

# Russian View Of Drinking Changes

► **THE MAIN CAUSE** of divorce in the Soviet Union is excessive drinking of vodka.

A Moscow writer reported in the Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol published by the Rutgers Center of Alcohol Studies, New Brunswick, N.J., Spring, 1966, that "heavy drinking and alcoholism are usually held accountable for many-faced tragedies." Elena Korenevskaya of the Novosti Press Agency said that "according to figures provided by the Ministry of Protection of Social Order, out of each 10 crimes, nine are committed under the influence of alcohol."

Almost all delinquent and retarded children come from families with an alcoholic history, and the greater part of traffic accidents happen when either the driver or the pedestrian is intoxicated, the writer pointed out. Soviet police automatically suspend a driver's license for at least one year if driving is impaired by liquor. The amount of alcohol consumed does not affect the ruling.

The per capita consumption of alcohol has fallen sharply from the pre-revolutionary level, when it stood at three-quarters of a bucket annually (equal to about 7.4 quarts), but drinking is a problem that cannot be ignored in the USSR.

"After the October Revolution of 1917, the enthusiastic naive sociologists solemnly proclaimed that with the change of society, drinking was automatically doomed," Miss Korenevskaya said. "And since drinking as a national problem did not exist, at least officially, nobody studied the statistics and nobody tried to cope with it."

Among the ways of dealing with alcoholics are early medical diagnosis, factory education programs, sports and fresh air colonies for alcoholics, hypnotic treatment and propaganda spread by all information media. They have also instituted sobering-up stations and jail terms and have forbidden the sale of vodka by the glass.

• Science News, 89:275 April 16, 1966

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# Gastric Acid Inhibitor Upset by Surgery

► **RUNAWAY** secretions of gastric acid after extensive surgery removing small intestines are probably due to the lost action of an inhibitor, a Harvard Medical School professor said in Boca Raton, Fla.

Dr. Melvin P. Osborne, principal investigator of a six-man group, told the American Surgical Association meeting that the secretion of acid varies in proportion to the amount of small intestine removed. The greater the removal, the greater the acid secretion.

The life of a 16-year-old boy, who had had all but eight inches of his 26 feet of small intestine removed at Boston City Hospital, was saved only after additional surgery was performed on the vagus nerve to control runaway acid secretion.

Later reports by research fellows in the Sears Surgical Laboratory at the Hospital showed a correlation between the removal of portions of the small intestine of dogs and the rise in acid secretion from pouches made from the dogs' stomachs. Still other studies confirmed the increase of acid secretion after bowel surgery.

Research is continuing to determine the chemical nature of the inhibitor, because without control of the acid, death will occur.

The National Institute of Arthritis and Metabolic Diseases, Bethesda, Md., is sponsoring research by the Boston group.

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# Radiation Cleanses Clams Efficiently

► **HARD SHELL** clams or quahogs from polluted water can be cleaned in one day with salt water purified by ultraviolet radiation, two University of Rhode Island professors reported.

The quahogs could be cleaned in a proposed plant designed by Dr. An-

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dreas Holmsen and Joseph Stanislaos. Salt water radiated with ultraviolet light is pumped across the quahogs continuously for 24 hours. The clams siphon this sterilized water in and out of their bodies, getting rid of the polluted coastal waters in which they grew.

The clams can be cleaned at a cost of 25 cents per bushel, instead of present day costs of about \$1.85 per bushel.

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# Farm Accident Victims Lack Fast Medical Care

► **AGRICULTURE** has the third highest accident rate of any major occupation, and kills more people than any other, partly because of the lack of nearby doctors.

Medical and rehabilitation services to the farmer should be improved to protect this vital part of the country's work force, L. W. Knapp, Jr. of the Institute of Agricultural Medicine, University of Iowa, Iowa City, said in Chicago.

Farm machinery manufacturers also should improve the safety of equipment, Mr. Knapp told the Third Congress on Environmental Health, sponsored by the American Medical Association.

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