

March 24, 1959

Dr. Bruno B. Rossi  
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Massachusetts Institute Of Technology  
Cambridge 39, Massachusetts

Dear Dr. Rossi:

I forgot to ask you during our telephone conversation yesterday whether you had succeeded in carrying our urgent request to Bronk and if so whether you know of any action he may have taken on it or any reply he may have received.

I am enclosing a copy of a letter I just received from Tamm. I had discussed some of the general issues of planetary contamination when I met him in Stockholm.

I certainly agree with you that the conclusions of EASTEX and WESTEX should be summarized and brought out in some kind of publication so as to strengthen the measure of general biological interest in space exploration. I could undertake to do this myself but only at the expense of other responsibilities. However, I have another suggestion: a young fellow by the name of Carl Sagan who is finishing up his thesis in astronomy at Yerkes Observatory. I'm trying to make some arrangement for him to come to the west coast either for a short time this summer or on a somewhat more durable basis after this fall for the purpose of setting up somewhat more explicit experiments relating to planetary biology. He is deeply interested in this question and has more than a little depth of insight in the issues. I would be delighted if we could obtain the funds that might be needed to employ him as a consultant both for the preliminary studies of WESTEX and, ultimately, for the development of experiments. If you think the National Academy would be a better sponsoring agency for the first aspect, I would be delighted to proceed on this basis. For about \$1500 we could have his services through the summer together with some expenses for travel, material and so on and the result of this might be a very useful resume. I suspect that it might be better to go directly to NASA for somewhat comprehensive support of both the discussion and experimental phases of a preliminary program but I would be grateful for your advice on this question.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg

P. S. I think I've brought up this question of a possible handbook with you before; now that the Russians have gotten the same idea, I suppose it is inevitable that we will do the same thing. See the enclosure.