

of health of local residents, I cannot help but notice the article's tendency toward repeated use of hyperbole. On a number of points, unfortunately, this has led to distortion of the facts of the matter."

The authors of the publications, notes the scientist, give distorted information regarding the sources of the elevated background radiation. After all, nuclear tests were not only conducted in our country, so why heap all of it on the USSR? Moreover, natural sources contribute equally to the increased radiation in the Far North.

"The institute's findings," continues P. Ramzaev, "do not confirm that all disease on the Chukotka is 'evidence for the effects of radiation'. This is a gross exaggeration. We are merely calling for research as to its role since this role is unknown... Disease among the native populations in all regions of the Far North is approximately twice the average for the USSR as a whole. The reason for this is unknown to us and needs to be studied."

Of course it needs to be studied, and nobody argues with this. Research by the radiology laboratory of the Oblast sanitation and epidemiological station confirms the following: the specific radioactivity of venison is much higher than that of beef or pork, but is a hundred times lower than the maximum permissible concentrations established by the USSR Ministry of Public Health (Minzdrav) for meat products. As for background gamma radiation on the Chukotka, it does not exceed naturally occurring levels and measures 15-20 microroentgens per hour, which is no higher than in many other regions of the country. Under these circumstances, to speak about the carcinogenic effects of radiation and to view radiation as the cause of all diseases is to stray from the truth.