



NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION
AMES RESEARCH CENTER
MOFFETT FIELD, CALIFORNIA 94035

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: L:200-7

February 15, 1974

TO: NASA Headquarters
Attn: MM/NASA Director for Life Sciences

FROM: Harold P. Klein, Director of Life Sciences

SUBJECT: Your memo of Feb. 7, 1974

REFERENCES: (a) My letter of Aug. 28, 1973 to Prof. A. I. Oparin
(b) Routing Slip to Code I through MM from RMS dtd. 9-5-73
(c) Routing Slip to RMS through MM from Code I dtd. 9-21-73
(d) My memo to Dr. Young (Code SL) dtd. Jan. 8, 1974

I have received your memorandum of February 7, and hasten to respond to the concern you expressed regarding my memo to Code SL (Reference (d)).

First, let me say that I am in full concurrence with your desire to maintain an "integrated posture for the Life Sciences" within NASA and have consistently predicated my actions upon this premise. I certainly have no intention of adding to the difficulties of your office, and sincerely believe that I have carried out all of my duties with your policies in mind.

I am all the more astonished, therefore, at the intensity of your remarks, and I can only surmise that this particular issue has been misunderstood. For this reason, I'd like to review for you the sequence of events, as I see them, in the hope that you will agree that I acted, in this affair, in a manner consistent with the best interests of your office and of the Agency.

First, you will recall that Prof. A. I. Oparin, a most distinguished and celebrated scientist, was a guest of NASA at Ames in 1969. Since his area of expertness falls within the scope of our Planetary Program Office, it should not be surprising that, a few years later (in June 1973), when both Dr. Young and I were in Barcelona, we had an opportunity to exchange views briefly with Prof. Oparin, who was also present at the same meeting. During this discussion, the subject arose concerning the feasibility of yet another interchange between his laboratory and ours, at Ames. I can assure you that Dr. Young and I were discreet in this short encounter; no promises, no commitments were made or implied. All that happened was that we all concluded that additional interactions could be useful to both

laboratories, and that some kind of exchange was at least possible. Also, it was agreed that the most feasible individual from Oparin's Institute for a possible interaction was Dr. M. Kritsky. No mention was made of who, if anyone, might participate from the U.S. in any future exchange that might develop from this initial discussion.

Upon returning to Ames, I attempted a few months later (Reference (a)) to contact Oparin, simply to learn precisely what he had in mind and to get these views down on paper, so we could study them. You will note that my letter to Oparin was essentially an inquiry as to what was possible at his end. Since he is an Academician, with strong influence in the Soviet Academy of Sciences, and we had an on-going exchange program between the respective Science Academies, this inquiry seemed to me to be reasonable. My letter contained no commitments nor proposals. I also expected that this letter could serve as a signal to you and to the cognizant NASA Headquarters offices, since it was routed through Code I as well as through normal OAST channels. I also sent Dr. Young a copy of this letter since his name was mentioned in it.

As far as I could ascertain at the time, appropriate approvals to transmit this letter to Oparin were obtained at all levels, including your office (Reference (b)), until it reached Code I. There, Code I interposed some objections (Reference (c)) and went to Dr. Young and advised him to obtain from me additional "background" material. In turn, Dr. Young called me and asked me to send him further information and that request is the basis for my memo to him (Reference (d)). There was no intention to circumvent established lines of communication. I merely reacted to his request for more information. My memo to him was not a proposal; it was supposed to give Dr. Young additional information so that Code I might then allow my letter of August 1973 to be sent out to Oparin. I should also point out another misconception: While I spoke (Reference (d)) of having Kritsky here "... for up to six months" (i.e., this was a maximum), no specifications were mentioned regarding how long Dr. Winter might devote to this possible exchange. There didn't seem to be any strict quid pro quo in these exchanges, as far as I could see, and it is entirely possible that, because of his more senior stature, Dr. Winter might, in any case, spend much less time in the USSR than would be expected of Kritsky here.

Finally, you can be assured that Dr. Winter and I discussed this whole matter a number of times, and that he concurred in the idea of a possible exchange, and that he agreed that the reasonable thing to do was to proceed to get that letter (Reference (a)) out to Oparin. Needless to say, my own management, at Ames, also concurred.

I have recounted these details for you in the hope that you will have a better picture of what I did and why. Naturally, I am prepared to go into further details when you come out here later this month.

With all good wishes.

Chuck K.

Harold P. Klein

cc:

NASA Headquarters, Code I

→ NASA Headquarters, Code SL/Dr. R. S. Young