

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY USSR (Kherson Oblast)

REPORT

SUBJECT Disease Control in Kherson

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(FOR KEY SEE REVERSE)

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1. In general the health situation in Kherson was unsatisfactory but this fact was never officially published or acknowledged.

Malaria

2. Malaria was widespread in Kherson. During the spring the Dnieper River overflowed, and on receding left swampy ponds in the river bottoms. Anopheles mosquitoes bred in these swamps, so that new cases of malaria occurred in the early summer. In 1952 the Soviet health authorities set up a malaria station from which the fight against this disease was directed. The fight was carried on in two phases. In the first phase, "Bonificator", or "scouts of a reconnaissance service", were sent out from the malaria station to various areas in the city to collect information concerning the ground problems which must be corrected. This group then presented its data to the malaria station, which initiated action to wipe out mosquito breeding grounds. A greenish powder, [redacted] was sprayed from U-2 type training planes over stagnant pools. During the stage when the mosquito larvae were developing, open trenches and stagnant pools were covered by oil (from hand-operated pumps) by the employees of the malaria station. A campaign had been under way for some years, and was still in operation in 1952, for the reclamation of flooded areas, not only to remove malaria breeding grounds but also to

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furnish new cultivation land. The station which directed this ground improvement was on the Tsyurupinsk side of the Dnieper, opposite Kherson.

2. The second phase of the malarial control program was the medical treatment of victims of the disease; [redacted] the malaria station had two physicians and two medical assistants for this purpose. Injections of quinine or akrikhin (atebrin) and tablets of akrikhin (in doses of 0.3 grams) were given to those who were suffering from the disease. Akrikhin tablets were also used as a prophylactic measure against malaria.

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Venereal Diseases

3. Prior to the war, venereal diseases were only infrequently encountered in Kherson. Venereal incidence increased during the German occupation of Kherson, and during the postwar years, because of the low standard of living. Young women resorted to prostitution as a means of supporting themselves. People contracting VD, generally of low cultural level, failed to report the disease. Gonorrhea and syphilis were found in equal incidence [redacted]

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4. No punishment was meted out to civilians with VD; military personnel were punished according to the attitude and severity of the commanding officer (guardhouse confinement was the usual penalty). Communist Party members who contracted VD could be expelled from the Komsomol and the Party.

5. Kherson had a VD dispensary, and a branch prophylaxis station which was open 24 hours a day. Gonorrhea was treated, [redacted] with penicillin injections.

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[redacted] five injections of crystalline penicillin (one injection every two hours until a total of five had been administered) was employed.

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[redacted] Immediately after World War II, penicillin was available for use in the Soviet Union; in 1952, Soviet, German, and Hungarian penicillin was available.

6. Prior to the war years, syphilis was treated with drugs containing mercury; in 1952 the therapy employed was to administer penicillin, neo-salvarsan, and bismuth in a series of treatments. [redacted]

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[redacted] the physician administered arsenic and bismuth in addition to the penicillin.

7. Treatment for VD was free. Some physicians maintained a private practice after their normal working hours, although this was not sanctioned officially. Patients who were treated by physicians under such circumstances were required to pay whatever fee the physician asked. These physicians stole the necessary drugs for VD treatment from polyclinic supplies. [redacted] a case involving theft of drugs by a Soviet army physician in Germany; [redacted] a physician took penicillin from Army stores for private use, and substituted bismuth therapy for penicillin therapy during normal duty hours to cover his theft. Punishment for this was a sentence of 10 years' imprisonment in a labor camp.

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Amoebic Dysentery

8. It was generally accepted by authorities in Kherson that the city was seriously affected by amoebic dysentery. Spread of the infection was increased by the absence of control of drinking water in Kherson and surrounding areas. The Dnieper River water was drunk regularly without treatment.

Amoebic dysentery was said to be wide-spread in the Asiatic section of the USSR.

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Bacillary Dysentery

9. This disease occurred in Kherson,

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Food Poisoning

10. a few isolated cases of food poisoning in Kherson; these were traced to the drinking of methanol, eating infected ice cream sold by private vendors, and eating packaged meats from the 8th of March Food Processing Plant in Kherson. This plant packaged fish and meat. Sporadic cases of botulism occurred every year and were attributed to infected products of the 8th of March plant. No deaths from such poisoning were reported.

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11. Whenever private citizens wanted to slaughter one of their diseased animals, they were required to obtain a permit from a government veterinarian certifying that the animal was fit for human consumption; these private owners were then allowed to make sausage and other meat products from the meat and sell these products without supervision.

Intestinal Parasites

12. Many people in Kherson were infested with ascarides and taeniae. Treatment for removal of these worms from infected individuals consisted of administrations of enemas, or of santonin. Occasionally, physicians prescribed "English Salt" ("Angliyskaya Sol"),

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Plague

13. the last case of plague in the Southern Ukraine occurred in 1864.

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Tetanus

14. Tetanus occurred throughout the Ukraine, and several cases were reported every year. Tetanus vaccine was administered whenever danger of infection occurred. Only individuals who had not received protective inoculations contracted tetanus. Medical assistants or nurses in small villages were permitted to administer tetanus vaccine to infected villagers, but active immunization was not in practice.

Tularemia

15. Tularemia did not occur in the Kherson Oblast, but was found in the Slavgorod steppe area in the northern Kazakh SSR. it was spread by the rodent hamster (Khomyak) which inhabited the prairie. Soviet textbooks stated that the "suslik", which is found in the Ukraine, is also a source of tularemia infection. The "suslik" is a small animal similar in size to a rat; it has a whiskered cat-like head, a tail which is only two inches long, and

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is of a greyish yellow color. It lives underground and stores grain in its burrow. These animals were eaten during the famine in the Ukraine. A campaign was under way in 1952 to destroy the "suslik". A government fur agency gave rewards of cloth goods to anyone bringing in the dead animals, and even furnished traps to suslik-hunters.

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Rabies

16. Rabies occurred only rarely in Kherson, and people who were bitten by rabid animals were advised to report immediately for treatment to local health offices. Vaccine was administered at any hospital, and, probably, at small village health stations.

Typhus

17. Only isolated cases of typhus occurred in Kherson in recent years. The number of cases of the disease increased immediately after the war, but no epidemics occurred and the incidence rapidly declined.

Typhoid and Paratyphoid Fevers

18. No serious outbreaks of typhoid and paratyphoid fevers occurred in the last few years in Kherson. An epidemic of typhoid fever occurred in Kherson in 1940.

At present, cases of typhoid fever and paratyphoid fever occur irregularly during the summer months.

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Poliomyelitis

19. It was the general opinion in the USSR that poliomyelitis occurred only infrequently in that country before 1948. Since that time the number of cases has increased, especially in the western European section; Soviet doctors attributed this to introduction of the disease from countries outside of the Soviet Union.

Tuberculosis

20. Tuberculosis presented the most serious problem to medical authorities in Kherson. A special tuberculosis station for children was set up to combat this disease. This station (Tubdispanser) administered tuberculin tests to assist in diagnosis; chest X-ray films and sputum analyses were also employed. Adults were examined at the local hospitals which had tuberculosis specialists and TB sections.

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21. Treatment of tuberculosis was conservative; isolation, rest, and injections of calcium (calcium chloride, and sodium bicarbonate /sic/ were administered.

Streptomycin was known, but was not widely used as a medicine because it was very scarce and very expensive.

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Penicillin was sometimes administered to TB patients, but only for supportive therapy.

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22. TB sanatoriums were located in the Crimea, especially in Yalta, and in the Altay region of Asia. This latter area became more widely known in the postwar years.

Animal Diseases

23. [REDACTED] 25X1
24. In the postwar period, there was an outbreak of glanders (Sap) among horses. [REDACTED] 25X1
25. Swine erysipelas (Rozha) epidemics occurred regularly year after year in the Kherson Oblast. They were usually localized, however, and confined to one or two villages. It was required by law that small pigs must be administered a vaccine against erysipelas. [REDACTED] 25X1
26. A swine plague (known in Kherson as "Chumka" and in the Ukrainian language as "Chervonka") was also found, [REDACTED] 25X1
- [REDACTED] Pigs in the Kherson region were known to be hosts for intestinal worms. Trichinosis also occurred as a result of eating infected pork, presumably from swine of the Kherson Oblast. 25X1
27. A very contagious fowl plague was endemic in this region. It was characterized by a sudden onset of diarrhea, a blue comb, and lowering of body temperature during the night; death followed rapidly after the appearance of first signs of the disease. A sporadic outbreak occurred every year and [REDACTED] the disease was found in the air. 25X1
28. There was a disease of sheep which occurred rarely in the Kherson area caused by the invasion of the sheep's liver by flukes. [REDACTED] it is said [REDACTED] to be caused by the sheep grazing in wet grass. 25X1
29. Animals found in the Kherson area included cows, sheep, pigs, chickens, and horses. Dairies in the surrounding area usually had 1,000 cattle. Such large enterprises had one or two veterinarians as permanent employees. Sheep were found from Kherson to Askaniya-Nova. Pigs in the area of Askaniya-Nova included a breed called Ukrainian Steppe pig (Ukrainskaya Stepnaya Poroda), famous for its high meat and low fat yield. This animal weighed about 350 kg. and was long and narrow. Chickens were raised for the most part on the right bank of the Dnieper River.
30. In the Dnieper River, opposite Kherson, were three islands called "Quarantine Islands". These islands had no inhabitants and no animals were raised there. No quarantine duties were carried on there; the name was apparently given to the islands many years ago.
31. [REDACTED] 25X1

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