

The Swedish Pugwash Group

April 20, 1966

Björnerstedt

Prof M Meselson
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The Biological Laboratories
Cambridge, Mass. 02138
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Dear Professor Meselson,

In your letter of February 19 you asked which persons were expected to attend the meeting in March. When the question was asked, I knew definitely only that (apart from a number of swedes) you, Taylor (UK) and Nairn (Australia) could attend, the latter in case we could reimburse him \$ 1600 for travel expenses. It looked like a conference of very limited attendance, indeed.

At present, the situation is slightly better. If we have the conference in the beginning of September the following may attend: Edsall, Imshenetsky, Kaplan, Nairn (\$ 1600) and Taylor. From Sweden we could then expect Caspersson, Hedén and Tammelin. There are still no answers from Glaser, Humphrey, Lapter, Leerhöy, Lindop, Lwoff, Malek, Mansberg, yourself, Möse and Rotblat. It is perhaps better, however, to have no answers than the answer "no" as was the case last time. I have consequently written everybody once more, and this time the dates of September 5 - 7 are tentatively suggested. What is your attitude?

11-16.

You will find enclosed three statements on the detection problem. Another statement (by Hedén) will be sent out shortly. The participants that have not yet given their views, have been asked once more to do so.

With regard to the pilot project on inspection, Hedén now tells me that there will be visits to Stockholm, Copenhagen and Vienna in May and to Prague in June. Preliminary results will be reported at the Sopoty Conference.

It may interest you to know that within two weeks, our Parliament will vote on the International Peace Research Institute. From July 1 there is thus every chance that there will be money available for a number of projects. The idea to make the BW problems into one such project has been taken up with the organizers. They tell me that in principle this is very well possible. In practise we will have to await a decision by the International Board of the Institute. In conclusion it is possible that our conference will be organized, financed and sponsored by the Institute and this would certainly eliminate the financial difficulties that have been my most serious problem as coordinator.

Your letter of February 28 asked for some statements from the organizers as to the likely attendance to the meeting and the possible contribution it could give towards control in the chemical and biological warfare field. This letter arrived here at a time when it had become obvious that our meeting had to be postponed for reasons of insufficient attendance. Foreseeing, however, that you may need the same information in the present circumstances, I have already told you what I know about the attendance and will send more information when I have it. With regard to the possible contribution, this has been evaluated in some of the statements you have received. If, in addition to this, you need my personal view, you are welcome to it:

"It is generally agreed that the addition of biological weapons to the arsenals of the U.S. and the USSR would not constitute any improvement of the national security of these two states. On the contrary, as the proliferation problem is likely to be even more serious with respect to BW agents than with regard to nuclear weapons, it is a common interest to the great powers that the further development of biological weapons is checked before they become operational and generally manufactured. The chances of checking the present intensive development are uncertain. However, two possibilities have suggested themselves in the studies so far carried out by the Pugwash Study Group on Biological Warfare: inspection and detection. A pilot project on inspection has been started with the aim of acquiring practical experience and deepened discussion of the problems to be conquered. With regard to detection, it is considered that the development of efficient and rapid methods might play an important role in an effort to check and control the production of microbiological preparations. It is at present not possible to claim that efforts towards new detection techniques will be successful in the terms discussed here. But I consider it a reasonable claim that one should try. A first step is then logically to canvass the international scientific opinion. The proposed conference has this important aim and it is now evident that a wide international representation can be mobilized for the conference. It is essential that such a meeting take place as soon as practically possible".

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,



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Enclosures