NO FIELD of German Professional knowledge suffered more severely during the Nazi regime than did medicine. Today, practising physicians in particular need a chance to catch up to new medical advances made in other parts of the world during the Hitler blackout, and the Military Government is trying to help them.

The German medical profession, which led the world in the golden days of Robert Koch and Paul Ehrlich in the half-century before the first World War, found itself in 1945 about 10 to 15 years behind the more advanced countries of Europe and North America, and almost completely unfamiliar with the new discoveries made in the United States and Great Britain.

The whole subject of antibiotics, for example, was almost a closed book. Sulfanilamide was in limited use only but the newer sulfonamides, such as sulfadiazine, were practically unknown. Penicillin and streptomycin were only strange names in the occasional American or British medical journals which had been smuggled into Germany during the war.

THE UNDERGRADUATE training of medical students also suffered grievously under the Nazi system. There was no systematic deferment of medical students from service in the German army and there was nothing quite comparable to the US Army ASTP and the Navy V-12 programs for in-service professional education. German students were often afforded intermittent periods of attendance at various medical schools but there was no organized, coordinated program. The previous high standards of German medical education declined enormously under political interference by the Nazis, due both to elimination of outstanding teachers and students, and to the forced acceptance of many a dull-witted party member. Thus a whole generation of doctors was graduated whose competency to practise their chosen profession left much to be desired.

However, many members of the German medical profession still are exceptionally well grounded in the basic principles of medicine and surgery and some of the leaders have a certain degree of acquaintance with new developments. Some of these leaders rapidly brought themselves up to date on what had happened during the recent “dark ages”. Therefore, a few leading physicians and surgeons approach their American counterparts in knowledge and ability, but the average German family doctor may be as much as 15 years behind his counterpart in the United States. The need for postgraduate medical education for the practising physician thus became paramount, and overshadowed by far the need for undergraduate training.

ATTEMPTS have been made in various cities in the US area of occupation to meet the urgent need for postgraduate medical education of practising physicians. One of the broadest and most carefully planned has been the Medical Academy in the US Sector of Berlin. This institution was originally proposed in November 1947 by Lt. Col. Adam J. Rapalski, then chief of the Public Health Branch of GMGS.

It was planned to utilize, chiefly the clinical material and facilities of the Augusta-Viktoria and Zinnowwald hospitals, two of the largest in the US Sector. Many of the details of the Academy have been worked out by the tireless efforts of the medical directors of these two hospitals, Dr. Franz-Josef Misgheld and Dr. Fritz Hussels, together with Dr. Georg Hinzmann-Fuerstenau and Dr. Erich Weber of the Association of Physicians in the US Sector of Berlin.

Both of the hospitals in question had suffered extensive war damage and considerable repairs were necessary in order to provide lecture halls, demonstration rooms, laboratories and other necessary facilities. A sum of slightly over RM 200,000 was made available by the Finance Branch of OMGBS in December 1947, to be used for the necessary repairs and for purchase of equipment such as slide and motion picture projectors and demonstration models. This money came chiefly from fines collected by the US Military Government Courts.

PROGRESS toward the reconstruction of a teaching ward and lecture hall in the Augusta-Viktoria Hospital and a surgical amphitheater in the Zinnowwald Hospital went on slowly during the first half of 1948. It was decided in April 1948 also to utilize the clinical facilities of the Behring Hospital in Zehlendorf, which had been a German military hospital prior to 1945, and was one of the best planned and equipped in the US Sector but it had suffered extensive air raid damage. Construction of a special building for the Academy was contemplated, as well as repairs for existing departments.

All major repair work was brought to a full stop by the imposition of the Russian blockade, which made almost all kinds of building materials unobtainable. The currency reform which was used by the Russians as an excuse for the blockade also posed the threat of the Medical Academy fund being greatly reduced overnight, but conversion of this money to the western Deutshe Mark at a rate of
THE BLOCKADE has forced the Academy to modify its plans somewhat, but a wide selection of courses began in November to continue through the winter. Both formal courses and practical demonstrations, as well as seminars, are to be offered and are especially planned for the benefit of the physician in private practice.

Subjects include not only surgery, internal medicine and almost all the recognized sub-specialties, but also such special subjects as a refresher course in anatomy, physiology and chemistry, pathology (with special emphasis on the postwar period), and psychosomatic medicine. There is also a course in dentistry for dentists. The entire curriculum offers a broad selection of courses which would be the envy of many a physician in the United States.

Each doctor is to select only a few courses in which he is particularly interested, and each course is to require one to six hours weekly. The courses are open to all licensed physicians in Greater Berlin and the surrounding area at a nominal fee.

The Medical Academy also sponsors special lectures and demonstrations by visiting experts from the western zones of Germany and from foreign countries. In the past two months there have been programs by Dr. I. A. B. Cathie of the Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital in London, speaking on streptomycin therapy, and by Dr. Aschenbrenner of the City Hospital Hamburg-Altona, lecturing on experiences in the 1947 poliomyelitis epidemic in Hamburg.

THE Medical Academy does not offer undergraduate instruction leading to a medical degree, and is entirely separate from the new Free University of Western Berlin. At the time the Academy was founded, there was a possibility that it might do something for the hundreds of non-communist medical students who were forced by Russian pressure out of the University of Berlin Faculty of Medicine at the Charité Hospital. This problem has now been met by the establishment of a medical faculty of the Free University, and that institution and the Medical Academy are expected to develop individually, each meeting a separate need.

The future of the building and reconstruction program of the Medical Academy is naturally somewhat in doubt and it appears likely that little can be done under conditions of the present blockade. The blockade is no serious obstacle, however, to the carrying out of the courses of instruction already described. They are to fill a definite and very real need and are expected to do much to raise the professional standards of the practising German medical profession to their former eminence.

(Continued from page 4)

Training for Production

be given in both Military Government and military installations.

In response, General Clay called a joint meeting of his manpower and personnel advisers, the top ranking officials in EUCOM, EES and Military Government and invited the labor ministers of the US Area and, through the British Military Governor, the labor ministers of the British Zone. The newly-established German Bizonal Manpower Department also was represented.

In addressing the conference, General Clay said in part:

"I feel this program to be so important that we are going to install it in all of our Army installations in Germany, in order that we may get the maximum efficiency from our employees, have happy employees, and have the minimum number of workers to do the job.

"As a large employer of German labor, we have a great interest in the welfare of that labor. Our concern with the German economy also gives us a great interest in the total German manpower problem. I am of the opinion that a training program of this type will accomplish a great deal. After this meeting we will ask the members of our Military Staff concerned with this problem to meet separately so that they can arrange the details for putting the program into effect. We would also appreciate it if the German Ministers of Labor from the several states would meet with experts who can advise them in further detail with respect to the program. I am sure that the German Ministers of Labor will understand that this is not a mandatory program. It is being offered only as a service and in the genuine belief that it will do much to stimulate economic recovery."

After hearing Mr. McCarthy give an explanation of the program and its purposes, the Military Staff and the German Ministers met in separate sessions. Decision was made on the American side to see that the training is carried out through the military posts under the direction of EUCOM and Mr. Robert M. Barnett, personnel adviser, CINCEUR.

In the labor ministers' meeting it was agreed that they should sponsor the program in the Bizonal Area and decision on definite organizational details are to be made at a meeting in early November.

In the meantime the program is going ahead in three states of the US Zone. Basic 10-hour courses are being conducted in industry and PX and military installations by the personnel already trained at Oberursel. Requests are being received from many industries and all types of establishments for the program to be given to their supervisors. It is planned that by April 1949 all three courses—employee instruction, employee relations and job improvement—will be under way and the program will stand as proof of what can be accomplished by joint voluntary effort.

German Labor in France Aided

A secretariat to assist German workers employed in France has been established in Paris by the French anti-Communist labor federation, "Force Ouvriers." It provides information and advice on wages, working conditions and related matters. The work of the secretariat is conducted in coordination with the Bizonal Trade Union Council.

INFORMATION BULLETIN

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