

slaves while defending the idol of the outworn nation-state.

Only a governmental organization on an international, if possible, global, basis

can free the individual from the ever-growing restrictions imposed on him by the many conflicting national Super-states.

Health Protection in the U.S.S.R.

By N. PROPPER-GRASHCHENKOV

EVERYTHING connected with public health in the U. S. S. R. is in the hands of the state and is provided for by the state budget. Medical establishments, staffs and scientific and everyday work of medical institutions and organizations are all planned. At the beginning of every fiscal year, the People's Commissariat of Public Health of the U. S. S. R. together with the People's Commissariats of Public Health of the various republics and the local Boards of Health determine where hospitals, polyclinics, maternity homes, nurseries, sanatoriums, scientific institutes, medical schools and the like are needed and how many should be built. At the same time the most important tasks for the coming year are also determined.

Organization

The fact that all public health work is centrally directed makes possible the proper utilization of all the facilities of the country, the widespread application of the latest achievements in medical science, and unified methods of work. The medical establishments and organizations of the Soviet Union are not isolated, insular institutions, but are closely interconnected and work according to a common plan of preventive and curative measures, with efforts directed primarily towards preventing illnesses and safeguarding the population against sickness.

The public health system includes numerous and widespread specialized sanitation organizations which engage in work in the field of industrial hygiene

and labor protection, housing and municipal sanitation and food hygiene, and which combat epidemics. There is an extensive network of scientific research institutes of hygienics, sanitation centers and laboratories which serve as bases for the public health officers in their prophylactic work. However, it is not these sanitation organizations alone that concern themselves with prophylactic measures. The entire Soviet public health system concerns itself with this work. Even the establishments for treating ill people, and practising physicians base their activities on preventive medicine. For this reason hygiene is a science that is particularly widely taught in all medical schools.

Public organizations of the working people do much to assist the public health institutions. Every City and District Soviet has its Board of Health. Hospitals and prophylactic institutes have the cooperation of public commissions. Sanitation commissions are organized in apartment houses; collective farms have their sanitary inspectors. The members of these commissions and the inspectors are elected by the local population and go through special training courses in the Hygiene Educational Centers. These commissions and collective farm inspectors keep a check on the work of medical establishments, and assist the latter to carry out the prophylactic measures by interesting the public in questions of health protection and making them conscious of the necessity of observing the rules of hygiene at home and at work.

Soviet public health work has been efficacious because of the very nature

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of the social and state system existing in the U. S. S. R. In a remarkably short period of time the Socialist state has succeeded in raising the material and cultural level of the entire population enormously, thereby laying a firm foundation for successful work in the field of public health.

Services Provided

The Constitution of the U. S. S. R. guarantees the working people of the U. S. S. R. the right to free medical services, security in old age, maintenance in the event of loss of working capacity or illness, and the right to state protection of the interests of mother and child. All medical service—from first aid to the most intricate surgical operation—is available free of charge.

All forms of medical aid—the most up-to-date methods of diagnosis and treatment, laboratory analyses, X-rays, physiotherapeutic treatment, hospitalization and sanatorium cures, radium-therapy, maternity-home services where methods of painless deliveries have been developed, dental treatment, the provision of orthopedic appliances, etc.—are available to the Soviet working people and their families without cost.

Child Welfare

The Soviet citizen is given the care of the public health establishments from the very day of birth. As soon as the child is born, he is registered in his district child welfare center. This means that he will be under the constant supervision of a doctor. The mother will be instructed in the care of the child, its needs, diet and proper upbringing. The child will be vaccinated and inoculated against contagious diseases, and in case of illness provided with medical aid at home or in a children's hospital. The child welfare centers do not wait until they are applied to for assistance. The doctors and nurses of the centre visit the child at home, acquaint themselves with his living condition and advise the parents on the care of the child.

Infants from the age of twenty-eight days are accepted in nurseries. The

mother may leave her child in the nursery while she goes to work. Here the child is under the supervision of doctors and trained nurses. In the rural districts seasonal nurseries are established during the farming season. The nurseries accept children until the age of three and a half. Children up to this age are most susceptible to all sorts of illnesses and contagious diseases. For this reason the nurseries are under the jurisdiction of the People's Commissariat of Public Health. Children over three and a half years of age are accepted in the kindergartens, which are under the jurisdiction of the People's Commissariat of Education.

The number of establishments for the health protection of mother and child is increasing every year. Maternity welfare centres, of which there are well over 4,300 in the country, afford medical supervision to expectant mothers, who register in these centres during their very first months of pregnancy. Here they are given medical care at government expense. The maternity centres direct the expectant mother to a maternity home for her confinement.

Material Benefits

Working women and other women employees receive thirty-five days maternity leave with full pay before confinement and forty-two days after. In the event of an abnormal birth or the birth of twins, post-natal leave is extended to fifty-six calendar days. Beginning with the fourth month of pregnancy women are exempt from overtime work, and women with infants from night work throughout the nursing period. There is, in addition, a system of state benefits for mothers of large families.

Present regulations, contained in the July 8, 1944, Edict of the Supreme Soviet, provide for allowances to married and widowed mothers on a scale ranging from a single grant of 400 rubles¹ to a

¹A ruble is equal to about 20 Canadian cents at the official rate of exchange, but the purchasing power within Russia is considerably greater.

mother with two children on the birth of a third child, to 5,000 rubles to a mother with ten children on the birth of each subsequent child. Monthly allowances beginning on the birth of the fourth child are also paid on the child's first birthday and continue until it is five. In determining the size of the single grants and monthly allowances, all living children are included (as well as children killed or missing at the war front), regardless of age, place of residence, or whether they are of the same father. Adopted children are also included, as well as children under twelve from a former marriage of the husband. If the mother dies, the allowance is paid to the father or guardian. Unmarried mothers receive corresponding single grants and monthly allowances as well as special monthly allowances. These allowances continue if the mother marries, but not for children placed in institutions and brought up fully at the expense of the State.

Children receive medical aid in children's polyclinics, dispensaries and hospitals, and all children and adolescents undergo an annual medical examination in the spring. At this time children who need to be sent to rest homes and sanatoriums are selected. The care accorded children and adolescents in the Soviet Union is convincingly reflected in the labor legislation of the country: the labor of children below the age of 14 is strictly prohibited; minors from 14-16 years of age are allowed to work only four hours a day at light work, and adolescents from the age of 16-18 have a six-hour working day. Adolescents are obliged to undergo a thorough physical examination before starting work, in order to establish what kind of work can be performed by them in accordance with the state of their health.

The enormous expenditures on kindergartens, nurseries, maternity homes, dairy kitchens, sanatoriums, summer camps and rest homes for mother and child have had splendid results. During the years of Soviet rule, child mortality, for

instance, has declined by over fifty per cent. The chest expansion of Soviet children shows an average increase of one inch, and their height has increased by an average of one and a quarter inches.

Industrial Hygiene

Of great importance in the U. S. S. R. is the persistent work done to prevent industrial accidents, since this work is directed towards safe guarding the life and health of the working man himself, the most valuable asset in the Soviet Union. A number of institutes which deal exclusively with industrial accidents and orthopedics have been established in the Soviet Union. They comprise centres both for the study of industrial accidents and the means of combating them, and for training personnel to carry out the latter work.

As a result of the constantly increasing introduction of automatic machinery in industry and the compulsory use of safety measures and appliances, there has been an enormous decrease in industrial accidents in the U. S. S. R. The establishment of numerous first aid stations both in factories and collective farms, as well as the fact that people who sustain injuries at work have free access to further treatment, has also led to a sharp decline in the harmful consequences resulting from industrial accidents.

Health stations in factories and other places of work, first set up under Soviet rule, are important factors in creating healthful working conditions and combating industrial accidents. They render medical aid and carry on health protection work—check up on the sanitary conditions of the enterprise, introduce measures for decreasing illness and accidents, treat workers who take ill, select people to be sent to health resorts, rest homes and sanatoriums, and those in need of special diets in dietetic restaurants. Workers requiring more skilled or special treatment are sent by these stations to the district polyclinic or dispensary. The polyclinics are staffed with specialists in all the principal bran-

ches of medicine; they have all sorts of medical appliances, provide physiotherapeutic and X-ray treatments and have their own laboratories.

A certain zone in the district where the polyclinic is located is assigned to every physician in the polyclinic. He receives the people living in the zone assigned him in the polyclinic and visits them at home. He has all the latest achievements of medical science at his disposal, X-ray apparatus and laboratories. He can send his patient to any specialist in the polyclinic or call out a specialist to the home of the patient for consultation purposes; he can send the patient for a course of physiotherapeutic treatment and he can avail himself of the services of a well-trained staff of medical workers.

Tuberculosis and venereal diseases, which were extremely widespread among the workers in pre-revolutionary Russia are now being successfully attacked. The public health institutions of the Soviet Union with their 5,000 physicians for venereal diseases working in 2,225 medical institutions have succeeded in greatly curtailing venereal infections. Thus, there are only one-tenth as many syphilitic cases in the U. S. S. R. as there were in pre-revolutionary Russia, and new cases of syphilis are extremely rare.

Just as great progress has been made by the Soviet public health institutions in the fight against tuberculosis, which has decreased by 83% since Soviet rule was established. In the large cities of the U. S. S. R. mortality due to tuberculosis has been reduced to less than half of what it was in pre-revolutionary Russia. Particular attention is devoted to combating tuberculosis among children. For this purpose not only have children's tuberculosis sanatoria been established, but special tuberculosis preventative schools, children's camps and health grounds have been built all over the Soviet Union. There are over one thousand dispensaries for carrying on preventative work among people prone to have tuberculosis and treating tubercular cases.

Hospital Facilities

Hospitals and hospital facilities for treating all types of patients have been greatly expanded. Equally important, the qualitative aspect of Soviet hospitals differs greatly from the hospitals of the past. Soviet hospitals are specialized or have departments for all the principal branches of medicine. Their staffs are highly skilled. They can avail themselves of the consultative services of professors in any branch of medicine, even to the extent of summoning them from the large cities.

District medical centres have also been established throughout the countryside. These medical centres have hospitals, clinics, first aid stations, obstetrical departments, collective farm maternity homes, child and maternity welfare centres, nurseries, departments for the treatment and prevention of tuberculosis, venereal diseases and malaria, and so on. Many of these centres have Roentgen and physiotherapeutic apparatus and laboratories. The Soviet Government takes every measure to strengthen the rural staffs of medical workers: rural physicians receive higher pay, all sorts of material advantages are afforded them, every three years they are sent for a three to four months' course of specialized study in some medical institute, during which time they continue to receive their full pay and an additional allowance.

Health resort treatments are available on an extensive scale to working people and their families. Excellent new health resorts have been established and vast improvements have been made in the old ones. The Sochi-Matsesta health resort can serve as a good example of how completely the old resorts have been transformed. New, first-class sanatoriums have been opened there, a splendid new bath for balneological treatment has been built, and new sulphur springs have been discovered. In addition to the famous places of Crimea and the Caucasus which are known all over the world, numerous new health resorts

have been established in other parts of the Soviet Union. Every Union and Autonomous Republic has its local balneological and climatotherapeutic health resorts.

The constantly expanding and rapidly increasing scope of public health work in the U. S. S. R. demands even larger numbers of workers in this field. The medical schools, where new physicians are trained, are state institutions. The Soviet now has 72 independent medical colleges with a student body of over 100,000. Tuition is free, and most of the students receive state allowances. The People's Commissars of Public Health of the U. S. S. R. and the various Union Republics, or their assistants arrange to talk things over with each young physician in order to be able to determine what work he is best suited for and where it would be best to assign him. Of course the personal interests of each individual are taken into account as well as the requirements of the state.

Medical Science

The physicians, scientific workers and professors are held in high esteem in the Soviet Union. A splendid expression of the respect accorded them is the fact that medical men and scientists have been elected members of the Supreme Soviet of the U. S. S. R. and the Supreme Soviets of the Union and Autonomous Republics. Many medical workers have

been decorated by the Soviet Government for distinguished service in the field of science and medical work.

In the U. S. S. R. medical science is closely bound up with practice. Splendid results have been achieved by various theoretical institutes. Outstanding among them is the huge All-Union Institute of Experimental Medicine (known by its Russian initials VIEM). The tasks of this Institute are to engage in a thorough study of the human organism on the basis of contemporary theories and practice of medical science, to discover new methods of diagnosis, treatment and preventative medicine, based on the latest achievements in the fields of biology, chemistry and physics, and the designing of new equipment for laboratories and clinics. The research work of the Institute covers all the theoretical branches of medicine and the branches of other sciences that are of importance to medicine.

The Soviet state assigns large funds to the development of science. The Soviet public health system, basing its work on the great advances made by science, has had splendid results in improving the health of the people. This is in keeping with the general economic and cultural progress made by the country. A major factor contributing to the success of the public health work was the assistance given to the movement by the masses of the working people.