

USSR

We would remind all National Societies that International Review is pleased to publish contributions which they send us on their activities or on humanitarian historical events concerning their countries. We quote below an article received recently from the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR, to which we express our warm thanks.

IN THE NAME OF HUMANISM

The Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR is one of the mass public organizations of our country. It unites 11 Red Cross and 4 Red Crescent Societies of the 15 Union Republics. At present the membership is 84.5 million, including about 30 million juniors of schools, colleges, vocational training and technical schools.

From the very beginning of its activities and at the present time the Soviet Red Cross considers its prime task is to render all-round assistance to public health bodies in improving medical care, the health and longevity of man.

The basic principle of the Soviet health service is preventive medicine. It is ably assisted in this by numerous members of the Soviet Red Cross. Ten million members trained by the Societies in various fields help medical workers in health education, prophylaxis measures, vaccination campaigns (for example, outbreak of influenza), and give first aid when necessary.

When the medical services are faced with great tasks in prevention and eradication of infectious diseases, in combating cardiovascular and oncological diseases and in prophylaxis measures, the close co-operation of Red Cross active members and medical workers is of great importance. The Soviet Red Cross is rendering vital assistance to the public health bodies in popularizing blood dona-

tion, in recruiting generous blood donors. In the years 1967-1970 the number of free blood donors was increased more than two-fold. This movement is very popular among young people.

Annually 1.5-2 million activists are trained by the Societies in nursing. The aim of the Societies is to see that at least one person in every family is able to look after a patient at home.

The Soviet Red Cross helps the public health bodies to spread medical and hygiene knowledge among the population. In four years (1967-1970) the Executive Committee of the Soviet Red Cross and Committees of Union Republics issued and distributed 240 million copies of various health education literature, textbooks, booklets, slogans, tables and other visual aids.

One of the main tasks of the Soviet Red Cross is all-round efforts to strengthen peace, friendship and co-operation among nations.

The Soviet Red Cross delegations and representatives take an active part in all international Red Cross meetings, submit resolutions and suggestions denouncing war and calling on National Societies through their humanitarian activities to help to prevent aggressive wars causing immeasurable human sufferings.

The Soviet Red Cross is constantly extending and reinforcing its contacts—both on a working and friendly basis—with many Societies abroad. In the period 1970-71 the Soviet Red Cross invited over 70 delegations of various Societies and International Red Cross bodies and 33 Soviet delegations were guests of foreign Societies.

In recent years great attention is paid to international meetings of Red Cross and Red Crescent juniors. The biggest International Youth Meeting was held in 1971 in the Soviet Union which gathered juniors of 38 countries. The Red Cross juniors of our country also take part in camps and gatherings in other countries. Such meetings give the opportunity to exchange experience of Red Cross youth problems, its role in protection of the health, education and bringing up of the population.

Many people suffer from natural disasters, epidemics and armed conflicts. True to its Red Cross humanitarian principles, the Soviet Red Cross willingly goes to the aid of the victims. In the years 1970-71 the Soviet Red Cross gave material assistance to the peoples of 42 countries on 50 occasions, valued at over 2 million

IN THE RED CROSS WORLD

roubles. The assistance was rendered to Vietnam, the population of Chile, India, Somalia, Afghanistan, Turkey, Colombia, Upper Volta, Mali, Niger, Iran and many others.

The groups of medical specialists and the Soviet Red Cross hospitals work at present in India, Iran, Ethiopia, Algeria, Bangladesh, giving medical assistance to many thousand people. The Soviet Red Cross teams fruitfully worked within the ICRC missions in Yemen and Jordan.

In accordance with the main Red Cross principles and the UN Declaration of Human Rights, the Soviet Red Cross is resolutely in favour of the rights of man and the Geneva Conventions.

The Executive Committee of the Soviet Red Cross is continuing to help Soviet and foreign citizens in searching for the relatives with whom they lost contact as a result of the Second World War, disasters and other reasons. In 1971 the fate of 6397 persons was detected. This work is conducted in close co-operation with National Societies in the GDR, Italy, Poland, FRG, Austria and other countries.

All domestic and international activities of the Soviet Red Cross are imbued with the noble ideals of humanism; they are directed to the constant care of the life and health of man, to the strengthening of friendship and fruitful co-operation among peoples in the interests of a stable world peace.

In 1967 the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR was decorated with the highest government award in this country—the Order of Lenin—for its major services in helping to develop the Soviet public health system, its active participation in the struggle for peace and in connection with the Centenary of the founding of the Red Cross Society in the country.