

SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

THE ACADEMY OF SCIENCES OF THE SOVIET UNION

A WIRELESS to *The New York Times* by Harold Denny, Moscow correspondent, states that preparations for the elections to the enlarged and "popularized" Academy of Sciences will take place at the end of January. It is said that there is every indication that membership will depend more than ever upon the candidate's practical value to Soviet economy and politics and upon his or her conformity to the Marxist ideology, as interpreted in Russia.

Mr. Denny writes in part as follows:

It is likely, indeed, that this august body, the outgrowth of the academy founded by Peter the Great and which even in the beginning barred scientists who were politically or ideologically undesirable, will now include Alexey Stakhanoff, coal miner credited with initiating the speed-up system that is named for him, and other new heroes of Soviet life. . . .

Stakhanoff and all four of the members of Ivan Papanin's North Pole ice floe expedition are among 800 nominees for the 150 vacancies among active and corresponding members to be elected. The Academy of Sciences now has eighty active and 230 corresponding members. By a recent decision of the government the number will be increased to 130 active and 330 corresponding members.

For several days the Soviet press has been publishing nominations, together with articles praising or blaming the aspirants. Among the nominees praised to-day in *Pravda*, Communist party organ, are Alexey Tolstoy, famous author; T. D. Lysenko, known now as the "Soviet Burbank" for his development of new species of useful plants, who has often been in conflict with classical geneticists, and Andrey Y. Vishinsky, Commissar of Justice of the Soviet Union.

Mr. Vishinsky is best known to the outside world as a prosecutor in treason cases, but he is the foremost authority on Soviet law, and his voluminous writings on that subject entitle him to consideration as a social scientist.

Other candidates advanced to-day include Evgeni Chudakoff, proposed by the Stalin Military Academy of Motorization and Mechanization of the Red Army. He is credited in *Izvestia*, government organ, with creating harmonious scientific discipline upon which automobile building and engineering are based. Another is Valentin Kovalenkoff, who is acclaimed for his researches and inventions for improving telegraphic and wireless communication.

Another is N. V. Tsitsin, one-time political commissar in the Red Guard during the civil war. He is now developing improved types of agricultural plants. According to *Pravda*, he is approved by Mr. Stalin, who told him: "Bold experimenter, we shall support you."

On the other hand, *Pravda* has lent its authoritative columns to a long article signed by ten scientists, headed by Academician A. N. Back, biologist, opposing two candi-

dates as "pseudo-scientists" who have no place in the academy. They are Professors L. S. Berg and N. K. Koltsoff, both biologists. They are accused of promulgating views more in keeping with Fascism than Marxism.

Professor Berg, according to *Pravda*, published a book in 1922 entitled, "Monogenesis, or Evolution on the Basis of Conformity to Established Law," which evoked no praise here but was hailed by bourgeois biologists and translated into English. It is stigmatized to-day as an anti-Darwin treatise.

Professor Koltsoff is denounced as a eugenicist. Eugenics as a scheme for improving the human race is, in Soviet eyes, a reactionary and imperialist teaching directed against the toilers but adopted by Fascists as a basis for racial theories.

JEWISH PHYSICIANS IN GERMANY

THE Berlin correspondent of the *Journal* of the American Medical Association states that supplementary data can now be added to the recent reports appearing on the purge of Jewish physicians. On September 24 Professor Dr. Klare, "commissioner of the specialized medical press," issued the following statement:

In view of the fact that the German medical profession is now freed of all members of an alien race, the writings of Jewish authors ought not to appear in our German medical journals. At the same time I trust that our German doctors will subscribe only to those foreign journals which are published by Aryan organizations and edited by Aryan physicians. In this connection I should like to call attention to the emigration of the journal *Ars Medici*, together with its Jewish editor and publisher, Dr. Max Ostermann, from Vienna to Switzerland. From its new home this publication continues to solicit the subscriptions of German doctors, but I feel sure that our men will refuse to have anything to do with the Jewish publisher of *Ars Medici*.

This periodical had circulated widely among practitioners within the German Reich. The correspondent continues:

With respect to Jews in the insurance panel practice, it has been newly decreed that those Jews who have been allowed to continue in medical practice (under the restrictions described in previous letters) may now take part in panel practice among insured Jews and their families; a special permit is needed for panel practice.

That, actually, a definite lack of physicians has resulted from the suppression, since October 1, of Jewish doctors is evidenced by the recent establishment of "policlinic treatment centers" at seventeen municipal clinics of Berlin. These centers are designed for the exclusive use of members of sickness insurance clubs and patients referred by the social service agencies; in other words, just those groups which are usually treated by the panel practitioners. It was expressly stated that these auxiliary centers were designed to lighten the load of the panel doc-

tors (a new consideration). The medical staffs of fourteen municipal emergency stations were also increased for the same purpose as well as for emergency house visit duty, especially at night. Meanwhile it has been decreed that the foregoing measures shall be discontinued on November 16.

When the question of obligatory practice in villages was taken up, the diet decided to take other measures to satisfy the demands for medical service and to raise the number of physicians. There are five universities with faculties of medicine, and the government proposed to establish a medical school in Lodz, a city of more than 500,000 inhabitants, which has had no university. The project was welcomed by the inhabitants of Lodz, and a committee was organized to supply financial aid for the founding of the school. The anti-Semitic organizations of students of medicine in other cities, however, passed a resolution protesting against the establishing of the school, claiming that it would increase the percentage of Jews in the medical profession, since there are many Jews in Lodz and the committee is supported financially by Jewish philanthropists. This action of the anti-Semitic students is held by democratic groups to be a handicap in the supplying of sufficient medical aid to the country. In spite of it the building of the new medical school will begin shortly.

THE COUNCIL FOR PEDIATRIC RESEARCH

THE Council for Pediatric Research is essentially a committee of the American Academy of Pediatrics, which has been in operation now for somewhat more than a year, supported for a trial period by a grant from the Carnegie Corporation. Its members are: Kenneth D. Blackfan, *chairman*; Thomas B. Cooley, *executive secretary*; Alexis F. Hartmann, Irvine McQuarrie, Oscar M. Schloss and Fritz B. Talbot. Offices are at 660 Frederick Street, Detroit.

The prime reason for the formation of the council lay in the notoriously unsatisfactory system of direct subsidization by manufacturers of investigation of their products by clinics and laboratories. Such investigations are usually prompted by a real desire to ascertain the value and uses of such products; sometimes merely for use in advertising. Studies primarily intended for advertising may, however, by proper handling give opportunity for really worth-while research. Some manufacturers are experienced enough to select competent investigators, others have wasted large amounts of money on ill-conceived, superficial, often obviously biased studies. At the best, direct subsidization is not very dignified and is open to suspicion of bias. It was believed that an impartial and authoritative committee might perform a real service by acting as intermediary between manufacturer and investigator, selecting qualified persons to carry out

particular studies, suggesting or criticizing plans and finally, on publication, giving the study the stamp of its approval. It was planned that the council should charge a fee for such services, which eventually, in addition to covering its overhead, might build up a "free fund" to assist and stimulate needed research. Foundations and private philanthropists also might well dispense funds through the medium of the council.

Progress at first was slow. It was necessary to locate and gain the confidence of probable sources of grants for research, and at the same time to accumulate information as to capacities and interests of investigating clinics and laboratories. This groundwork has largely been done, and recently has shown results in the way of a number of projects which have been brought to the council for allocation to responsible clinics, and in several cases for assistance in planning a proper type of study. Another type of activity which it has recently undertaken is participation in a rather elaborate scheme for an intensive, long-term study of the various physical and mental phenomena of adolescence.

The council believes that as it becomes better known requests for its assistance will be multiplied, and its prime purpose of encouraging worth-while research furthered. It will welcome inquiries by any one interested.

THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

PROGRESS, especially in the design and construction of delicate instruments for astronomical and biological studies, and large additions to the scientific and historical collections were reported by Charles G. Abbot, secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, to the annual meeting of the Board of Regents.

The year was marked by progress in the building of the new National Gallery of Art presented to the nation by the late Andrew W. Mellon, and by the designation of a site and an appropriation for preliminary plans for a Smithsonian Gallery of Art.

Among the new instruments designed was an improvement of the galvanometer associated with the newest type of thermocouple. Dr. Abbot is confident that when the 200-inch telescope of the Carnegie Institution of Washington is available it will be possible with this instrument to get continuous spectrum energy curves of all types of stars.

A new observatory for solar radiation has been installed on Burro Mountain near Tyrone, N. M., to cooperate with the existing Smithsonian observatories in California and Chile to study solar variation and weather. Among plans for the future is one dealing with the measurement of variations of the sun's ultra-violet radiation in the upper atmosphere which can be determined by the amount of ionization of atmospheric