

THE BRIGHTENING OF THE CHINESE UFO SCENE

With an 'aside' about a darkening on the Soviet horizon

Charles Bowen

A YEAR AGO our artist's impression of a Chinese UFO incident was featured on the cover of FLYING SAUCER REVIEW, and news was given in our *World Round-up* column of the establishment of China's UFO (Flying Saucer) Research Society. This society, set up to handle the investigation and analysis of all kinds of unidentified flying objects, had received the recognition of the Chinese Society for the Study of the Future — a name which itself conjures up interesting implications. Our information came from an item in the *Beijing Wanbao* (Peking Evening News) of November 28, 1980, which was translated by Gordon Creighton. We learned, furthermore, that at that time the China UFO Research Society had "... over 300 members distributed throughout 24 provinces."

In the recent past neither Mr. Creighton nor I made any secret of the fact that there seemed to be, in 1980-81, a considerable recession in UFO reports. We were fairly confident, however, that waves, or flaps, were going on in parts of the world where there were communications difficulties. Our respective hunches probably stemmed from the fact that over the years there had always been a certain official interest in our subject; the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Peking, and the Soviet Academy of Sciences too, have always been punctilious in renewing their subscriptions to FSR. In addition the Chinese have maintained an exchange as well: FSR for a technical — non-UFO — publication. Now that there seems to be some lifting of restrictions on communications with modern China, we begin to learn that a considerable volume of UFO reports have been made in that country over the past two years. Perhaps we were correct in our assumptions that "something was going on, unknown to us, in some relatively remote part of the world." (Again, in the past, the occasional visitor to China who has come our way — and I am thinking in particular of an Australian businessman friend, who wishes to remain unnamed — have always insisted that "... the place is 'running alive' with UFOs.")

FSR banned

Our recent articles from Russian sources, directly and indirectly, have revealed there have been a good deal of UFO — and humanoid — cases in that country as well. At the same time, however, there has been

an unhappy development. Even before our articles were published, the "clamps had gone on". A small number of Soviet ufologists have long received the Review, without charge, through the post. We have learned now that our journal is proscribed, and that during the last two years all copies, other than those addressed to the Academy libraries, have been confiscated by the Soviet authorities. The Academy copies may only be read by specially approved persons, and we'd bet our bottom dollar that those persons do not include ufologists.

Attempts to communicate with the Chinese UFO Society

Encouraged by the unprecedented trickle of UFO news items out of China, via Tokyo, in 1980, Gordon Creighton and I visited the Chinese Embassy in London. Our purpose was, first, to obtain a print of the UFO photograph allegedly taken near the Great Wall on August 23, 1980, and secondly, to establish contact with the UFO Society which, we understood, was centred at Wuhan University. Our hopes were to receive a few knocks, for our experience of the apparent "easing of restrictions" is that they still seem to be buried in a frustrating mire of suspicions. Two officials in turn stared at us in blank amazement, and neither seemed willing to take responsibility for doing anything about our request. In the end one of them suggested we try the *Xinhua* news agency, which has an office in the city. When we arrived at the agency office, the door was bolted and barred. After a while, a formidable gentleman opened the door, and we put our request to him about the photograph, whereat he looked somewhat confused. In the end he bellowed something up the hallway, and a charming lady arrived at the door, and in perfect English invited us into the news room. We repeated our request about the photograph, and spoke about the Society.

Now Gordon Creighton happens to be fluent in Mandarin Chinese, and after the lady had spoken to a colleague — the only other person in the room — and interpreted what we had said in (so Gordon told me) Shanghai Chinese, he interjected in Mandarin. The amazed Chinese faces were a wonder to behold, but they quickly recovered their composure, and switched to Mandarin, and a good time was had by all

— bar me, until the good lady realised my predicament, and interpreted salient points for my benefit. The upshot of it all was that we got precisely nowhere; the best the agency could do for us was to suggest we tried to establish contact with the China UFO Society through the office which arranges the exchanges with FSR.

So we tried that, and tried again, but unfortunately, although we received a polite acknowledgement of our request — which, we were told, had been forwarded to the appropriate place — "... the wheels grind exceeding slow."

In the absence of reports that have come directly to us, here is a selection of Chinese reports sent to us by our correspondent **Yusuke Matsumura** in Tokyo. They are taken from the Tokyo newspaper *Asahi Evening News* where they appeared on June 19, 1981, under the signature **Bo Lin** of China Features (the cross headings are mine — C.B.)

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"According to China's traditional calendar, 1980 was the Year of the Monkey. But, for the newly-established China UFO Research Organization (CURO) it was the Year of the Unidentified Flying Object.

"UFO sightings reached a new peak in China in 1980.' CURO chairman Cha Leping said recently in the central China city of Wuhan, as he looked over the 77 reports of UFOs from January through November.

"We don't reject the idea that they come from outer space,' he said. 'We just have to study these things with an open and scientific mind.'

"CURO was officially formed in May 1980 from an informal liaison centre for UFO fans at Wuhan University, which has recorded 208 sightings over the last few years.

"CURO is now a member of the Chinese Society for the Study of the Future, set up to research into unexplained phenomena. It has branches and 400 members throughout China. Cha Leping, 25, the chairman, is a student at the space-physics faculty at Wuhan University."

Heat radiating UFO at Dagang oilfield

"Some of the sightings reported to CURO in 1980 make incredible reading. Like the report of a group of machinery workers who were on a night prawn-fishing expedition at Dagang, the north China coastal oilfield.

"According to one of the machinists, 31-year-old Hong Changgui, the UFO appeared about 3 a.m. on October 5, 1980. It was cone-shaped, he said, flying at about 3,000 feet and apparently not very large. But, gazing up at the strange object, he felt an intense heat on his face.

"It was like standing under a stove,' he recalled. 'It gave off a very bright light, something like a welding arc. It was bright red at the centre and blue-green at the edges, except for the trailing edge which showed a white light.

"The whole incident lasted about ten seconds as it flew overhead with a whistling sound.'

"Another member of the group, 46-year-old Jin Guomin, said: 'Frankly, I was scared. We didn't know what it was and it made such a terrible noise. But my young son started calling to it "UFO! UFO!" as it went overhead.'

Green disc at Tianjin

"A month later, on November 5, Li Renpei and Li Laijun, office workers at a textile mill in Jinghai county, near the big city port of Tianjin, were also up and about in the early hours of the morning. The spotted a dish-like object, emitting a green light and flying on an irregular course.

"Within a few seconds, it disappeared in the eastern sky, but it reappeared about seven minutes later and flew west. It held this course for another few seconds and then veered east again until it disappeared once more."

Wuhan "dish" with bright lights

"Less than a week later, on November 11, three students at Wuhan University sighted a UFO over the eastern outskirts of Wuhan at about 10 o'clock in the evening.

"According to the report the students gave to CURO, the UFO was carrying two yellow lights and two white lights. The white lights were dazzling at times. They said: 'The shape was like a dish, with the middle part protruding a little. We estimated it was about 3,000 feet above the ground and we had it in view for about 15 minutes. It flew slowly in a north-eastern direction and then made a turn right above us to take a south-west course.'

Twin objects at Zhangpu cause panic, and deaths

"Not all of China's UFO sightings in recent years have been uneventful. According to the newly-collated records of CURO, at least one visitation caused death and injury.

"It happened on the evening of July 7, 1977, when more than 3,000 people were watching an open-air showing of the Romanian film *Alarm in the Danube Delta* at a playground in Zhangpu county, Fujian province, east China.

"About 8.30, a section of the audience spotted two mysterious objects hurtling towards them out of the night sky, flying so low they nearly touched the ground. The objects — there are conflicting reports about their shape — were giving off a strong orange light and flying only a few feet apart. They made no noise.

"Panic spread like wildfire, and in the scramble two children were trampled to death and 300 people were hurt. Within a few seconds, the UFOs had streaked overhead and disappeared.

"Later, the local Public Security Bureau ran the film under the same atmospheric conditions but nothing abnormal occurred."

Air Force pilots observe rectangular UFO at Gansu: speculatively linked with Valentich case

"The CURO file seems to show a strong link between sightings in China and sightings in other parts of the world.

"On October 23, 1978, a group of Chinese air force pilots, watching a film out of doors in Gansu province, northwest China, spotted a massive luminous object in the sky. They watched it for two or three minutes as it flew overhead at an altitude of about 21,000 feet. The pilots said it was rectangular and carrying very bright lights.

"The incident has been reported in the *Weekly World News*, Florida, but a new development is the apparent link between this UFO and the one reported to have knocked down an Australian plane only two days earlier, in October 21, 1978.

"In the Australian incident, a small single-engined aircraft was flying over the Bass Strait, southern Australia, when the pilot radioed to the ground station that a rectangular object, giving off a green light, was flying above him. The object was very large, he said, and carrying four lights.

"Six minutes after his first radio report, communication between the pilot and the ground were cut off. Later searches by the Australian Navy and Air Force failed to find the plane or the pilot.

"Inhabitants of King Island, near the strait, also said they saw the object which they said was very large and flying very fast. They also reported the green light.

"Cha Leping, the CURO chairman, said: "There seems to be some link between the UFO the Australian pilot saw and the one that appeared over Gansu province two days later. The descriptions tally — very large, rectangular and emitting a strong light.'"

Speedy spraying object in Guangxi: another speculative link

"In another sighting that strongly suggests a link with phenomena in other parts of the world, Fan Da, a farm official in Guangxi, south China, saw a silvery object on November 11, 1979. It was flying at high speed and apparently spraying some liquid or dust.

"A day earlier, a UFO matching the description of the

one over Guangxi was reported to have forced a Spanish jetliner to make an emergency landing.

Widely reported UFO identified as meteorite

"In a recent article, Cha Leping has placed descriptions of the UFOs in three categories.

"He said 80 per cent of them appeared to be like a dish, a ball, a ring or egg-shaped, shining with a silvery light during the day and glowing orange or red at night. Several cases of UFOs trailing smoke have been reported.

"In the second category Cha Leping lists large rectangular objects — rarely seen — and in the third, UFOs that appear as spiral nebula, with a bright core and many small points of light around it.

"One UFO, which brought in 22 reports from Shanghai and the Chinese provinces of Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Anhui, Jiangxi and Fujian, has been identified with some confidence as a big meteorite.

"It entered the atmosphere over east China at about 10.45 p.m. on August 26, 1980, as a ball of fire and at an altitude of about 60 kilometres.

"It broke up into several fiery pieces, followed by a burning cloud of smaller debris. Two observations tracked its 1,000-kilometer descent over the Taiwan Straits and estimate it must have weighed at least 1,000 tons on entry."

"HAMBURGER" WITH LIGHTS OVER POOLE

Leslie Harris

This case was investigated by Ron Lucas and the author, formerly editor of *Scan* magazine.

OBTAINING corroborative evidence of a single-witness sighting is usually an impossible task and for that reason multi-witness sightings are eagerly sought by investigators anxious to prove the objective reality of UFOs. This report deals with a sighting at Poole in Dorset involving six witnesses, all nine year old boys, tender in years but mature enough to recognise an inexplicable phenomenon and to describe their experience with sufficient lucidity to indicate that a UFO of some kind was indeed present.

The incident occurred on November 13, 1980. The witnesses were Richard Gillson, Emmerson Road; Lee Perkins, Emmerson Road; Anthony Rayment, Denmark Road; Matthew Anderson, St. Mary's Rd; Vincent Jones, Green Road; Abdul Shahid, Green Road. All the boys were nine years old on the date of the sighting, all attend the same school, and all live fairly close to each other in Poole. One boy, Abdul Shahid, was not interviewed. Attempts were made to see him, but difficulties were experienced owing to the reserved and suspicious attitude of his guardians. All

the boys we did see gave every impression of frank truthfulness, and it became clear that they did indeed witness a UFO phenomenon.

The location

The sighting occurred on a stretch of land bordering Poole Harbour known as Baiter Point. The land has been turned into a pleasure area with goal-posts provided in season for the use of the public.

The sighting

This is a general account using information supplied by all the witnesses interviewed.

The six boys were playing football after school (about 4.00pm) when Anthony Rayment, glancing up, saw the UFO. He shouted to draw the attention of the others to the object which was about twice the size of a helicopter and stationary at about 300ft (45°). It had the appearance of a hamburger (oval) with bumps,