

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE IN THE USSR

The World Health Organization has devoted a special issue of its magazine to health progress in the Soviet Union.¹

Academician Boris Petrovski, Soviet Minister of Health, in his article, alludes to the contribution made by the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to the improvement of medical service and health protection.

The importance of the medico-social activities undertaken by the Alliance is recognized.

Mr. Petrovski recalled that 50 years ago the average life expectancy in Russia was 32 years, whereas today in the Soviet Union it is 70. The number of doctors during the past half-century has increased twenty-fold, and is now 580,000. In addition, there are almost five million health workers in the country.

Much is being done to improve the health of the rural and urban populations. Mobile dispensaries, X-ray units, dental clinics and laboratories provide service to the inhabitants of remote areas.

The Minister of Health affirmed that no scientific discovery was so effective in the fight against illness as the participation of the people in the measures taken by the State to abolish the causes of disease. In this connection he stated, in conclusion:

Laws for the protection of natural resources have been promulgated in the fifteen federated Soviet Republics, and—this is very important—the people themselves ensure that these laws are observed. We Soviet doctors are always assured of the support of millions of health enthusiasts. It is sufficient to say that in the USSR there are 70 million voluntary members of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

¹ *World Health*, WHO, Geneva, October 1967.

The public health services in the USSR make good use of the experience of world medical science and willingly let foreign doctors have the benefit of Soviet experience. Soviet doctors and scientists are intensifying their international relations year by year. They take an active part in international conferences and congresses in every branch of medicine without exception.

The humanistic character of the Soviet State is clearly shown in the effective aid it provides for countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Soviet doctors at work in Yemen, Algeria, Mali, Tunisia, Uganda, Burma and Cambodia are introducing new methods for the prevention and treatment of the diseases from which the populations of those countries suffer. A large number of hospitals and other establishments have been built and are still being built with the assistance of the Soviet Union in India, Nepal, Guinea, Indonesia, Somalia, Iran and other countries.
