

IN THE RED CROSS WORLD

However, it will continue to operate the existing health centres if they still serve a useful purpose, and open new ones if and when they are required.

Generally speaking, the work of a Red Cross Health Centre is directed primarily towards the betterment of the health and welfare of the people. It renders them health services and helps teach them how to take care of their health. It makes efforts to raise their health standards and promotes their health education for the prevention of disease.

Each Health Centre is staffed by a head nurse aided by three or four nurses and assistants. Its main activities are health advice, first aid, medical examination, immunizations, inoculation, home nursing, visits to homes, family hygiene, ante-and post natal advice, infant and mother welfare, disaster relief. The Centre pays special attention to the members of the Junior Red Cross who are taught first aid, personal hygiene, home nursing and health care. By arrangement with the local private enterprises and government offices the Centre carries out regular medical examination of workers and officials as well as their families.

In all 200,000 persons received medical advice and treatment at the nine Red Cross Health Centres during the year 1964.

U.S.S.R.

The Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies has published a brief account of its activity from 1957 to 1965 entitled The Soviet Red Cross (Moscow, 1965). This report, submitted to the XXth International Conference, comprises the following headings: 1) Structure of the Alliance, 2) Medico-Social work, 3) Juniors, 4) International activities, 5) Aid to other peoples and 6) Information, extracts of which we have thought it to be of interest to reproduce¹.

¹ *Plate.* Thanks to the Missing Persons Tracing Bureau of the Alliance, a young girl hugs her mother, after having been separated from her family for several years. (Photograph of the Soviet Red Cross, from material prepared by the League of Red Cross Societies for "World Red Cross Day" on May 8, 1966).



Thailand.— Red Cross Health Center, Bangkok.

U.S.S.R.— Thanks to the Missing Persons Tracing Bureau of the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, a young girl hugs her mother, after having been separated from her family several years.



In the past eight years between the XIX and XX International *Red Cross Conferences (1957—1964)*, the number of Soviet Red Cross organizations has considerably increased ; great progress has been made in its humane activities within the country, as well as in the extension of international ties and cooperation with National Societies of many other countries.

During this period the total number of primary organizations of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR has grown by 114,000 (from 309,000 to 423,000). 124,000 primary organizations successfully function in the schools of the country, their growth in the last eight years constituting 48,000.

Due to widespread propaganda the Soviet Red Cross membership, in the period under review, showing a marked yearly increase until at present it has reached 61,108,000 people which is 27 per cent of the country's population.

In the last eight years 39 million people joined the Societies, among them 11.3 million schoolchildren. Such rapid growth of the ranks of the society organizations testifies to the wide popularity and authority that the Soviet Red Cross enjoys among the population of the country.

All Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR have achieved a great increase in their membership. For example, there has been almost four-fold membership increase in the Red Cross Societies of the Lithuanian and Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republics, a three-fold membership increase in the Red Cross Societies of the Russian Federation, Ukrainian, Kazakh and Latvian Soviet Socialist Republics and a two-fold membership increase in the Red Crescent Societies of the Uzbek and Tajik Soviet Socialist Republics, to name but a few.

There was a considerable improvement in the activities of the Red Cross and Red Crescent organizations directed to rendering assistance to public health bodies in their struggle for health protection and longevity of the Soviet people. In this connection the main attention of these organizations was concentrated on the following measures : mass sanitary education of the population, especially of students and schoolchildren ; training of active public health volunteers and their use in rendering help to the medical profession in

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the conduct of health protection and prophylactic campaigns ; involvement of the population in the ranks of donors.

Here are some of the main figures showing the volume of this work. In the last eight years 21.3 million schoolchildren of 5—6—7 forms have received sanitary education. Since 1959 up till now 5 million women have been trained for home nursing.

Hundreds of thousands of active public health visitors render assistance to doctors in getting the population at large to come to the medical, laboratory, roentgenologic fluorographic examinations, as well as to take preventive inoculations, vaccinations and other preventive measures.

At present the total number of active public health volunteers trained by Society organizations and medical workers has reached 10 million. Public health in the USSR has been improving from year to year. Now the average life-span of the Soviet citizen is 70 years. The mortality rate of the population is steadily decreasing and in 1964 it was 7.2 persons per 1000 people. Considerable is the reduction in the children's mortality rate, the physical standards of the rising generation are steadily improving.

Public health in our country is taken care of by the standing army of more than 502,000 doctors.

Such dread diseases as smallpox, cholera, plague have long since been forgotten in the Soviet Union. The last few years also saw the elimination of malaria, a considerable drop in the incidence of typhus, typhoid, diphtheria, poliomyelitis, scarlet fever, whooping cough and other infectious diseases. In some parts of the country these diseases have been completely wiped out.

In all these achievements in public health in our country a certain role belongs to the Soviet Red Cross, the workers and active members of which are always in the forefront, assisting the public health bodies and establishments in their struggle for the health, longevity and happiness of the Soviet people.

MEDICO-SOCIAL WORK

From the very first day of its existence the Soviet Red Cross renders to public health bodies every kind of assistance directed at the improvement of medical service and health protection of the population.

The Soviet Red Cross and Red Crescent organizations do not have their own medical establishments in the USSR. The entire network of medical and prophylactic establishments and institutions belongs to the public health bodies, and medical aid is free of charge.

Voluntary Formations of Soviet Red Cross. — The basic types of voluntary formations of the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR are sanitary posts and sanitary teams.

Sanitary posts consisting of four persons trained under a 20-hour programme are established at all industrial enterprises and offices, in collective and state farms, in higher and secondary educational institutions. At present sanitary posts are widespread in apartment houses, at railway stations and highways. The sanitary post equipment (medicine chest, stretchers, etc.) is provided and paid for by the sponsor organization.

Sanitary teams, bigger bodies, each consisting of 23 persons, are formed in bigger primary organizations by the Red Cross and Red Crescent Committees in the urban and rural areas.

Members of the sanitary teams are given a 50-hour training, which gives deeper knowledge than the 20-hour sanitary post programme.

The basic task of sanitary posts and sanitary teams in business establishments, in rural areas, in educational establishments and apartment houses is to give first aid in case of accident ; to assist the medical personnel in checking the proper hygienic conditions at workshops, in classrooms and other premises ; to participate in carrying out preventive measures with a view to reducing the incidence of general and industrial diseases as well as industrial injuries.

Apart from that, members of the sanitary posts and teams take an active part in public sanitary education. They conduct among the population medical and sanitary lectures and talks and organize lectures by doctors.

Here are several examples of sanitary posts and teams activity ; in the Turkmenian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1964 the so-called seasonal sanitary posts formed at the pastures for rendering medical aid to cattle-breeders examined for brucellosis more than

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5,000 persons, helped to vaccinate against anthrax more than 700 persons and against poliomyelitis—2,500 persons.

During the influenza outbreak in Leningrad early in 1965 more than 11,000 sanitary posts and 4,500 sanitary teams were involved in helping public health bodies. The outbreak was brought under control in a short time.

Red Cross Active Sanitary Members—Assistants of Medical Personnel. — Soviet public health is truly public health, the basic principle of which is prevention of diseases. It readily finds wide support among the public, and first and foremost among millions of active sanitary members of the Soviet Red Cross.

The number of active sanitary members trained by medical personnel together with Red Cross and Red Crescent organizations increases each year. At present the number of active sanitary members, as mentioned above, is 10 million people.

Of late the Soviet Red Cross organizations have taken greater part in the preventive and sanitation measures carried out by the public health bodies. Invaluable assistance by Red Cross and Red Crescent organizations to the public health bodies is given by public sanitary agents.

The main task of the public sanitary agents is to help sanitary inspectors and epidemiologists carry out sanitary surveys and sanitary and anti-epidemic measures. Such sanitary agents are usually appointed by primary organizations from among medical nurses, members of sanitary posts, teams and other active Red Cross members, who have undergone special training. Since 1957 the number of public sanitary agents has increased by 395,268 people. At present they run to about two million. It means that each year the sanitary service of the country draws more and more assistants who participate in carrying-out sanitation measures directed at further reduction and elimination of infectious diseases.

The Red Cross and Red Crescent committees with the help of the medical personnel have started a wide education of the active sanitary members with the view to combatting infectious diseases. The training of the active members concerns the people who have earlier undergone training in accordance with the first aid programmes, public sanitary agents and those trained in home nursing.

Trained active sanitary members greatly help the medical personnel in conducting widespread sanitation measures directed at prevention of tuberculosis, poliomyelitis, diphtheria, influenza and other diseases.

For example, the active sanitary members of the Ukrainian Red Cross Society participate in protecting child health. Regional Red Cross Committees, together with the management of the medical establishments, set up at rural regional hospitals mother's training courses according to a special programme. Active members hold lectures for mothers on child care, they bring to light the newly-arrived and non-inoculated children, they supervise and control inoculation teams, rational infant feeding and so on.

Home Nursing Courses. — Since 1959 overall training of the population has been carried on in home nursing (a 28-hour course). The courses are organized by the primary organizations of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies at apartment houses, in rural areas, at business establishments and offices.

At present the expanding activity of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in setting up such courses enjoys wide popularity among the population. Whereas in 1959 only 265.5 thousand people finished these courses, at present more than 5 million people undergo training at such courses, which render assistance to the medical personnel in home nursing.

In 1964 alone 1 million 311 thousand people were trained on these courses, and they nursed more than 914,000 sick people in their homes.

For the purpose of rendering help to the public health bodies regarding medical service and home nursing of the lonely patients (from among the Great Patriotic War disabled persons, disabled workmen and others) who are bed-ridden but by the nature of their malady do not qualify for admission to hospital, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies organized Bureaux of nurses, whose expenses are paid by the membership fees.

As a rule, nurses visiting their patients carry out doctor's orders only. As for domestic help, it is done by the active sanitary members, particularly, by home nursing course trainees.

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Since the Bureaux' inception in 1960 nurses have treated more than 500,000 patients, whom they visited more than 7,000,000 times.

Together with the Bureaux maintained by the membership fees, voluntary Bureaux without payment came into being. The active Red Cross members of the town of Volzhsk, the Volgograd region, were initiators of this noble undertaking. While at the start only nine nurses were involved in this work at the town of Volzhsk in three years' time their number in the Volgograd region had increased to 1,268. At present the Voluntary Nurses Bureaux are functioning in most of the republics.

Training of Nurses. — The Soviet Red Cross provides help to public health bodies in training nurses required by medical institutions. The two-year nurse training course is conducted by the Red Cross Society committees in the trainees' spare-from-work time.

The courses admit persons working in business, offices in agriculture, at ages varying from 17 to 35, with at least 8 years of school education. The active members of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are accepted on more favourable terms.

As a rule, courses for medical nurses are organized at hospitals, secondary and higher medical educational institutions. The training is free.

Even when in training, future nurses become active members of the Soviet Red Cross and reliable assistants of the medical personnel in conducting medico-preventive and sanitation measures among the population.

Those who pass final examinations are qualified as medical nurses with secondary medical education. Many nurses who graduated at the Soviet Red Cross courses work at medical and prophylactic establishments of our country.

Recruitment of Donors from Among the Population. — The blood transfusion service in the Soviet Union is entirely operated by the public health bodies.

As far as this important issue is concerned, the Soviet Red Cross renders great assistance to the public health bodies by carrying on country-wide organizational activities aimed at the recruitment of blood donors both from among the members of the Red Cross and

Red Crescent Societies and from among the population. This has resulted in the yearly increase of the number of donors in our country. Gratuitous donorship has gained particular prevalence.

The Executive Committee of the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR has different kinds of encouragement to offer to gratuitous donors. Donors who have donated their blood not less than 15 times are awarded the badge of "Donor of the USSR—1st Degree"; donors who have donated their blood 10 times are awarded the badge of "Donor of the USSR—2nd degree", and those who donated their blood 5 times are awarded the badge "Donor of the USSR"—of the 3rd degree. The badge "a Drop of Blood" is given for the first donation.

The most active donors, who help to draw the population into the ranks of donors are given the highest reward—the badge of "Honourable Donor of the USSR".

Medical and Hygienic Education of the Population. — Health education of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Society members and the wide sections of the population is an important task of the Soviet Red Cross and is conducted in close contact with the public health bodies and various other public organizations.

The following methods and forms in bringing to the masses of medical and hygienic education are employed: lectures, talks, broadcasts and telecasts, topical "get-togethers", People's Universities, health schools, exhibitions, printed propaganda and others.

Since the XIX International Red Cross Conference our Societies have been improving the old methods and forms of mass propaganda and trying to find new ones.

For more profound and regular dissemination of medical and hygienic knowledge People's Universities and health schools were started in urban and rural areas at the instance of the medical personnel and with the active participation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Lectures at these Universities and schools of health creating on a free time, voluntary basis are given 1-2 times monthly, and are planned for a two year programme. At present 1420 People's Universities of Health are functioning in our country.

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For instance, the Red Cross Society of the Georgian Republic is active in setting up People's Universities and Health Schools and in recruiting students for them. At present 47 People's Universities and 121 Health Schools are functioning in the Georgian Republic. In the last four years, in this republic only, Health Schools have discharged 50 thousand trainees or 25 % of the active members of the Red Cross Society.

The Society Committees take an active part in creating " Health Rooms " in residential quarters and " Sanitary Education Rooms " in rural areas. Their major occupation is the sanitary education of the population.

Recently, most of the district, regional and republic committees very successfully organized regular talks on Health over the radio and television, during which medical and hygiene subjects are discussed. The Red Cross Society Committees take part in their preparation.

To help the Society organizations, the Executive Committee of the Alliance of Soviet Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies has issued series of gramophone records and tape-recordings of talks of leading medical specialists on prevention of different diseases, on correct diet, child care and on some other subjects of public health.

Of late more than 100 sanitary-education short films have been released by the Public Health Ministry of the USSR with the Executive Committee of the Alliance of Soviet Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies having a hand in their preparation too.

Independently the Executive Committee released 12 films on donorship, hygiene education of schoolchildren, international activities of the Society, fight against poliomyelitis, activities of active sanitary members of the Societies etc. The Executive Committee has also released three series of slide-pictures for training the active sanitary members. Films and slide-films are also widely used for spreading medical and hygiene education among the population.

The Soviet Red Cross organizations attach great significance to printed matter. Booklets, leaflets, posters, instruction hand-books; slogans are published not only by the Executive Committee of the Alliance of Soviet Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies but by all local Society Committees as well.

Besides books and posters on sanitary education the Executive Committee publishes text-books and instruction brochures for the training of the active sanitary members.

In 1964 alone, the Executive Committee of the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR in conjunction with the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies published 4,127 different books on sanitary education with a total circulation of 41,5 million copies.

The Executive Committee is responsible for publishing its own mass-circulation magazine "The Soviet Red Cross", which supplies information about its versatile activities, popularizes the best experience in sanitary, educational and organizational work and tells about cooperation with public health bodies.

In March 1964 the Executive Committee of Soviet Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies held a special Plenum devoted to the discussion of the Red Cross Societies' participation in popularizing medical and hygienic knowledge among the population. The Plenum had approved the activities of the Soviet Red Cross in general and of its most effective methods of spreading medical and hygienic knowledge in particular and marked out new ways of further improvement of this work.
