

Little is known about diseases other than lung cancer that may be stimulated by ambient tobacco smoke, although experience with active smokers suggests that there is reason for concern. This is another "important topic for future epidemiologic inquiries," according to the report.

Many issues remain unresolved, but one clear implication of this study is that smoking presents a public health threat broader than generally appreciated. It endangers not just the health of those who are competent to accept such risks, but also children, who are not. ■ **ELIOT MARSHALL**

Russians Querying U.S. Sovietologists

Two representatives from the Soviet Academy of Sciences were in this country last month circulating a questionnaire, apparently the first of its kind, designed to gain information on the state of Soviet studies in the United States. Yuri K. Igritsky and Leonid K. Shkarenkov, from the Institute of Scientific Information for Social Sciences, visited a number of Soviet study centers and reportedly dropped off about 100 copies of the questionnaire.

The Russians, under General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev, are "much more interested in the real state of the U.S. today than they were 5 or 10 years ago," says Bruce Parrott of the Johns Hopkins School for Advanced International Studies. He said, though, that he would not be answering the query because of the Soviets' habits of taking things out of context.

Peter Reddaway of the Smithsonian Institution's Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies says the questionnaire has a "very definite political goal" which is "to find out if sovietologists in the U.S. influence American policy." He adds that the Soviets are getting more interested in trying to "discern the true facts about various aspects of their own economy and society," and they recognize that Americans have been studying these "much more objectively than the Soviets have."

A State Department official says the most interesting aspect of the query is that it reflects a softening of the Russians' "fairly intense hostility toward all sovietologists" that grew up with the Cold War expansion of Soviet studies in the United States. These experts have been seen as partly responsible for the government's animosity toward the Soviet Union. But now the Soviets seem prepared to recognize that scholars hold a variety of views and that hard-line anti-Soviet emigrés do not, as formerly perceived, dominate the field.

The questionnaire on "Soviet Studies in the USA in the 1980's," written on a manual typewriter, reads as follows:

"Dear sir,

to acquire more precise firsthand knowl-

edge of the aforementioned subject matter, we beg you at your will and choice answer the following questions. Thank you very much in advance.

1. What did the new Act of 1982/83 change in the scale and intensity of Soviet studies in the United States? [The reference is to a \$4.5-million annual increase in Soviet and East European studies.]

2. Can the study of the Soviet Union and Russia in the United States be a positive (or negative) factor in shaping American-Soviet relations?

3. Is it true today, as Peter Wiles remarked in 1964 (in the 'Survey' Journal), that the Soviet Union is studied in the NATO countries with prejudice that cannot be denied?

4. If yes, what can (or should) be done to lessen that prejudice?

5. Is there a public image (or set of images) of the Soviet Union prevalent in the

USA? Do American scholars of the USSR contribute in some way or other to the making and preservation of that image?

6. Has the conservative tide in the United States of the recent years exerted significant influence upon Soviet Studies in the United States? Where can this influence be most commonly traced?

7. If conservative ideology and conservative perception of the USSR loses its élan and influence in the States, what will succeed it?

8. Is the concept of totalitarianism (which seems to dominate again in the American views on the USSR) adequate to describe the Soviet Union? Are there any concepts that run counter to that one in American sovietology?

9. While some American scholars of the Soviet Union view it as a traditional great power succeeding Imperial Russia, others interpret it in the categories of 'world revolution' or 'communist expansion,' still others follow the theory of 'dualist' nature of the Soviet state. What version do you adhere to and why? Does conservative theory shed any light on this matter? Finally, which 'model' of the Soviet Union is most appealing to the average American?

10. Do you think there can be positive understanding between the United States and the Soviet Union leading to mutually satisfactory relations, and if so what ought to be done to promote it?" ■

CONSTANCE HOLDEN

Xerox Launches Learning Institute

The Xerox Corporation, citing the vast cost to American businesses of retraining new workers who never learned to read, write, or count in school, has launched a new not-for-profit research institute to study how artificial intelligence and the cognitive sciences can be applied to human learning.

The Institute for Research on Learning will be associated with Xerox's Palo Alto Research Center (PARC) and with the University of California Graduate School of Education at Berkeley. It will be headed by George E. Pake, the founder and recently retired director of PARC, and it will build on PARC's pioneering research in computer-aided instruction.

"Learning isn't just a matter of pouring knowledge into a kid's head," says John Seely Brown, vice president of advanced research at PARC and an associate director of the new institute. "People come into learning with fragmentary concepts already

in place—like a set of eyeglasses for looking at the world in a certain way. So the question in education is, How do you reconceptualize the world? How do you craft a new set of eyeglasses. And that's not a passive process."

Thus the importance of the artificial intelligence and cognitive science approach to learning, he says. Instead of concentrating on rote memorization and drill, these disciplines ask very precise questions about how a student mentally processes information, how he or she structures knowledge, and how computers can best be designed to facilitate that processing.

"One of our hopes at the institute is to attract a new kind of theoretician who is interested in these questions," says Brown.

Xerox is investing \$5 million to start the institute and is seeking other companies to join as partners. Results will be published and made available to the public. ■

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