

## Everyday Life of Almaty Region and City Dweller's in the 1920-1930s of the XX Century (State of Health Care)

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**Abstract:** The research deals with the studying of Almaty region dweller's everyday life, rising modern trends in the science of history and socialization of state branches reforming acts. The peculiarity of displaying a great interest in everyday life is in making an effort to comprehend the first Stalin 5 year plan's new construction samples from the point of view of a representative of a Soviet man, showing the information of the Almaty region dweller's ambitions and living in the special environment. In order to study industrialization years of the Soviet Union it is necessary to draw an attention to the new construction of the 5 year plans as 1930s modernization's effect was one of the most important factors in the life of the region dwellers. Among them we are going to point out medicine sphere figuring out the important information about region dwellers health care and the quality of the service.

**Key words:** Almaty region, Almaty city, everyday life, dwellers health care, regional hospitals

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### INTRODUCTION

Health care sphere, regardless of area let it be city or village is considered to be a decisive factor of the human being life. From this point in our opinion to be informed of this sphere's state and the quality of service to the dwellers of Almaty region and city is one of the most interesting topics. According to the archive document's fund medical service rendered to the dwellers wasn't up to the standard. The dwellers often experienced typhus, infectious abdominal diseases, trachoma, tuberculosis, plague and smallpox. The city hospitals hardly had clean beddings that are why the patients had to use the dirty ones. Beds in the hospitals were in the crucial state the patients may surely fall down of them. There were shortages of dressings. Tattered bandages were in use. The patients were served meager fare.

In 1913 only 356 rub. and 60 kopecks were allocated to the city hospitals. Medical treatment was chargeable. The Kazakhs were to be treated after they had bought the "medical card". Local authorities used speak ironically on the occasion: "the Kazakhs will go to medical establishments against their will because the air of hospitals is much more dangerous for steppe inhabitants than many of the diseases". In 1881 only 7 rub. 9 kopecks were spent for treating Kazakhs and

Kirgizes in Very hospital instead of 400 allocated rub. There were 10 doctors, 10 doctor's assistants and 3 dental mechanics in 1913 in Verny (Central government archive of RK, F.698, D.211). They were engaged mainly in private practice. Verny uezd-city health care department was established in the winter of 1919. Pasterov station was opened at that time in the city. In 1920 in spring a typhus hospital containing 25 beds began to function.

There weren't enough water barrels kerosene for lightening in the so called "infectious hospital". The wards were equipped with planking's instead of beds, the only horse cart was at the disposal of the whole hospital. Health care activities began in this way in Almaty. In addition to a military hospital and an in-patient department 5 more new hospitals had been built by 1927. 7 ambulatory clinics, a TB prophylactic center, riding first-aid service a malarial station, some chemist's "shops" a medical shop rendered the dwellers their service in the following year. In the late 1920s 34 doctors were employed and their number reached 205 in 1939. By that time the number of hospitals have increased from 2 up to 21, ambulatory clinics and polyclinics, correspondingly-from 3 up to 38 (Central government archive of RK, F.267, D.12).

According to the Zhetisu regional hospital record in the concerning infectious diseases spreading from

Table 1: Spreading infectious disease

Types of disease	Were registered	Were received	Were treated	Were transferred	Died	Not sick
Influenza	12	17	-	-	1	28
Diphtheria	-	1	-	-	-	1
Spotted fever	10	8	3	1	-	14
Mumps	5	6	7	1	-	3
Pneumonia	2	-	2	-	-	-

Table 2: Financing shortage

Types of disease	Were registered	Were received	Were treated	Were transferred	Died	Not sick
Rubella	1	-	-	-	-	1
Typhoid	-	2	-	-	-	2
Spotted fever	23	12	-	-	-	35
Typhina	25	15	12	-	-	40

February 1-10 and March 1-10 in 1930, many of the dwellers suffered the flu, spotted fever and relapsing fever (Bitenova, 1982). Infectious diseases spreading quickly took place because of financing shortage and not taking preventive measures (Table 1-2).

Zhetisu regional hospital Record (the therapeutic department) concerning infectious diseases spreading from February 1-10, 1930. Zhetisu regional hospital Record (the therapeutic department) concerning infectious diseases spreading from March 1-10, 1930 because of little money having been allocated to the Public Health Care department from Regional Health Care Department in 1926, half of the functioning health care institutions were closed. Among them were:

- In Almaty: a children’s clinic stopped functioning, its 30 beds it were placed within the regional hospital
- The regional hospital had only 150 beds
- In the infectious hospital from 50 beds only 30 remained
- The city outpatients clinic personnel was reduced up to 50%
- There were only 6 medical institutions and 151 employees in the city. Before it had had 8 medical institutions with 388 beds, where 278 employees work (Central government archive of RK, F.698, D.204)

Almaty city council paying much attention to the social sphere some measures was taken to improve it. Then the regional Paster hospital, regional insane hospital, Almaty city hospital. Almaty regional outpatient’s clinic, Almaty sanitary inspection began to be financed from the city budget. Almaty infectious diseases hospital began functioning on February 17, 1925 and X-ray consulting-room from October 1 of the same year. A doctor was sent to Leningrad to master the profession of a rontgenologist. An oculist’s service had been chargeable before and certain means were allocated

from the budget to make it free of charge. Specialists treating ears, throat, eyes worked in the oculist’s hospital.

At the expense of state budget a malaria station started its work in June, 1925. Chemical bacteriological laboratory began functioning from May, 1925. One more institution for mother and child was established in the advisory centre. About 22 beds were designated for children and 8 beds for pregnant but it worked from May 10 up to October. Instead children milk providing kitchen was opened at the expense of state (Central government archive of RK, F.698, D.195). By January 1, 1925 the following medical and sanitary institutions were functioning in Almaty:

- Regional Pasterovskaya station with the personnel of employees
- 30 bed regional insane hospital, 23 employees
- Central, ambulatory clinic of Almaty, 20 employees
- 70 bed Almaty city hospital, 54 employees
- Almaty city sanitary inspection, 6 employees

All these institutions were financed by the local budget. Because of means shortage the staffs of the following hospitals were cut down:

- In the province insane hospital-2 employees
- In Almaty hospital-6 employees
- In Almaty Central outpatients clinic-9 employees
- City sanitary inspection-2 employees (Central government archive of RK, F.698, D.230)

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Regional insane hospital:** Before the flood in 1921 it was located in specially built, buildings then the hospital was evacuated twice, at the moment it is located in 2 old houses. The heavy repair of it and special insulator for mad patients is necessary. By December 1, 1924; 31 patients had been registered, 51 of them were examined they had been treated 11179 bed-days (Central government archive of RK, F.267, D.12).

**Almaty city pasterovskaya station:** The station is situated in the suitable building but it needs repairing including to substitute gridiron in the yard where the rabbits are. Since October 1, 1925; 2 institutions have been funded from the state budget. 298 patients bitten by mad animals were examined and 3764 were vaccinated. Before July 1 1925, Almaty city hospital had 70 beds and then at the requests of dwellers they increased to some more 15 beds.

About 2497 rub. and 10 kopecks were allocated for repair works and the following was done: the walls of till buildings were whitewashed, some stoves were reconstructed in the infectious diseases department, new stoves were also fixed in the surgery department, the roofs of the buildings were painted and the new windows were put in. In the new 1925-1926 fiscal year a laundry and ironing room were built at the expense of state and local budgets. In addition to it a disinfection chamber and clothes drying device were established. In the period under review 2301 patients were registered and 46641 bed days were designated.

According to the staff 85 beds were distributed in the following way: 30 beds for policy holder (they are in the other building) 10 beds for obstetric department, 15 beds for infectious diseases department and 25 beds for surgery, gynecological and abdominal patients.

However, this kind of distribution were made formally, the real facts are over and above norms as examining and treating of pregnant and infectious diseases patients was obligatory. In the course of epidemic diseases spreading the number of infectious disease patients were over 40 patients which exceeded the norm 2-3 times. That was the case for the pregnant; sometimes their number was under 15. Taking in to situation like that women in childbirth were transferred from a narrow room to a 20 bed ward that had been repaired. (10 beds of which were built at the expense of medical fund). The number of the sick people for being treated in in-patient treatment was considerable thus, conflicts rose in case the patients weren't admitted to hospital. It was a common thing when the relatives make the patients stay in the hospital for a long time. Hospital staff had to place the patients of that kind in hospitals. In connection with the facts above provincial health care department applied for aid to increase the stuff at least up to 200 beds.

**Almaty city central outpatient clinic:** It treated the insured patients and their family member of executive committee and invalids. Other city and Almaty region dwellers were rendered ambulatory care at the city hospital. The stuff was financed by medical fund (3 doctors: a midwife and a recorder). On an average, the outpatient clinic served 125-150 patients. It had the following consulting rooms for:

- Abdominal diseases
- Obstetric and gynecological aids
- Dental aid

In the financial year 20846 patients were registered and were consulted 45541 times while having been treated (Ayagan, 2008).

**Almaty city dermatovenerologic hospital (100 bedded):** It was reconstructed from the insulator which had been at the authority of public educational inspection board it began to treat children from April 18, 1925. By city Executive Committee decision in been functioning under the supervision of provincial health care department. In summer the hospital was located in the former preselendik (migration) stop point and the autumn it continued its work at the military hospital buildings.

Beginning from the first day of its work up to October 1, 1925 its expenditure composed 8222 rub. and 63 kopecks. The hospital wasn't equipped with necessary furniture. The stuff has been doing its best but it couldn't provide clothes for all its patients. The medical provision was sufficient at that time.

**Roentgen consulting-room:** Total 3 staffs were admitted on October, in 1925-1926 fiscal years at the expense of local budget. The room stuff didn't work temporarily as its head left the province because of his (her) poor health. At the late February, 1926 after the doctor's having arrived who had been sent to Leningrad for mastering the profession of roentgenologist, the stuff goes on with its work.

**Eye curing department:** It administrated temporary medical assistance to parents. On an average, 100 patients were examined a day and then an in-patient clinic with 10 beds was equipped after the credit had been assigned for buying devices. The salaries of the employers and other expenses were paid through the chargeable medical service means and not from the local budget and only from December 1, 1925-1926 fiscal year it began to be financed by the local budget. Specialists curing ear, nose, throat and eye diseases worked there.

**State health care institutions:** Malaria station was opened in June, 1925. During a month organizational activities, studying of methods against malaria were performed. In addition to research works, the outpatient clinic examined the patients. Total 1556 patients were registered, examined at that period (8584 times) later a stationary chamber with 5 beds was established at the expense of the state budget and 1347 rub. and 18 kopecks were allocated. To meet the requirements of life, a new type of medical institution was opened near the province because the imperialist and civil war those Almaty region

dwellers had experienced, resulted the rising of such diseases as: tuberculosis, syphilis, malaria and etc. To overcome these difficulties the city authorities chose a way of clinical examination and opened the new types of medical and sanitary institutions. Their main goal was not only medical treating but to do scientific and research works and take preventive measures and it promoted improving the dwellers health. Moreover, there were tuberculosis and venereology dispensaries (Iskakov, 1985).

**Dermatovenerologic dispensary:** Dermatovenerologic dispensary was opened on September 12, 1925. From this date up to March only organizational activities and ambulatory care were performed and then sanitary preventive measures were taken. At the period under review schools and orphanages were checked: (1577 children) and the sick children were isolated from others in dermatovenerologic dispensaries. 3 consulting rooms functioned there:

- About 805 patients were registered because of gonorrhoea and its advanced form
- About 4701 patients-concerning syphilis
- About 1220 patients-because of dermal diseases

About 600 (0, 6 gr.) ampoules of Nervalvarsan were used. 2594 patients were registered, they were examined 6708 times. 1808 rub. and 54 kopecks were allocated to the dispensary in 1925.

**Chemical and bacteriological laboratory:** It was opened in May, 1925. After Kazakh People's health care department making a decision about opening a laboratory at the expense of the state budget an application was addressed to provincial executive committee with the request of laboratory properties handing on to provincial health care department which was in the possession of medtorg (medical trading department). At the same time 24 guinea were bought to test Wassermann reaction. Bacteriological laboratory made 913 analyses and 2610 rub. and kopeks were allocated to the laboratory (Gusupbekov, 1939).

**Maternity and infant welfare centre:** It was opened in January 1925 and could examine 20 patients a day. Till October 1925 it functioned through 900 rub. allocated by former Turkistan public health care department and medical fund accounts. Exhibition of pictures are exhibited there showing how to look after babies. Babies under

1 year old and were examined 788 times, the ones under 1-3-430 times. The revealed diseases they had: gastrointestinal diseases, infectious diseases-101, non-infectious diseases-385. Except the institution there was a mother's and baby's house with 30 beds including 22 beds for children and 8 beds for expectant mothers. It functioned from May up to October, 1925. According to Kazakh People's health care committee's order it was closed. The replaced new institution-an advisory bureau with milk canteen was included into the state budget.

During January and August in 1926 1000 mothers and children were examined at the advice bureau and their number reached 9000 at that period of time in 1927. In comparison with outcomes in 1926, the number of women increased 4 times and the children number-2, 5 times. The mother not only took advice but they realized the importance of them. The volume of milk canteen increased 3 times. Advice bureaus began their work there. At that period of midwife Anna renting a flat in Pervo-Gildieskaya Street 4336 was engaged in her job. After Almaty had become the capital of our state, state of health care department began to improve. The main reason of it was based on the fact that the population of the new city increased and the main task of the doctors and city authorities was to raise medical institutions service level. Owing to the replacement of the sanitary-bacteriological center to Alma-Ata from Kyzyl-Orda control of typhus was to be consolidated.

Almaty had a favorable climate condition thanks to its location but the typhus was spread in most part of the city, many the dwellers living outside the city suffered from this disease. According to statistics, 3500 inhabitants tended to get ill. As many of the Malaya Stanitsa dwellers experienced the infectious diseases sanitary-bacteriological institute authorities sent the doctors instructors there to deliver lectures. Preventive measures were taken against typhus: all the inhabitants were tested, the patients were to stay in the hospital until they recovered completely. Total 28 schools were involved in conversations, the employees and pupils were examined. The institute staff issued leaflets about preventive measures against the disease. In order to give reliable information about typhus a film was brought from Moscow. Total 2 medical institutions were opened in Almaty: a tuberculous dispensary with a night sanatorium and Medeu holiday home sanatorium.

Those 2 medical institutions were equipped well and the medical experts were of high quality. The clean mountain air good feeding at the Medeu sanatorium had favourable effects for quick recovering of patients. Medeu holiday home rendered a service to 55 patients and

clients. It was presumed that the number of them would reach 67 in the nearest future. The patients of the holiday home regained the necessary weight and recovered in due time. The peculiarities of the tuberculous dispensary were cleanliness and proper service. Provincial social insurance department used to grant passes for 12 patients to Arasan holiday home. In April, 1928 a week-long measure "For healthy generation" was held for revealing the pupil's getting ill reasons. Abundance of mental activities (being busy with studies all day long) not doing physical exercises at all not maintaining the requirements of hygiene wrong nourishment were considered to be the dangerous factors influencing our youth's health. It was revealed that 50% of the pupils at schools suffered from anemia, pulmonary diseases (tuberculosis).

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In the course of studying pre-school children's health, it was found out that most of them had poor health. When a week, under developed child goes to school his (her) lagging behind will make a progress. At school a pupil is on the run, swallows dust and performs mental activities. Various diseases occur due to these factors. Tuberculosis is in the first place among the diseases. Medical verification outcomes in RKFSR showed that 20% of pupils suffered from tuberculosis. They were the children of different ages. Many of them lived under insanitary conditions and their living conditions were poor. This situation was same with region and city schools (Bragin and Belacerkovsri, 1937).

The children suffering from tuberculosis were often tired absent-minded, hot-tempered. The children of that kind often didn't get on well with teachers and were in the rank of these who left the school. They became homeless and neglected. There were many reasons for these phenomena: transition period, war, starvation period, pedagogical and social indifference and other reasons.

In January, 1929 in the report of the City Council, it was pointed out about the organizing of the first aid medical service (rendering of medical service to the dwellers at home proved to be useless). It was a mistake when the city council members reduced the home service doctor's number up to 1. During the epidemic diseases spreading the only doctor wasn't able to examine 50000 dwellers. The doctor usually choose 8-9 houses out of 20-30 addresses that were near the out-patient clinic; the others only relied on God's mercy. Moreover, the doctor wasn't provided with the car, he (she) had to walk to the place of destination. Necessity of medical aid grew day by day. As there was much work to

do at the outpatient's clinic the local health care department didn't allow the doctor's leave the place of their work, in case of examining the patient there, sometimes the doctor wasn't able to make right diagnosis and not everybody could afford to call a doctor.

At an early June, in 1929 the doctors of the city hospitals were to perform the function of daily alert doctor. Up to that time only nurses used to do the duty like that. Due to moving specialists from central institutions the local health care department issued an order according to which the aid post heads, located in Almtay-Frunze (Bishkek) highway must administer a medical aid to the immigrants. The aid posts were located in Georgievka (a local hospital) Kordye (a doctor's assistant aid post) Otar (a doctor's assistant aid post) Uzun-agash (a local hospital) Kaskelen (doctor's assistant aid post).

### **CONCLUSION**

Due to replacing the capital in Almaty there wasn't much change in the medical institutions. For example, as to the central outpatients clinic, it could admit 400 patients. It happened because of means shortage but the number of patients were increasing day by day. At the expense of district budget an outpatients clinic was extended but that wasn't enough yet.

First aid service at home was improved more or less; the only doctor in the city was given a horse before he had been walking. They were waiting for an ambulance to arrive soon which had been bought from abroad. Preventive measures against typhus were taken successfully. Typhus station had a suitable staff. Not being extended yet it had new devices. District health care department searched for the ways to find the source of means for establishing a night sanatorium for the patients suffering from tuberculosis but it failed because of an edifice shortage. What concerns the city's chemist's shops, their service level was rather low. Medicaments were given out according to the "planned order". If the dwellers went to get an aspirin or a powder of quinine, it was a customary thing to send them back with words: "this medicine will be given out tomorrow". At the same time there were many consumer goods, various types of eau-de-Cologne and soaps, cosmetic powder and etc. At the counters of Almaty "Gubmedtorg" (district medical trade) shops. One may think that it was a perfume and cosmetics shop. And a customer coming to get eye glasses used to go back home without nothing.

The residents of the city without insurance policies had to stand in a queue for or two hours at the chemist's shops. And when it was one's turn to buy a medicine, a

receptionist often was saying: “we haven’t got this medicine”. The city inhabitants who didn’t have insurance policies weren’t usually served.

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