

*Quiet River, Heavy Waters: Un-silencing Nuclear Narratives of Socio-environmental  
Inequalities in the Cradle of Soviet Plutonium, 1945-1977*  
September 16, 2017 - May 31, 2018  
Chelyabinsk and Moscow, Russian Federation

**Research abstract**

This report presents the research activities, goals, important findings, and policy implications resulting from a nine-month long research trip to the Russian Federation. The goals of my research trip centered on finding and analyzing personal and official archival sources to examine the role of Soviet-era social inequality in shaping the environmental burdens of radioactive contamination experienced by the rural populations of north central Chelyabinskaya Oblast in the Southern Urals, particularly during the years from 1945 to 1977. I conducted archival research in the cities of Chelyabinsk, Moscow, and St. Petersburg in Russia from September 16, 2017 through May 31, 2018. Among the most important set of findings are those from archival sources relating to the Soviet regional executive committee of workers' councils. Particularly relevant to my question regarding socio-spatial relationships and questions about inequality, these records include negotiations relating to removal or transfer of land rights as part of the planning process to construct the PO Mayak facility and the imposition of a special regime zone surrounding the facility. Archival material, including scientific conference proceedings, notes, reports, and written correspondence, suggests that numerous active members of Soviet scientific community endeavored to address ethical questions of radiation exposure. Numerous records made note of public health concerns in Chelyabinsk oblast that posed continuous and critical problems for the ministry of health.

I intend to turn parts of my dissertation into articles that I will prepare for publishing, presentations at academic conferences. Following the completion and defense of my dissertation, I plan to continue building on this research project by returning to Chelyabinsk oblast with the aim of carrying out interviews with rural residents who continue to live in areas of radioactive contamination. Relatedly, by continuing to build on this project, I aim to further contribute to scholarship on this region and topic, making the product of this research accessible to a source of expertise for U.S. policymakers engaging with this region. Based on quantity and quality amount and relevance of findings, this research trip concluded with successful and productive results, and with contributions to furthering the goals of the Title VIII program.

## Research goals

The goals of my research trip centered on finding and analyzing personal and official archival sources to examine the role of Soviet-era social inequality in shaping the environmental burdens of radioactive contamination experienced by the rural populations of north central Chelyabinskaya Oblast in the Southern Urals, particularly during the years from 1945 to 1977.

This primary research objective was driven by three specific research questions:

1. As early as 1945, the time when the design and construction of PO Mayak was still in a planning phase, how did social difference and inequality manifest itself in the policies by which Soviet planners and authorities shaped the social and cultural geography of the Southern Urals?

This question is based on existing scholarship indicating spatial manifestations of social disparities which existed within the Southern Urals before the construction of PO Mayak, and the reality of disadvantaged areas and communities played a contributing role in the selection of the site for the construction of PO Mayak.<sup>1</sup>

2. Between 1947 and 1977, what were the social-political practices and conditions that produced the un-accidental aspects of exposure to radioactive contamination resulting from PO Mayak's operation?

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<sup>1</sup> Kate Brown, *Plutopia: Nuclear Families, Atomic Cities, and the Great Soviet and American Plutonium Disasters*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); Paula Garb and Galina Komarova, "Victims of 'Friendly Fire' at Russia's Nuclear Weapons Sites" in *Violent Environments*. Nancy Lee Peluso and Michael Watts (eds.). (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001); Galina Komarova, "Ethnic and confessional aspects of the 'Maiak' accident" in *Peoples, Identities, and Regions: Spain, Russia, and the Challenges of the Multi-ethnic State* (Moscow: Institute Ethnology and Anthropology Russian Academy of Sciences, 2015); Michael Edelstein, *Cultures of Contamination: Legacies of Pollution in Russia and the U.S., Series: Research in Social Problems and Public Policy*, Volume 14, Michael R. Edelstein, Maria Tysiachniouk, Lyudmila V. Smirnova, eds. (Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing, Ltd., 2007); Scott D. Monroe, "Chelyabinsk: The Evolution of Disaster," *Post-Soviet Geography*. 33(8) 533-545, 1992.

This question builds upon what scholars of Soviet history have established regarding social stratification in Soviet society.<sup>2</sup> This social stratification placed rural communities, along with other marginalized segments of the population, at greater risk for exposure to hazardous contamination as a function of the spatial manifestation of social inequalities. In particular, I argue that the Soviet government's policy of silence regarding PO Mayak and the presence of hazardous material associated with it can be identified as a preventable factor in radiation exposure, particularly up to 1977 when information about radioactive contamination from the facility began to reach the general public.<sup>3</sup>

3. What conflicts historically existed among Soviet scientists whose work directly engaged with the health or environmental impacts of radioactive contamination and the creation of safety policies?

Based on existing scholarship on the history of Soviet science, particularly in the context of the atomic project, I hypothesize that Soviet scientists' individual subjectivities and their social positions affected their practice of research as well as how the knowledge they produced was applied towards the response to radioactive contamination.<sup>4</sup>

### **Research activities**

*September 16 through December 27, 2017*

For approximately the first three months of this research trip, I conducted archival research at the *Ob'edinenniy Gosudarstvennyy Arkhiv Chelyabinskoy Oblast'* (United State Archives of Chelyabinsk Oblast, henceforth "OGACHO"). The extensive logistical and travel support of American Councils for International Education, as well as local support from Dr. Julia

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<sup>2</sup> Julian Agyeman and Yelena Ognjeva-Himmelberger, *Environmental Justice and Sustainability in the Former Soviet Union* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009); Mervyn Matthews, *Class and Society in the Soviet Union* (New York: Walker, 1972).

<sup>3</sup> Zhores Medvedev, *Nuclear Disaster in the Urals*. Translated by George Saunders (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1979).

<sup>4</sup> Jonathan Oldfield and Denis J.B. Shaw, "A Russian Geographical Tradition? The Contested Canon of Russian and Soviet Geography, 1884-1953," *Journal of Historical Geography*, 49 (2015) 75-84; Denis J.B. Shaw and Jonathan Oldfield, "Scientific, Institutional and Personal Rivalries among Soviet Geographers in the Late Stalin Era," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 60.8 (2008) 1397-1418; Douglas Weiner, *A Little Corner of Freedom: Russian Nature Protection from Stalin to Gorbachev* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Paul R. Josephson, *Red Atom: Russia's Nuclear Power Program from Stalin to Today* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005).

Khmelevskaya, Associate Professor in History at South Ural State University, and Dr. Olga Nikonova, head of the History department at South Ural State University made it possible for me to obtain the proper visa and permissions to conduct archival research in compliance with federal and regional laws. At OGACHO, as a routine aspect of daily archival research activity, I was allowed to use the camera of my cellphone to scan most of the documents I requested. In this way, I collected and organized all of the materials I would be analyzing in relation to my research questions. An additional benefit of carrying out research at OGACHO was that its archivists regularly made suggestions regarding relevant literature that could be helpful for my research endeavor.

Among my primary goals for research at OGACHO had been to read and analyze *Fond R-456*, which consists of the personal documents of the geographer, Aleksandr Dmitrevich Sysoev, who devoted his life's work, throughout much of the twentieth century until his death in the early 1980s, towards the research, teaching, and writing about the physical geography, ecology, and ethnographies of the Southern Urals region. I aimed to search through the collection of Sysoev's archived documents for maps he had created of Chelyabinsk Oblast, in order to analyze them and begin addressing my first research question relating to social, cultural, and physical geography of this region *before* the construction of PO Mayak. However, the archive's collection of his documents did not include the maps I specifically sought to analyze.

In addition to the collection of Sysoev's personal documents at OGACHO, I found numerous records relating to the regional executive committee of workers' councils of Chelyabinsk oblast, particularly during the 1940s. This includes documents relating to the policy making process at the regional level, including those relating to the planning process for the construction of PO Mayak. Particularly relevant to my research questions, these records include those relating to the allocation of resources connected with the construction zone and a pair of maps showing existing factories, farms, villages during the early months of 1947, when the construction of PO Mayak was still in a planning phase. Furthermore, my search through *Fond R-274*, among the records from the regional executive committee of

workers' councils from the 1930s to 1956, led me to records of citizens' petitions and appeals challenging the decisions relating to their forced relocations or evictions.

*January 16 through May 7, 2018*

On January 16th, I arrived in Moscow in order to begin the second stage of this research trip. The Russian State Archives of Contemporary History (RGANI) was the first archival center in Moscow at which I had planned to conduct research. However, I unexpectedly discovered that this archival center was temporarily closed to all researchers, as the entirety of its collection was being moved to a new building. Although it had been set for reopening in January 2018, it remained closed, and there was no readily available information about its new reopening date.

In spite of the unexpected inaccessibility of RGANI, in Moscow I found an abundance of other potential resources through which to access data relevant to my research questions. At the Russian State Library, I was able to find relevant and useful secondary sources, including microfilm collections of Russian periodicals and newspapers to help guide my archival research and to better interpret the material I had collected. At the Archives of the Russian Academy of Sciences (ARAN), I sought documents relating to various Soviet scientific institutions' studies on the biological effects of radiation. Particularly key to addressing my research questions regarding the complex role of Soviet scientists in social-environmental relationships is the correspondence that took place between the scientists who engaged with these questions about radiation safety during the late 1940s, the 1950s, and early 1960s. While I was allowed to save copies of document using my cellphone, unlike at OGACHO, I was charged for each page scanned and was required to pay the total in advance before scanning the pages I requested.

*May 7 through May 14, 2018*

During the course of my research in Moscow, I learned of an archival center in St. Petersburg, the Central State Archives of Scientific-Technical Documentation of Saint Petersburg (TsGANTD-SPb), which held collections from the Institute of Experimental

Medicine covering years that included the late 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. This organization included questions of radiation safety in relation to humans, other organisms, and the environment in its research agenda. For this reason, I believed that the holdings at TsGANTD-SPb were potentially very valuable to my research, and for this reason, I planned to spend one week in St. Petersburg to conduct research there. I found the archivists at TsGANTD-SPb very helpful in allowing me access to the documents I sought and found. For obtaining copies of documents, the same policy in place at ARAN applied at TsGANTD-SPb.

*May 14 through May 31, 2018*

During the months following the first stage of my research trip, I realized that I had overlooked sets of documents at OGACHO from the local councils and assemblies at the small, rural districts which were located in the areas within and surrounding the construction zone for PO Mayak. Therefore, for the last two weeks of my research trip, I returned to the city of Chelyabinsk in order to return to OGACHO. Because most of these documents are from relatively obscure, rural councils, many of them had not been reviewed in what seemed to be many years. On the one hand, there is an advantage in being the first to review documents that have gone unnoticed for many years. On the other hand, since they are in a neglected state, are mostly handwritten, and are much less organized, I found it more difficult and time-consuming to pinpoint the information I sought. Ultimately, my return to OGACHO proved to be productive in that I was able to find documents illuminating at a deeper level how state power worked at the level of rural, obscure, and much less powerful councils.

### **Important Research Findings**

As I described in my research activities, during my research I focused on archival sources, to collect data with which to address the objectives of my research. My search was guided by my research questions which are summarized below as follows:

1. How did social-spatial relations change from 1945 to 1977 in terms of policies by which Soviet planners and authorities shaped the social and cultural geography of the Southern Urals?
2. What conflicts historically existed among Soviet scientists whose work directly engaged with the health or environmental impacts of radioactive contamination and the creation of safety policies?
3. What social-political practices and conditions contributed to the un-accidental aspects of exposure to radioactive contamination?

I have categorized the key findings of my research trip in the following way:

- ***Socio-spatial relationships and the political dimensions of radioactive contamination in the Techa River Basin***
- ***Institutionalized silence***
- ***Scientists' narratives in radiation hygiene and safety***
- ***Public health concerns in Chelyabinsk oblast***

### ***Socio-spatial relationships and the political dimensions of radioactive contamination in the Techa River Basin***

The most important set of findings in relation to socio-spatial relationships in the Techa River basin are those I have drawn from *Fond R-274 (OGACHO)* relating to the Soviet regional executive committee of workers. This set of documents includes the committee's directives, proposals, implementation of policies, meeting minutes and plans related to the allocation and use of resources, and official correspondence in relation to these matters. The specific materials I collected and analyzed included funds allocation, ration cards, designation of laborers for particular projects, measures to address and control public health hazards, along with several records relating to the planning process for the construction of PO Mayak. Particularly relevant to my question regarding socio-spatial relationships and questions about inequality, these records include information on negotiations for procuring land for the PO Mayak facility, the transfer of lands from surrounding collective and state farms, the terms of

compensation to these farms for land, and the negotiation of terms by which to households from land that became designated for PO Mayak. An especially valuable document includes a map showing existing factories, farms, villages, as well as physical geographical features during the early months of 1947, as the construction of PO Mayak was still in a planning phase. This allows me to analyze a detailed representation of the local region at a key time in its history.

Another specific set of documents which is particularly insightful are the records citizens' appeals and requests to have their evictions and/or relocations reviewed, as these written testimonies serve as opportunities to obtain first-person narratives from rural residents, even as they are mediated by the state. This additional discovery of especially relevant material allowed me to analyze a detailed representation of the local region at a key time in its history. The testimonies that are included as supportive documentation offers insight in terms of the particular language used to represent residents who sought to appeal their evictions or relocations. For example, for all the documents I have reviewed involving eviction or termination cases they repeatedly included written testimonies building a case for the eviction or termination of that individual from a given collective farm that used the term "parasitic and antisocial way of life" to characterize individuals in. For several residents who attempted to appeal their evictions and/or termination from a collective farm, the resident's ethnic and family background are reviewed. Many of those who were evicted had family members with a father or grandfather who was noted as having fought for the White Army during the civil war. Importantly, I have been able to compile a list of the collective and state farms affected by the constructed of PO Mayak, and those who most impacted by the radioactive contamination of the Techa River after operations began at PO Mayak.

The material I have reviewed does not indicate evidence of a clearly strong pattern of systemic bias or discrimination against Bashkir or Tatar rural, working class. There are patterns highlighted in existing literature and secondary sources indicating that Tatar/Bashkir, rural, working class, low-income groups are overrepresented among victims of economic, health, and environmental effects of radioactive contamination originating from PO Mayak, but I have not yet found enough evidence from the archives to determine the nature of

historical factors that have driven this inequality. For example, the fact that some public health materials during the Soviet period were at least recommended by higher authorities to be translated to Bashkir language suggests sensitivity to language and ethnic difference in a way that does not support the argument of social/ethnic bias against Bashkir populations.

### ***Institutionalized silence***

As the materials I have reviewed and analyzed indicate that maintaining high levels of security surrounding even mundane information obliquely related to PO Mayak, its operation, projects, and accidents, it is appropriate to devote a category of research findings to institutionalized silence. From *Fond R-274* (OGAChO) relating to the Soviet regional executive committee of workers this collection includes documents pertaining to the orders, official correspondence, resolutions, and detailed plans for implementing the creation of a special regime zone encompassing PO Mayak and a broad buffer zone surrounding it. The imposition of this special regime zone relates directly to the institution of silence in that the purpose was to render PO Mayak invisible to potential threats and breaches of classified information and to minimize unauthorized communication of information from individuals whose loyalty and integrity were considered questionable by Soviet authorities. Furthermore, the conspicuous absence of certain pages in this collection in relation to PO Mayak reflects the continuing legacy of institutionalized silence and security.

Additionally, from my reading and analysis of documents from the Institute of Experimental Medicine (IEM) held at the Central State Archives of Scientific and Technical Documentation in St. Petersburg (TsGANTD-SPb), records of conferences as well as written correspondence among scientists demonstrate that scientists struggled with the political mandate for institutionalized silence that was imposed upon them with the implementation of the “special topics” policy in scientific research and agenda relating to radiation hygiene and safety. The imposition of this policy meant that scientists were required to censor and truncate their published findings, activity reports, agendas, communications, and conference proceedings. As comments in conference proceedings and written correspondence show, this

policy posed problems for them as scientists, whose profession depends on the exchange of information, peer review, and critique.

### ***Scientists' narratives in radiation hygiene and safety***

In relation to the key role of scientists in the formation of social-environmental relationships in the context of radiation safety, the archival material, including scientific conference proceedings, notes, reports, and written correspondence, which I read and analyzed shows numerous examples of scientists' efforts to address questions, particularly in the realms of biology and toxicology, of ethical implications of radiation exposure and establishing safety standards and protocol. Adding to the difficulty of dealing with these questions was the political mandate of secrecy, as exemplified by the restricted nature of *spetstema*, or the "special theme" policy which directly related to issue of nuclear safety, as described in the previous section dealing with institutionalized silence.

At TsGANTD, several collections of documents within *Fond R-182* include reports from Institute of Experimental Medicine regarding the state of the literature and the state of the science in research tools and analytical concepts for use in testing and measuring radiation levels, discussions on determining safety thresholds of safe levels of radiation, and more clearly delineating differences between types of radiation exposure. My analysis of these documents shows that there was a high level of interest, which seemed to spike significantly in late 1957 and 1958. While very few show specific engagement that could be even remotely associated with PO Mayak or the crisis in public health as a result of radioactive contamination in the Southern Urals, these materials serve as key sources of information to use in tracking down individual research and other work by the scientists who may have authored research publications more directly related to PO Mayak.

Through my research at ARAN, I found materials including written correspondence between distinguished molecular biologists geneticists sharing and collecting literature regarding safety and hazards in relation radiation exposure as a concern relevant to human health, well-being of living organisms, and ecological conditions.

## **Public health concerns in Chelyabinsk oblast**

Through my review and analysis of *Fond R-274* at OGACHO I discovered numerous records making note of public health concerns in Chelyabinsk oblast that posed continuous and critical problems for the ministry of health, especially during the 1940s and 1950s. These were not directly related to radioactive contamination, but they provide concrete and detailed information about the conditions in which public health was practiced and how it was represented in bureaucratic and scientific discourse. Understanding these conditions, particularly in a very specific and local context, is necessary in order to more clearly place the public health and environmental crisis driven by radioactive contamination into context. For example, these records indicate that problems with compliance and enforcement of rules, and the practical matter of providing adequate materials for compliance and enforcement of rules, were systemic and hindered the state's response to all public health crises, not only those associated with radioactive contamination.

In terms of public health, agriculture and food production received significant attention from the ministry of health as numerous outbreaks diseases were either zoonotic and spread from domestic animals in agricultural sectors to humans and/or resulted in serious impacts on food supply and production of zoonotic disease. For example, documents corresponding to the Chelyabinsk oblast executive committee in *Fond R-274* (OGACHO) includes descriptions of multiple outbreaks of anthrax originating from domestic animals in the agricultural sector, along with detailed plans for eliminating anthrax, improvement of training for health professionals and staff, and improving public health education, and standardizing public health protocol to be implemented throughout Chelyabinsk oblast, especially in rural areas. What is important about these particular records relating to outbreaks of anthrax is that, while they do not relate to health crises resulting from radioactive contamination, they do clearly demonstrate at a locally specific level what infrastructure and procedures were in place to respond to public health crises, in order to more closely understand the reality of public health as radioactive contamination of the Techa River grew into a serious crisis.

## **Policy implications and recommendations**

### ***Public health and socio-spatial history***

The archival records I reviewed at OGACHO which illuminated day-to-day details regarding the state's response to epidemics and other public health crises demonstrate historical factors that contributed to the establishment of a hub of medical research and expertise within this region. For this reason, the state has historically focused a relatively high amount of resources into this region. However, due to historical patterns of inequality in the distribution of such resources, a pattern also evident in archival materials, this concentration of state resources is still not immediately apparent, particularly across rural areas in comparison with urban areas.

On the one hand, in the context of humanitarian efforts and diplomacy, the concentrated presence of experts in the medical and other scientific fields, along with the widespread poverty in rural areas, creates opportunity for collaborative humanitarian efforts to help the region's struggling populations meet their medical and health needs. On the other hand, however, being a provincial region with highly guarded nuclear processing and production industries, there still exists a significant level of caution and security measures in relation to foreigners, particularly during the present time of heightened political tensions between the United States and Russia. Therefore, it is important to bear these points in mind before proposing any project or plan to carry out humanitarian and/or collaborative work in this region of Russia.

As my analysis of state bureaucratic records archived at OGACHO show, the rural areas surrounding the zone that became the PO Mayak plutonium production and processing facility underwent a new form of marginalization and dislocation in the form of a restrictive socio-spatial regime imposed while PO Mayak was constructed. My review of secondary sources shows that this socio-spatial regime continues to exist in the present, and it continues to play a role in the ways in which rural populations of the Techa River basin experience the continuing health and environmental effects of radioactive contamination. For these reasons, the Techa River Basin demonstrates a need for humanitarian attention to help address the serious and lasting health and environmental conditions which have been exacerbated by chronic poverty and economic marginalization.

### ***Institutionalized silence***

The construction of PO Mayak during the Soviet period is related to the state's perceived need for self-defense in a world in which an atomic bomb became a reality. This event changed the Soviet Union's perception of security where its own defense, both in a literal and symbolic sense, hinged on harnessing nuclear technology for its own arsenal. Despite the fact that the Soviet Union no longer exists, Russia's military-industrial complex, of which PO Mayak still forms a crucial element given the continuing high-security surrounding it, and the fact that Ozersk is still a restricted city, reflects a continuation of the Soviet rationale for building a nuclear arsenal and maintaining a high level of secrecy surrounding it. The fact that many archival materials relating to PO Mayak's history, even as far back as the 1940s, are still considered classified state secrets, also serves as a reminder of this enduring legacy. This level of security is not likely to change in the future, particularly as long as tensions between Russia and the U.S. remain as high as they are now.

Another point evident in archival material, is that the security apparatus was nearly as distrustful of Soviet citizens as it was of foreigners. Secondary sources from more recent periods reflect that, in some ways, this legacy of internal tension and distrust continues to the present day.

Finally, the events of the 20th century still bear a strong historical and cultural significance in the Southern Urals, and particularly in Chelyabinsk oblast. This region played a key role during WWI and WWII. The personal and collective memory of WWII, or the Great Patriotic War, still carries a high emotional charge, particularly given the scale of destruction and loss of life suffered by the Soviet Union during the war. For the sake of diplomacy as supported by deep understanding and sensitivity, this history is important to bear in mind when directing attention and reaching out to this region of the country, especially in the context of its military-industrial infrastructure.

## **Co-Curricular Activities**

On November 10, 2017, I gave a presentation for students of the history department at South Ural State University in Chelyabinsk, Russia. The presentation related to my research project, and the underlying concepts on which the research questions are based. Following the presentation, I spoke at length with the head of the history department, who provided me with helpful feedback regarding the archival sources I was using, and pointed me to other potential literature I could use.

In Moscow, I attended weekly language instruction courses at Moscow International University for thirteen weeks. These weekly sessions were very helpful for me in strengthening my handling of Russian language in relation to my research, as my instructor focused the sessions on improving vocabulary that directly relates to my research topic and to archival research.

## **Plans for Future Research Agenda/ Presentations and Publications**

At this time I have begun the dissertation writing process, and I aim to have completed a final draft of my dissertation by spring of 2019, in order to defend it before the end of the Spring 2019 semester. I intend to turn parts of my dissertation into articles that I will prepare for publishing before I graduate. Over the next several months, I also plan to present on a part of this research project at the ASEES annual convention in Boston, MA, as my panel proposal was accepted. There will also be an opportunity early next spring to give a presentation on my research at my university's annual Scholar Forum.

Additionally, as I hope to return to Chelyabinsk oblast with the aim of carrying out interviews with rural residents who continue to live in areas of radioactive contamination, my plan is to continue building on this research project. By continuing to work on this project and fostering academic relationships with scholars in Chelyabinsk oblast, my ultimate aim is to contribute to scholarship on this region and topic, become available as a source of expertise

for U.S. policymakers engaging with this region, and to help facilitate the improvement of current conditions in the region in relation to ameliorating social and environmental problems.

At each presentation and for each written work that may be published using data from this research, I intend to make a point of acknowledging and thanking American Councils for International Education for the generous funding I was awarded through the Title VIII Research Scholar program, which has made this entire research experience possible.

## **Conclusion**

Despite a variety of logistical obstacles I faced in relation to increased regulations relating to the particular visa necessary to legally conduct archival research in Russia and the occasional challenges in accessing archival materials, particularly in Moscow, I was able to obtain adequate amounts of relevant data with which to address my research questions and synthesize policy implications in relation to U.S. interests in Russia. With further analysis of the materials I collected, particularly as I develop my dissertation based on the research conducted during this trip, I will be able to compose a much more in-depth interpretation of the data as well as a more comprehensive set of policy implications. As I intend to continue building on the findings from this research trip on the topic of social implications of radioactive contamination in the Southern Urals region, this research trip enabled a vital step as part of this long-term plan for continued scholarly research. Based on the amount and depth of findings which are relevant to my research questions and relevant to issues which further the goals of the Title VIII program, and potentially inform U.S. policy in relation to Russia, I consider this a productive and successful research endeavor. Without the generous funding and consistently reliable support and guidance of American Councils for International Education at all stages of this trip and in so many vital aspects, this research project would not have been possible. In this way, I am entirely honored to be selected for the Title VIII Research Scholar Award which enabled this project to become a reality. It may not be possible to adequately express gratitude for the flawless professionalism and excellence in bridging scholarship and diplomacy demonstrated by American Councils without which this research trip could not have had such successful results.

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