

## Touch for Health in the Soviet Union

by Wayne Topping, Ph. D. and Friends

2622 Birchwood Ave, Bellingham, WA 98225

During July 1990 I had the great pleasure of meeting a holistically-minded Soviet medical doctor, Dr Michael Lazarev and some of his professional colleagues while they were visiting Bellingham, Washington. They were very interested in Touch for Health techniques I shared with them and invited me to teach in the Soviet Union. Rather than going in by myself, I decided to share the experience with other Touch for Health Instructors.

The travel and accommodations were arranged by Ambassadors International, a Bellingham organization that specializes in American-Soviet exchanges.

On February 3, a group of 10, undaunted by possible terrorist attacks on planes because of the Gulf War, and unfazed by the unrest in the Soviet Union, flew out of Newark, Los Angeles, and Seattle bound for Helsinki, Finland. We all met February 4, in Helsinki, where we had our orientation meeting and discussed how we were going to team-teach four days of Touch for Health in Moscow.

Our group consisted of Dawn Speck-Hughes of Ambassadors International; North American Touch for Health Instructors, Jan Cole, Norma Harnack, Camille Hetherington, Arnetta Hildreth, Judy Levin, Irene Yaychuk, and Wayne Topping; Three-in-One Facilitator, Carol Hontz; and a Bellingham entrepreneur, Joel Kronenberg.

While in Moscow, we stayed in a hotel built for the 1980 Olympics. The first two days of Touch for Health were taught in a nearby auditorium and the final two days in a lecture hall in a polyclinic or private hospital. Over 160 attended the seminar including quite a number of medical doctors, athletic coaches and teachers. During the first two days we taught a regular Touch for Health I class. During the final two days techniques were drawn from Touch for Health II and III. For part of that period the participants were split into three groups: a medically-oriented group,

teachers, and athletic coaches, for more specific information drawn from Educational Kinesiology, the MAPS course, etc. Our goal was to give the Soviets techniques and information that could be applied immediately in their work places.

Our schedule was filled with extracurricular activities. Some, for our relaxation and pleasure, included the Moscow Circus and an evening of folk and modern dancing. Tours to Zagorsk, a center for the Russian Orthodox Church in the Soviet Union, Red Square, the Kremlin, etc. introduced us to the Soviet way of life and some of its history. Some activities were arranged to give us a better insight into the Soviet health care and educational systems. We were given a tour of a very profitable, privately-operated hospital (polyclinic). There were two visits to the Children's Rehabilitation Clinic for asthmatic children operated by Dr. Michael Lazarev. One visit was to a large children's teaching hospital in Moscow. After a general discussion with many of their staff our planned tour of the hospital was changed. A number of us worked with the children instead, to demonstrate Touch for Health procedures. A few of us visited the operative and post-operative areas. With insufficient money to purchase equipment that is available and used in the west, we could see that the Soviets were hungry for any information that could be used to help their patients.

The return rail trip to Helsinki included a stop-over in Leningrad, the Venice of the North. Here we could be typical tourists, visiting the Hermitage art gallery, St. Isaac's Cathedral and other facilities to get a taste of the vast cultural wealth of this city.

A final night in Helsinki to discuss our shared experiences, then it was off to Canada and the United States.

We all had a wonderful experience and learned much. But, how successful was it in terms of Touch for Health? Very successful!

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We did make an impact! Our work was featured in Soviet newspapers, part of our workshop was shown on Moscow television, Wayne was interviewed by Radio Moscow, and articles are going to be written by some of the Soviet participants. Before we departed, a Touch for Health Association of The Soviet Union was formed, with 17 committee members from some of the various organizations represented at our seminar.

Since our trip in February much has happened. Dr. John Thie has given permission for the Touch for Health book to be translated into Russian and this project is partially completed as of the beginning of April. Touch for Health is being used in some of the Soviet hospitals and many of the therapists have integrated it with the methods they were already using.

This month (April) Carol Hontz and Wayne Topping were both back in the Soviet Union to give presentations at an international conference on "Pedagogues for Peace and Mutual Understanding" held in Dubner about two hours from Moscow. Most of the participants were from the various Soviet republics with a smaller number from Japan, Italy, England, France, Denmark, West Germany, etc. Carol and Wayne had been invited to speak because part of the conference was directed at innovative new ways to teach. Carol presented Brain Gym (Educational Kinesiology/One Brain) exercises and talked about Montessori education. Wayne taught the emotional stress release technique and showed many applications to the classroom environment. In a separately organized mini-workshop for about 60 people—medical doctors with some

teachers—Wayne again taught various stress release techniques based on muscle testing.

Prior to the conference, Carol taught three days One Brain in Moscow. After the conference, Wayne taught a 20 hour class in Moscow reviewing what we taught in February and adding the Touch for Health II and III procedures we didn't cover at that time. Over 100 people participated, including many more doctors than we had on our first visit.

As of the time of writing John Varun Maguire and Wayne plan to go to Moscow to teach an Instructor Training Workshop in June. It is expected that by the time you read this paper we'll be able to report that we now have 20-40 certified Touch for Health Instructors in the Soviet Union and that Touch for Health is about to explode (a peaceful controlled explosion!)

The Soviet Union is currently undergoing difficult times economically and politically with an uncertain future.

You can give a man a fish and you feed him for a day, or you can teach him to fish and you feed him for a lifetime. The Soviet Union is so immense, its difficulties so immense, and its needs so immense. What we could contribute financially would merely be a drop in the bucket. However, through teaching them Touch for Health a relatively small group of us, representing you, have given them a gift and taught them a new way to fish that I am sure they will treasure greatly and use extensively.

A big thank you to each of the participants for a wonderful profitable shared experience.