

UFOs AND POLITICS: EPISODES IN THE 40-YEAR HISTORY OF SOVIET UFOLOGY

By *LEV CHUIKOV, Russian Engineer*

INTRODUCTION BY EDITOR FSR

In the course of my many articles in FSR over the past thirty-nine years I have frequently mentioned FSR's own very early contacts (through myself) with the Russian researchers. See, for example, my editorial notes on page 18 of FSR 38/3 and on page 10 of FSR 39/2.

The following important article is from the excellent Russian publication AURA-Z, No.1, issued in Moscow in March 1993. As will be seen, it mentions the names of all those early Soviet researchers, Fomin, Kazantsev, Rubtsov, Stolyarov, Zigel', and Tikhonov, all of whom were either directly or indirectly in touch with FSR via the last named, Arkadiy Tikhonov, their "front man", who, for many years, was delegated by their group to "keep open the pipeline to FSR" via myself.

Most of these men are now gone - except of course for our very good friend Dr. Vladimir Rubtsov of Kharkov, who today runs the Ukrainian Astronomical Society, and still maintains the link with us as our Ukrainian Consultant. Yuri Fomin too is still alive, so far as we know.

The author of the present article, Lev Chuikov, was born in Moscow in 1938 and graduated in 1962 from the famous Moscow Aviation Institute. His PhD is in Mechanics and Applied Mathematics. At present he heads the Department of Ufology at the Inter-Branch Scientific and Technological Centre of Venturing and Non-Traditional Technologies, "VENT". He has been interested in UFOs since 1960 and his book *Sons of the Stars* was the first such work in the USSR to advance the concept that the UFOs might be of extraterrestrial origins. EDITOR

"We notice a bright object high in the sky. The object is moving from North to South. We fetch three powerful binoculars from our tents. We observe a large spheroidal object glittering in the sun. It is seen clearly against the blue sky. It moves very quickly. Then we notice that the object changes its direction and moves to the South-West where it disappears beyond the snowy Humboldt Ridge. The whole camp follows this unusual phenomenon..."

(From the book, *The Heart of Asia*, by Russian artist and explorer Nikolai Roerikh, who reported seeing a UFO in Central Asia in the 1920s)

One may think that one such sighting was a good enough impetus to start serious investigations into UFOs, but academic science in this country would not study these phenomena. The attitude of military and civilian authorities made this kind of investigation impossible.

Let us follow the course of development of ufology in this country during the last four decades.

As early as the beginning of the 1950s J. Stalin ordered Korolyov to study the phenomenon of the UFOs, but Korolyov managed to avoid fulfilling this task.

Meanwhile some enthusiastic scholars took an interest in the problem. Among them were: Yu.Fomin, A. Kazantsev, Yu. Roszius, V. Rubtsov, A. Tikhonov, P. Stolyarov, F. Zigel', and others. We must make a special mention of the late Dr. D.C. Felix Zigel' who died on November 20, 1988. He was an astronomer who started investigating UFOs as early as 1955 and continued these investigations courageously and productively until his very last days. He had authored over ten large volumes on ufology, none of which came out during his life-time. He brought together informal groups of investigators, arranged expeditions to UFO landing places when the very subject was unrecognized and banned, organized collection and analysis of primary ufological data, conducted a broad exchange of information with foreign scholars and appealed to a lot of different organizations and authorities trying to prove that the problem of UFOs was real and extremely significant. Then, on November 10, 1967, he and Air Force General P. Stolyarov, and Navigator V. Akkuratov were given a chance to state their case on National Television.

Thousands of people from all over the country responded to that programme.¹ Letters from eye-witnesses, often with drawings and photographs enclosed, poured into the contact address.

The authorities of official bodies chose a different course of action. For instance, reports from civil pilots of UFO sightings were directed to the State Scientific-Research Institute of Civil Aviation. Lots of telegrams came to the Chief Administration of the Hydrometeorological Service. Packages of reports arrived at the Astronomical Council of the USSR Academy of Sciences. *But each boss was much too fond of his chair, so all information of this type was safely stored away at the bottom of drawers and in king-size vaults.*

During those years the Moscow Planetarium took a very negative stand on the problem of UFOs. They had a ready-made printed letter to answer numerous requests. It ran as follows:

Dear Comrade,

The phenomenon you observed must be connected with one of the experiments aimed at measuring the density of atmosphere at high altitudes and with launching a sodium cloud (of the type which was formed during the flights of space rockets).

V. Bronshten

Science Consultant

Moscow Planetarium.

On January 8, 1961 the newspaper "Pravda" carried an article entitled "Myths of Flying Saucers" which expressed Academician Artsimovich's opinion of UFOs. The article dealt the problem a crushing blow and gave a start to ridicule and persecution of ufologists. The noted investigator Yu. Fomin was one of the victims. He was struck off the Register of the "Znaniye" (Knowledge) Society's official lecturers.

On May 17, 1967 the Initiative Group of UFO Investigators (45 persons) had a meeting at the House of Aviation and Cosmonautics in Moscow. They elected Major-General P. Stolyarov² their President and Dr. F. Zigel' — his Deputy. In October, 1967 the Manager of the House, Major-General L. Reino, assisted in establishing the UFO Department of the All-Union Committee of Cosmonautics. 350 people including representatives of the mass media attended the first session of the Department on October 18, 1967.

However, the Department was disbanded by Army General A. Ghetman's order late in November, 1967. The State had dealt ufologists a second blow.

The third one came soon after, before the investigators could regain their senses: late in 1967 Academician Artismovich³ initiated a resolution passed by the Department of General and Applied Physics of which he was Head. The resolution condemned investigation of UFOs in this country. The leading newspaper "Pravda" followed up with the article "Flying Saucers Again?" on February 29, 1968.

On February 5, 1968 the problem of UFOs was discussed at the Journalists' Club in Moscow. On February 16, 1968, 13 leading designers and engineers — members of the Initiative Group — addressed a letter to Prime Minister A. Kosygin, Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers. In their letter they reasoned that the problem of UFOs was real and global in its essence and proved its scientific and strategic significance.

Of course the letter never reached the Prime Minister, like none of thousands of other letters. The answer came on March 11, 1968 from Academician A. Shchukin. Each sentence in his response was a lie, and that is no exaggeration.

Zigel' and those who shared his ideas made another attempt to break through the "wall of silence" surrounding the problem of UFOs. They compiled a voluminous book "Inhabited Cosmos" which contained articles by the best Russian and foreign scholars on the prob-

lem. The book was being compiled at a printing-house when its publication was interrupted. Academician Artsimovich interfered, and 32 "seditious" articles on ufology were cut out of it. The manuscripts were not returned to Zigel' in spite of his insistent requests. The castrated "Inhabited Cosmos" came out in 1972.⁴

In December, 1976 another ufologist, R. Varlamov, an ex-official of the State Committee for Science and Technology, appealed to Prime Minister A. Kosygin once again and suggested that scientific investigation of UFOs be organized in this country. The letter was passed over to the Expert Commission of the Department of General and Applied Physics of the USSR Academy of Sciences. The answer was an excellent example of the Soviet scientific administration's attitude to everything new. It is worth citing verbatim:

"Your materials were transferred to the Department of General Physics and Astronomy of the USSR Academy of Sciences. We inform you that as early as 1961 the Department's Bureau stated that:

"Lately, Soviet newspapers and magazines have carried reports of so-called "flying saucers", meaning various objects emitting light, which are claimed to be phenomena unknown to Science or space vehicles launched from other worlds. These speculations have no scientific basis, and the phenomena observed are of a well-known nature. The Bureau of the Department of General Physics and Astronomy passed the following resolution on this matter:

1. to entrust the General Council of the All-Union Astronomic and Geodesic Society to intensify explanatory work concerning "flying saucers",

2. to condemn the unhealthy sensationalism, being fraudulent in its character, as it deceives the population of this country;

3. to request all members of the Department to fight against this unhealthy sensationalism;

4. to publish an Open Letter on behalf of the Department to expose fabrications concerning "flying saucers".

Expert Group

Academy of Sciences

March 10, 1977

In the same year the magazine "Zemlya i Vselennaya" (Earth and the Universe) carried an article by Professor D. Martynov of the Moscow State University titled "Flying Saucers — a Test for Intellect" in which he stated "all that was based on profit, circulation, royalties, cheap renown etc." The professor tested his own intellect and failed the "examination".

Meanwhile life went on. At 4 a.m. on September 20, 1977 the most spectacular unidentified object appeared over Petrozavodsk City, Russia. It gave a 12-minute show of surprising transformations. The newspaper "Sotsialisticheskaya Industriya" (Socialist Industry) wrote on September 23, 1977:⁵

"... a huge star shone brightly against black skies sending clusters of rays earthwards. The star was floating slowly towards Petrozavodsk and then spread medusa-wise over the city.⁶ It hovered, continuing to pour a multitude of the finest rays over the city; it all looked like

like a very heavy rain. Yu. Gromov, Director of the Petrozavodsk Hydro-Meteorological Observatory, told a TASS reporter that the meteorological service of Karelia had not observed anything of the kind before. Yu. Gromov went on to emphasize that to his knowledge no technological experiments were being conducted in those parts at the time..."

Reports from people who had sighted unusual phenomena came in large numbers from other parts of the Soviet Union and from foreign countries, as well.

F. Zigel' wrote at that time: "On September 20, 1977 strange phenomena in the sky were sighted from Helsinki to Petrozavodsk and from Pskov all the way to Murmansk... from 3 am till dawn." Later he arrived at the conclusion that several dozen objects were sighted that night.

Meanwhile persecution of ufologists did not stop for a day. I recall an incident I witnessed directly. The People's University of Scientific and Technological Knowledge was established in a Moscow club. Its curricula included lectures on problems of UFOs. You know what happened? Soon plain-clothed KGB agents called on the club manager — a woman — and nearly frightened her to death. The doors of the hospitable club closed forever on ufologists soon after.

Eventually the state authorities realized that the problem of UFOs could not be dealt with that easily. In 1982 the Commission on Paranormal Phenomena was established. It was headed by the Academy Corresponding Member V. Troitsky. Twice-Hero of the Soviet Union, Pilot-Cosmonaut, Air-Force Major-General P. Popovich, and the USSR Academy of Sciences Corresponding Member N. Zheltukhin, and Academician G. Pisarenko, were appointed his Deputies. Unfortunately the Commission completely failed to carry out its tasks.

Neither did ufologists get the right to officially sponsored research nor did reporters get the right to cover these topics in newspapers. Simultaneously, experts from the USSR Academy of Sciences were authorized to become censors. All manuscripts concerning UFOs were to be submitted to them. No editor-in-chief could publish a ufological article without their clearance. The General Censorship, known both in this country and outside it as *Glavlit*, observed this order vigilantly.

Yet, there's many a slip, and the censors overlooked a sensational article in the newspaper "*Trud*" ("*Labour*") on January 30, 1985 entitled "At 4.10 Sharp"⁷ The article reported an episode when a UFO with a lighted outline the size of Pskov Lake followed a TU-134A passenger plane (Flight No 8352) till it landed in Tallinn. The object was clearly seen on the radar screen.

At the same time another TU-134 plane was flying southwards from Leningrad to Tbilisi and the Control Tower informed its crew that there was a strange "tandem" right on their course. When First Pilot V. Gotsiridze, The Commander of the Tbilisi plane, noticed the object he decided to approach it and have a better look at it. *That cost him his life.*

The Unidentified Object shot a scanning ray which travelled over First Pilot Gotsiridze and partially over

Second Pilot Kabachnikov. Several days later Gotsiridze was taken to hospital where he died of a disease which resembled myeloma. A similar disease made Kabachnikov an invalid for life. *These facts are documented with medical conclusions.*⁸

Soon after, the writer of the article, V. Vostrukhin, and the paper's Science Editor, were sacked, and the Editor-in-Chief followed them.

V. Psalomshchikov, Ph.D., Science Consultant of the Leningrad Commission on Paranormal Phenomena in the Environment commented on the episode: "When the investigation conducted by the Leningrad Commission on PP was drawing to an end the question of publishing its conclusions arose. Correspondents of central newspapers took a vivid interest in them but they all handed the materials back. The rumours of severe punishment which had befallen the newspaper "*Trud*" were much too fresh in their memories".

What men dared not to do, a woman-journalist, Ms. S. Omelchenko, did. The impossible thing happened. In a Leningrad hotel she ran into Flight Engineer Murman Gvenetadze — *the only member of the crew from Tbilisi who still worked in Civil Aviation after the accident with the UFO.* Ms Omelchenko reported that Engineer Gvenetadze reaffirmed all the known details of the accident. A recollection of his own sensations is worth quoting: "What I felt? Nothing except curiosity and admiration of the strange object's performance. It manoeuvred easily, changed its course and speed or hovered. We did not think of danger at all. It was just interesting. Now I would be scared after what has happened to my friends. I am eager to know what scientists think about it all". (*Vozdushny Transport*" newspaper, February 25, 1989).

V. Psalomshchikov writes: "I am not entitled to speak for others, and that is strictly my own opinion, but suppose the reports of both crews and radar readings were trustworthy, taking all the data into consideration. I admit that the object discovered on September 7, 1984 is not a product of terrestrial technologies". ("*Trud*" of July 22, 1990, the article "*At 4.10 Sharp and Five and a Half Years Later*").

Early in 1989 the Committee on Problems of Energy-and-Information Exchange in Nature headed by Academician V. Kaznachejev was established within the Union of Scientific and Engineering Societies. It was another attempt to co-ordinate the activities of different researchers. Time will show what will come out of it.

We are glad to mark at least one thing: all bans on ufological information have now been lifted in this country.

Summing up we can say:

1. The policy of authorities and academic science on the problem of UFOs in this country does not differ from what we see in other countries.

2. Despite all difficulties and defamation, our ufologists have worked, conducted investigations, and achieved results they can be proud of.

ANOTHER BOOK REVIEW ON ANGELS

By Joan Wilder

ANGELS: TRUE STORIES OF HOW THEY TOUCH OUR LIVES. By Hope Price. Foreword by David Suchet. Pub. by Macmillan, London, 1993. Hardback, ISBN 0-333-58710-3. Price £12.99

NOTE BY EDITOR OF FSR

In our last issue (39/4) we have already given an article by Paul Whitehead that dealt partly with this same book by Mrs. Hope Price. The subject continues to arouse much interest. Reports have been coming from many parts of the world, and there are still other articles in our pipe-line.

For example, there is the Russian report of several Soviet astronauts who, while orbiting the Earth in *Salyut Seven* in July 1985, observed, and also filmed for ten minutes, seven gigantic winged humanlike figures - "immortal super-beings of pure energy" in the words of one Russian scientist.

We shall give a detailed account of this case in due course.

The subject of Angels in the twentieth century has largely been pushed into the realms of biblical myth and rather sentimental wishful thinking - until now. For a strange thing has happened in the last two years. Over fifty books about angels have been published, each one discussing the subject seriously and presenting angels, not just as mythical symbolic figures, but as real and powerful entities.

Many ordinary people have recounted their own personal experiences where they have actually been helped and even saved from disaster by angels. A few years ago these same people would have been reticent about revealing their experiences but now, with the changing climate of thought about this subject, they are happy to tell their stories.

Mrs. Hope Price has gathered in her book many such stories. All are from perfectly ordinary people who have had extraordinary experiences. Hope Price is, herself, a committed Christian, and to get these stories she invited readers of various Christian publications to write to her. Therefore, it might seem from this book that most of the people having these angelic visitations were themselves Christians. However, this is not so, for in other books published recently about the subject, people from all faiths and all over the world have also described angelic experiences and revelations.

Apparently, angels can appear in many forms - either looking exactly like other human beings, mysteriously appearing and disappearing, or like the angels of biblical tradition: shining, tall figures with long flowing white robes, soft feathered wings and beautiful faces. In nearly every account of an angelic manifestation the one feature that is repeated over and over again is the amazing light and radiance that emanate from the form of the

angel. One person described this as the mixing of sunlight and a rainbow, especially around the head.

The people who have been fortunate enough to have experienced an angelic visitation never forget it and are changed fundamentally. They find faith in God and lose their fear of death.

In our rather bleak and materialistic world of today this book is a comforting and refreshing read. Hope Price leads us to believe that God really does exist and that He is watching over this troublesome little planet with His angelic army. He is the ultimate Controller. ■

BOOK REVIEWS: MORE BOOKS ON ANGELS

By Dr. Bernard E. Finch, MRCS,
LRCP, DCh., FSR Consultant

1. A handbook of Angels. By Dr. H.C. Moolenburgh, MD., (Translated from Dutch). Pub. by C.W. Daniel Co., Saffron Walden, England 1984. Paperback ISBN - 0-85207-1698 Price £6.95

2. Meetings with Angels: A Hundred And One Real-Life Encounters. By Dr. H.C. Moolenburgh, MD., (Translated from Dutch). Pub. by C.W. Daniel Co., Saffron Walden, England, 1992. Paperback. ISBN 0-85207-260-0 Price £9.95

As one reads these two remarkable books together one realises how natural it is to employ such a term as *Close Encounters of the Angelic Kind*, for, after all, each case listed is greatly reminiscent of much of what has been published over the years in FSR! The cases are dealt with in great detail, with all the signs and symptoms of what we term an "encounter", plus the additional religious overtones.

From time immemorial, as in ancient Sumeria and Babylon and Egypt, the Angels were accepted and regarded as *winged Gods*. Then in due course, in Biblical Times, they were Holy Beings, likewise with wings. In Roman and Greek times the Gods continued to be seen as superior beings far above mankind. Then in the European Mediaeval Period we had the veneration of the Christian Angels and Apostles.

Finally, in our own days, we hear the constant talk of *Aliens*, or *Ghosts* and *Spirits*, and *Visions*.

Dependent upon what one's particular cultural environment and upbringing may have been, these *visions* produce stimuli in the human brain, giving rise to the most deep-seated kinds of perceptions and thoughts.

I have found these two books remarkable in that they can further our understanding of what the concept of "Aliens from other Dimensions" might mean. I could only wish however that the second book could have been provided with an *index* of its hundred cases ■