembrist revolt: the revolt of the nobility, mainly represented by army officers, against the monarchy and serfdom in Russia in December 1825. After the revolt had been suppressed, many of its participants were exiled to Siberia.
- 30 *Nash kraï (Our Land)*, 7 (1925), (11), 9 and 8–9 (12–13), 9. See also G. Mendrina, *Meditsinskaiia deiatel'nost' politicheskikh ssyl'nykh v Sibiri (Medical Activity of the Political Exiles in Siberia)* (Tomsk, 1962), 20.
- 31 *Vestnik gomeopaticheskoi meditsiny*, 1 (1900), 29.
- 32 For more information on Odessa homeopathic societies see the chapters 'Odessa Society of the Followers of Homeopathy' and 'Odessa Hahnemannian Society' in Kotok, *History of Homoeopathy in the Russian Empire*; and Konstantin K. Vasylyev, 'Zur Geschichte der Homöopathie im Russischen Reich bis 1917: Homöopathie in Odessa' in Regine Pfrepper, Ingrid Kästner and Dietrich von Engelhardt (eds.), *Von Samuel Gottlieb Gmelins Reise durch Russland bis zum Niedergang der Apothekarfamilie Poehl, Deutsch-Russische Beziehungen in Medizin- und Naturwissenschaften*, Band 4, Vorträge des Symposiums am Institut für Medizin- und Wissenschaftsgeschichte Lübeck und der Ostseeakademie Travemünde vom 30 September bis 1 October 2000 (Aachen, 2001), 241–50.
- 33 *21-e obshchee sobranie chlenov St Peterburgskogo Blagotvoritel'nogo Obshchestva posledovatelei gomeopatii 25-go apreliia 1899* (The 21st Annual Meeting of the Members of the St Petersburg Society of the Followers of Homoeopathy on 25 April 1899), (St Petersburg, 1899), 34. This was not the only example of homoeopathic treatment in the orphanages; Dr Lev Reichenbach (1819–99) wrote: 'I came to Baku in the Summer 1861, being invited by Baron T., a doctor in the Trans-Caspian Trade Company. He and his wife alike, were adherents of homoeopathy. His wife had a homoeopathic kit as well as homoeopathic manuals, and treated the poor sick. The fame of my successful treatments had been spreading quickly, and I had a profitable practice ... I was engaged with the supervision over the girls from the St Nina school and boarding school. The girls were returning after vacations with digestive disorders, but were soon recovering after having been treated with Antimonium crudum and Pulsatilla' (*Zhurnal St Petersburgskogo Obshchestva vrachei-gomeopatov*, 9 (1872), 268–76).
- 34 Sundi, *Istoricheskaiia*, 13, 40–41.