

March 25, 1959

Dr. Hugh Odishaw
National Academy of Sciences
2101 Constitution Ave. N.W.
Washington 24, D. C.

Dear Dr. Odishaw:

Since our last conversation we have had our second WESTEX meeting at the Jet Propulsion Laboratories and you will of course have returned from COSPAR. You will receive reports of our meetings as they are prepared. The main result of our second meeting was a considered re-affirmation of the principles outlined in the reports of the first meeting. As we were fortunate in having Dr. Urey with us on this occasion, I am particularly pleased at this result. In addition, Sinton was there to talk to us about the infra-red spectra of Mars and his results are, to say the least, highly persuasive of the existence of some vegetation. It is reasonably obvious that almost the only information we can possibly gain from safe approaches will be via spectrometry of the planetary surfaces and atmospheres. Apparently a great deal has to be done with laboratory models to support this type of investigation.

In conversations with Rossi and with Jastrow, we have already taken up the question of continued support of our group. I am enclosing a copy of a statement to which I hope you can give considered attention. Duplicated of this have gone to Rossi and to Schilling at NASA. Jastrow had referred our correspondence to him.

I will be waiting for advice on the procedure for reimbursement of various peoples expense accounts. I assume you are ready to do this by accepting individual accounts. Do you have some forms for these statements?

You will note that we have gone ahead with plans for another meeting to be held May 3rd. Will you be able to continue your subsidy? If we do not get support, we can still go ahead and finance this as a terminal meeting.

Alexander has sent me a copy of the current CETEX Report. From his own remarks, I judge that the report was already tempered to some extent by expediency but it is gratifying that COSPAR is getting along with the problem.

I heard at third or fourth hand that Porter still raised some objections to the CETEX Report. I am not clear whether this applies to CETEX's own statement or to the Argus-inspired amendment directed against nuclear explosions in space near the earth.

Our committee will review this CETEX Report in some detail at our next meeting. There are a few items that can well be cleared up, but of course I can only blame myself for not having attended. We will require your advice concerning appropriate channels for communication with COSPAR.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

Enclosure