

that he was "taken aback by the sense of incompetence manifest by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission in their backing and filling in the published transcripts" of their deliberations. He concluded that there was some "slackness" among the regulators, but that few people would construe this as a disaster for science. Of public opinion, he said simply that he "learned long ago not to trust the polls."

The opinion polls may be an untrustworthy technology themselves, but they give a sketch of popular sentiment that is at least as reliable as a month's file of newspaper clippings. They show that Americans are remarkably steady and optimistic supporters of technological enterprise. The Opinion Research Corporation poll, taken for the National Science Foundation's *Science Indicators*, found that scientists were described in favorable terms by 86 percent of the re-

spondents in 1972, by 89 percent in 1974, and by 81 percent in 1976. (The margin of error is usually considered to be three or four points.) Scientists invariably rank higher in public esteem than ministers, architects, bankers, lawyers, businessmen, and congressmen.

An official at the polling firm of Yankelovich, Skelly, and White said that he has seen no evidence that technology has fallen into disrepute. Every year since 1974 Yankelovich surveys have included a question asking pollees to agree or disagree with the following statements: "Science and advanced technology have brought us more benefits, through better products and an easier, healthier life, than the problems they may have created." The response has been "absolutely steady," according to a Yankelovich official, always falling within a range of 81 to 84 percent agreeable. He added

that people under 35 are generally more inclined to think well of new technologies (such as electronic banking and the use of computers) than older people. The exception is nuclear power, which has more support among older people than among the young. There is one indication, however, that the young expect less of technology than their parents. A recent Yankelovich poll found that while 52 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement that "technology will find a way of solving the problems of shortages in natural resources," only 29 percent of people between the ages of 18 and 24 attending college agreed that resource problems would be solved.

A poll taken last year by Cambridge Reports, Inc., for Union Carbide found that people "regard science and technology favorably. They feel that technological progress creates more jobs

## Science in Russia Is Full of Holes

The Soviet edition of *Science*, a facsimile of the English language edition, continues to be heavily censored. Only six in a recent sample of 20 issues were wholly uncensored.

Material about Soviet internal affairs is regularly deleted, as are articles on strategic arms and American-Soviet scientific exchange. Reference to religion also seems

taboo: a story about the scientific tests being applied to the Shroud of Turin was cut from the issue of 21 July 1978.

The contents page of the 22 September 1978 issue affords a typical example of the Glavlit censor at work (below right). The cover of that issue featured the first Soviet spacecraft to carry U.S. scientific experiments.—N.W.

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