

ENVIRONMENT

Novaya Zemlya Nuclear Test Leaves  
Radioactive Cloud

December 4, 1988. After a scheduled nuclear test on Novaya Zemlya two nuclear icebreakers sailed into a radioactive cloud. A radiation alert was sounded on the "Arktika", which was on its way from the Straits of Karskie Vorota to the Yamal Peninsula...

"A debate has developed in the press about the next nuclear test on Novaya Zemlya. On the one hand, people are trying to console us: 'The explosion poses no health risks,' they say. On the other hand, there is a strong wave of protests. The various soviets keep receiving telegrams addressed to the government. The "Greens" and the public in the Scandinavian countries are outraged. The future looks frightening. Whom can we believe? What kind of consequences can we expect from these explosions?"

L. Belyaeva, mother of  
two children,  
Murmansk

Our newspaper has previously reported on the reaction to the October 24 explosion of a nuclear device on Novaya Zemlya (numbers 128, 132). But the question raised in the readers' letter goes beyond the scope of the October incident, and the answer to it clearly must be sought within the context of the country's overall policy on nuclear testing. Our correspondent B. Blinov met with Andrei Alekseevich Zolotkov, USSR People's Deputy and senior engineer of the radiation safety service with the Murmansk Steamship Line. In the course of his official and private duties Mr. Zolotkov has long studied all of the issues surrounding nuclear testing and atomic energy. He participated in the much-talked-about voyage to Novaya Zemlya by the international environmental organization Greenpeace shortly before the last test. We think his comments will do much to clarify the situation both before and after the "silent" explosion.