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Meanwhile, Down in the Valley

Last month saw the collapse of negotiations at the summit, with accusations from Moscow that Washington had wrecked the Paris meeting by staging the 1 May flight of the U-2 reconnaissance plane, and accusations from Washington that Moscow had been determined all along that nothing should come of the Big Four conference. At a lesser height, the quarrel moved into the United Nations Security Council where the Soviet Union sought unsuccessfully to get the United States indicted for "aggression." Down in the valley, however, at the level of physics, medical science, and the arts, the world was treated to the sight of another aspect of the East-West dialogue continuing undisturbed.

Premier Khrushchev may have withdrawn his invitation to President Eisenhower to visit him in the Kremlin, but exchange programs that had started before the crisis proceeded right through it. American physicists visited various high-energy research centers in the Soviet Union, American medical scientists attended a conference in Moscow on poliomyelitis, and the American violinist Isaac Stern played encores to Russian applause. In this country, Soviet scientists specializing in thermonuclear research visited the James Forrestal Laboratory at Princeton University and other laboratories, and Soviet medical scientists attended conferences at Johns Hopkins and elsewhere on heart disease and related problems.

The hope that exchange programs will promote mutual trust is equally strong when relations on the political level are not so favorable as when they are favorable. An increase in mutual trust at the top can lead to greater opportunities for exchange below, and bringing people together at lower levels in activities that command common loyalties can affect relations above. Exchange may promote mutual confidence by correcting the distorted images that East and West may have of each other. We do not expect that at the mere sight of our magical presence all Russia will break out into "The Stars and Stripes Forever," but we can hope that those with eyes to see will learn that we are not a nation of hungry, exploited workers ripe for revolt against our secretary-chasing, cigar-chomping masters. And, for our part, in observing the Soviet way of life, we will never tire of watching demonstrations that the Russia of Khrushchev is not that of Stalin.

An increase in mutual trust generated by exchange programs can also bear on more specific American goals such as carrying out a step-by-step disarmament program. Part of the theory underlying this program is that the confidence between East and West developed in one step will furnish the confidence needed for the next step. But since new negotiations can also be new sources of suspicion, independent methods for building mutual trust are also necessary.

President Eisenhower has called for a continuation of cultural contacts and "businesslike dealings" with Soviet leaders, while Premier Khrushchev has found this statement of "positive value." This is good news. In the technical portion of exchange, our hope is that scientists, in seeking broader avenues of communication, will help reduce the tensions that their own achievements have made so dangerous.—J.T.