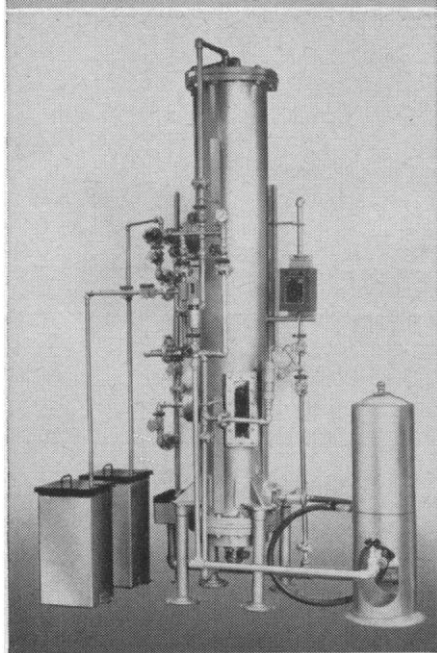


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situation is not improved by misapplication of old language, such as the term "acquired characters."

I trust that both Horsfall and his readers will take this not as a contradiction but as a clarification of his intended meaning.

GEORGE GAYLORD SIMPSON
*Museum of Comparative Zoology,
Harvard University,
Cambridge, Massachusetts*

Comprehension and Understanding

Webster's Third New International Dictionary gives two rather different definitions for the word *understanding*: "1: the act of grasping mentally . . . (a clear [understanding] of the reasons for his failure)"; and "4a: a friendly or harmonious relationship (working for better [understanding] between nations). . . ." One of the factors that confuses discussion of our relations with Russia is a tendency to mix up these two distinct meanings of the word. Melvin H. Marx's letter [*Science* 136, 190 (1962)] rather neatly illustrates this confusion. Marx states that the "fundamental disease . . . [is] the almost total ignorance of the problems and intentions of the 'other side' evident on each side." He feels it should be treated "by improving the reciprocal understanding and appreciation of strengths, as well as weaknesses, of the American and Russian societies." It is very clear that study and educative efforts will improve the understanding, in the sense of the comprehension that the two peoples have of the "other side's" system. It is not at all clear that this will lead to a friendly or harmonious relationship.

Khrushchev has said that he hopes to bury us. It is surely possible that he doesn't really mean it, but it is also possible that he does. If Khrushchev does wish to impose his system upon us, then a better understanding of that fact would surely not lead to "resolving the underlying tensions by improving the reciprocal understanding. . . ." The possibility that further comprehension of the Soviet system might lead to even more strained relations between ourselves and the Soviets, or perhaps leave the present situation unchanged, is simply ignored by Marx. The reciprocal possibility, that the Russian value system is such that their esteem for us will not increase as they know more about us, is also ignored.

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There is everything to be said for increasing our knowledge about Russia. There is also a good deal to be said for trying, insofar as it is possible, to educate the Russians about us. The bland assumption that the present tensions between the two nations result from mutual ignorance, however, is untenable. In general, in our society the most friendly feelings for Russia are held by people who have not made a special study of the subject. Of those people who have devoted their lives to a study of communism and the new Russian Empire, a high percentage feel that we are, if anything, not sufficiently aware of the danger.

GORDON TULLOCK

*Thomas Jefferson Center for
Studies in Political Economy,
University of Virginia, Charlottesville*

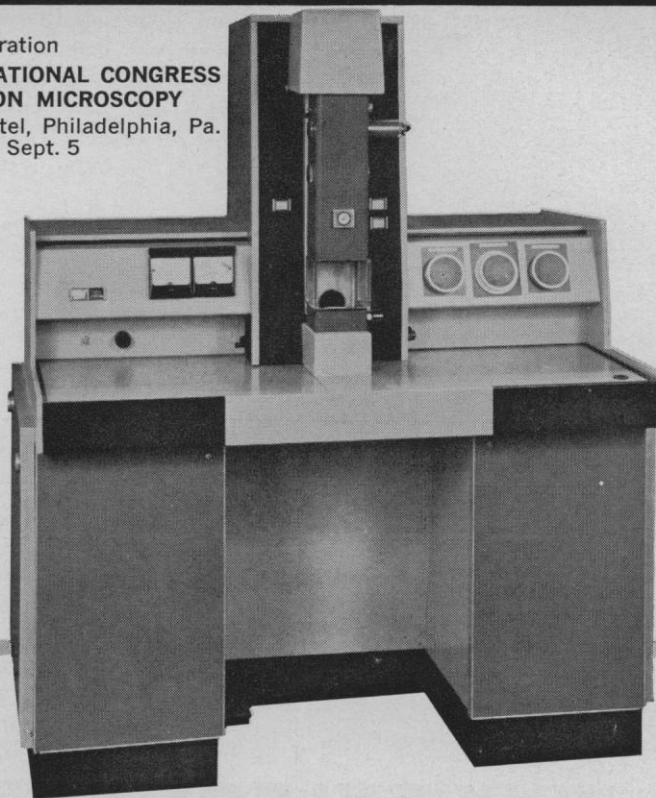
Tullock's letter makes certain points that call for comment.

First, I made no assumption, "bland" or otherwise, that the present impasse is a consequence of "mutual ignorance." My remarks were entirely directed toward what can be done, now and in the future, to improve relations and thereby reduce the tensions which most of us deplore.

Second, implicit in Tullock's letter is the assumption that "comprehension of the Soviet system" is the objective that is under discussion. There is at present in this country a sufficient concern with the Soviet "system"; what I am advocating is a greater concern for increased social and cultural relationships with the Russian people—scientists, artists, workers, and the like, as well as politicians. The most serious internal threat we face today is from those radicals, of the right as well as the left, who see *only* the ideological issues. By concentrating our attention solely on these issues they divert us from other, equally important and more long-standing, factors such as the nationalistic impulses involved in both the Russian and the Chinese "empires." Surely one does not need to be "friendly" to communism to see that the ideological interests are not perfectly correlated with the nationalistic interests of the countries in the so-called Communist bloc; the view that they are is no more valid than the view that a common interest in our brand of political freedom automatically unites the Western countries and overrides their respective national interests.

Third, I think it is most unfortunate that more and more in this country

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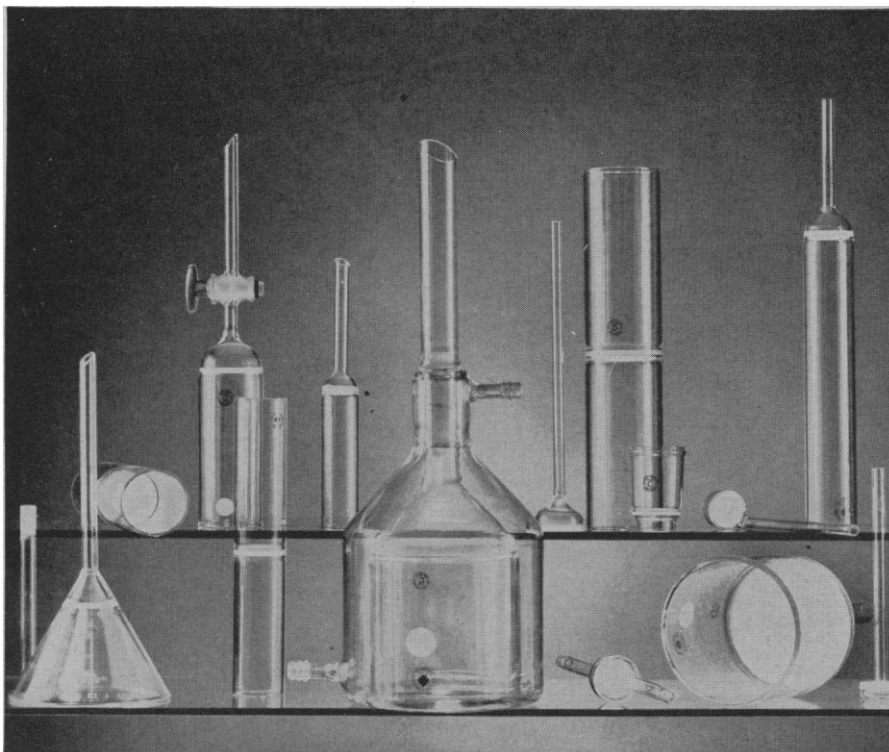
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we seem to be equating *liking* and *respect*, or rather, to be making the latter dependent upon the former. It is particularly important that we recognize that different social and cultural and political systems must be at least tolerated, if not fully respected, regardless of whether or not we *like* all the existing systems. It is also important that we appreciate the rapidly changing nature of today's economic and political systems—the Russians' as well as our own. Differences, where they exist, need not be denied, but at the same time the areas of similarity, which are probably increasing as certain of our political leaders have suggested, must also be recognized.

Finally, it is of course perfectly true, as Tullock points out, that we do not automatically like everything with which we become better acquainted. Familiarity may certainly breed contempt. But it is even more certain that ignorance breeds suspicion and distrust. Thus, while there would be some risk incurred in opening up the channels of communication with Soviet Russia, I think there will be infinitely greater risk in continuing our recent course.

In conclusion, I do not see how Tullock's argument negates, or in any way modifies, the fundamental contention of my previous letter. Scientists have a unique opportunity to take the lead in breaking through encrusted political prejudices on both sides, thereby helping to produce both kinds of "understanding."

MELVIN H. MARX

*Department of Psychology,
University of Missouri, Columbia*

An Atypical Occurrence

May an outside observer add something to D. N. Misra's letter in a recent issue of *Science* [136, 199 (1962)]. Anyone who knows Indian laboratories knows that such things are as rare there as in American or British laboratories and that if they should occur, they are treated equally seriously. What everyone may not know, however, is that such an event was also wholly out of keeping with the admirable establishment where it chanced to happen, a laboratory which is worthily living up to a 70-year tradition of fine scientific work and achievement.

H. R. AMBLER

*British High Commission,
Chanakyapuri, New Delhi, India*