

SOVIET MEDICINE

The more we learn of Russian medicine, the greater is our respect for her medical workers. The curtain has been lifted, and novel and attractive paths are revealed for the progressive physician to follow. The appearance of a new medical journal, *American Review of Soviet Medicine*, has introduced us to many phases of Russian practice, which have stimulated our admiration.

We have admired the reaction of that nation to unprovoked attack. This reaction is also manifest in its medicine. In the course of a defensive retreat, military medicine had to be changed quickly from a peacetime basis and adapted to the tactics of war. The total capacity of all evacuation hospitals and permanent hospital trains was placed under direct control of the chief medical officer. A bottle-neck was avoided, and order was established.

In the treatment of major casualties in shock, operation was deferred up to three days if neither hemorrhage nor intracranial pressure was present. Wounded were transported before rather than after serious operation. Deferment to a skilled surgeon was preferred to early operation by one less capable. At the end of a year, 70 per cent of all casualties had been returned to active duty, truly a remarkable record under military reverses. In the campaign in Finland frostbite was considered as a spasm of the capillaries and disturbance of nutrition through damage of the neurotrophic apparatus.

As a result of early operation for nerve injuries there was greater restoration of function. The use of formalinized nerves obtained from cadavers accelerated regeneration of peripheral nerve fibers.

An antireticular cytotoxic serum has been used to prevent recurrence in cancer, check scarlet fever, control surgical and puerperal sepsis, and to treat lung abscess and osteomyelitis. The hope is expressed that the serum will provide a means of fighting the precocious senile fading of the body, of fighting for its normal longevity.

Russian medicine is making a large contribution to progress.

HOWARD DITTRICK, M.D.