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The Stowe Conferences on Science and World Affairs

The resumption of nuclear weapons testing, announced just before the Stowe Conferences opened, immediately made it doubtful that the conferences could be held at all. It is consequently all the more significant that the participants were able, in spite of a stormy atmosphere, to arrive at constructive recommendations (see page 984). As befits scientists, views from East and West were exchanged with frankness and reasonable objectivity.

The first of the two conferences, being the less controversial, more quickly attained agreement on certain measures. If carried through, the resulting international cooperation in science ought to help lessen international tensions. With the example of the I.G.Y. before us, one may readily hope for constructive action in such joint enterprises as mapping the ocean floor and surveying the changing waters and life of the seas; drilling through the earth's crust; forecasting weather and natural catastrophes on a world-wide basis; increasing the fresh-water resources of the lands; developing food resources and farming the oceans; exploring space and internationalizing the moon; using satellites for communications systems; preserving and promoting health; grappling with human pollution and waste of the natural environment; exploring molecular biology; building a 300 billion electron volt accelerator and the world's greatest computer; and establishing in a strategic place—some persons propose in Berlin—a great international cluster of science laboratories and institutes. Nor was scientific aid to the less-developed countries forgotten, or the value of greatly extended and freer exchanges of scientific personnel and information overlooked.

Nevertheless, in the fine glow of such hopes, every mind harbored the unspoken recognition that none of these joint efforts could germinate in a world on the eve of nuclear war. The success of the Eighth Conference, on the subject of Disarmament and World Security, hence reflected the world's desire for an ultimate resolution of tensions and enmity. For the participants, it was not easy to speak without mutual recrimination or anger. Nor does the final public statement express much more than a common hope for peace.

All the more remarkable, then, is the fact that at least three working groups, each including leading experts from East and West, found it possible to agree upon measures for the cessation of the production of fissionable materials for military purposes and the elimination of stockpiles of nuclear weapons; for the similar and parallel elimination of long-range missiles, bombers, submarines, and other means of delivery; for staging the first phase of disarmament so that inspection and control can increase as disarmament progresses, and so that each side may retain security in the process. A hard look at the kind of world that would exist after complete and general disarmament clearly indicated the need for an international police force and a system for the settlement of disputes between countries, in order to prevent rearmament and to permit peaceful accommodation.

These working papers, which so far exceed in extent of agreement and explicitness the former bases of negotiations at Geneva, may perhaps, both sides willing, bring us closer to the ultimate goal declared by the leaders of the world to be the hope of every nation, the banishment of war.—BENTLEY GLASS, *Johns Hopkins University*