

3 March 1992

Dr. Alexei V. Yablokov
State Counselor on Ecology and Health Care
Moscow

Dear Dr. Yablokov,

Thank you for your cordial letter of 5 February.

I agree with you that there may not be much scientific evidence remaining from the 1979 outbreak of Anthrax in Ekaterinburgh. Nevertheless, specialists truly familiar with the pathology and epidemiology of anthrax and who have experience in epidemiological investigation may be able to reach scientifically valuable conclusions regarding the 1979 outbreak on the basis of discussions with physicians, officials, surviving patients, and others who were involved with the outbreak. In addition, there may be relevant records and other materials that were not previously available.

The recent articles in Izvestia, Komsomolskaya Pravda, Literaturnaya Gazeta, and other journals leave important questions unanswered and in some respects are uncritical and at variance with knowledge of human anthrax. While being fair to the journalists, one must nevertheless recognize the difficulty of understanding what happened in this case when it is reported by persons without the relevant scientific background.

Therefore, if we would be welcome, we would like to visit Moscow and Ekaterinburgh for approximately two weeks at the beginning of June. You mentioned in your letter that we would need someone in Moscow who could take responsibility for the organization of our visit. During his recent visit to Boston, I discussed the problem with Dr. Evgeny Sverdlov, who you know and who also took part in the meeting of academy delegations at which you and I met in 1988. Dr. Sverdlov expressed his willingness to help us with the necessary organization in Moscow.

He and I also discussed the need to identify an individual to help organize matters in Ekaterinburgh.

May I therefore ask if you would be willing to meet with Dr. Sverdlov, at which time he would be able to explain our ideas at this stage of

how to approach the problem and to obtain your advice regarding how our group might be of assistance in studying the scientific aspects of the 1979 outbreak. I have provided Dr. Sverdlov with a preliminary outline of what we might attempt to accomplish in Moscow and Ekaterinburgh, along with some other materials.

For your possible interest, I include with this letter two VHS video cassettes of the April 15, 1988 meeting I organized at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in Cambridge during which Drs. P.N. Burgasov, V.N. Nikiforov and V.P.Sergiev gave presentations and participated in subsequent discussion with a number of American specialists.

With kind regards,

Sincerely,

Matthew Meselson