

UFOs behind the Iron Curtain

by **GORDON W. CREIGHTON**

THOSE who read my translations of articles from *Pravda* and *Komsomolskaya Pravda* of January 8 last (published in the *FLYING SAUCER REVIEW* for March-April, 1961) may have noticed that the Soviet authorities appeared anxious to convince their public that this silly craze about saucers had only just started in the U.S.S.R., and that it was all due to the recent activities of one or two unscrupulous individuals who had been giving lectures on the subject in Moscow and elsewhere, using as their material some of the absurd UFO reports which had appeared in the irresponsible and sensation-seeking American press some eight or ten years ago and which had, of course, been briefly noted at the time by the Soviet newspapers.

Furthermore, as reported in the issue of the *REVIEW* for May-June, 1961, Marvin Kalb, writing in the *Sunday Times* of March 5, said that the stories of flying saucers had started in Russia in 1959.

If, of course, the theory of the Spanish investigator, Antonio Ribera, is correct (*FLYING SAUCER REVIEW*, May-June, 1959) it would be logical for the Soviet Union to have experienced its mass-visitation and scrutiny by UFOs at a date later than the U.S.A. (which seems to have been between 1947 and 1950) and also later than the countries of Western Europe (the sensational years for Britain and France seem to have been between 1950 and 1954). But is Marvin Kalb correct in saying that the stories about UFOs over the U.S.S.R. began only in 1959?

Readers of the *FLYING SAUCER REVIEW* may find it interesting to study the book *Russia Against the Kremlin*, by the well-known French journalist, Alexandre Metaxas, which was published in Paris in 1957, an English translation being brought out in the same year by Cassell.

Alexandre Metaxas, the quality of whose reporting will be well known to those who remember his remarkable series of articles entitled "How China Worries the Kremlin," in the *Sunday Times* of January, 1960, is himself of Eastern

European origin, and the important thing about him is that he is one of the very, very few Western journalists who claim to speak Russian so perfectly that they can talk to the ordinary people of the U.S.S.R. wherever they meet them without it being suspected that they are not themselves citizens of the U.S.S.R.

His book, *Russia Against the Kremlin*, and his articles in the *Sunday Times* show how well he used this ability to mix with the ordinary Soviet citizens during his visit there in 1956. And this is what he has to say (pp.78-79) about the young people of the U.S.S.R.:

"While I was in Russia I conducted a sort of Gallup Poll of my own. I questioned many young people of both sexes, and we talked freely about all sorts of things. It was rarely that I had to ask a question outright; they never stopped asking me about the most diverse subjects. It was while answering them that I managed to slip in a question or two of my own. They were passionately eager to know how we in the West live, what our hopes are for the future, what our needs are and what our possibilities. Not once did a question so much as hint at propaganda or criticism. What interested them most were astro-nautical problems, the whole field of 'Science Fiction', the Martians, the galaxies, inter-stellar communication, even flying saucers."

From my own wide reading of Soviet newspapers and technical journals over the past seven or eight years, I can confirm that this estimate by Alexandre Metaxas must be correct, for the amount of material published in Russia on the subject of Space Travel, life on other worlds, etc., has been absolutely astonishing. Although "flying saucers" were never mentioned in this enormous volume of Soviet writing about Space and Space Travel, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the Soviet Government is, in fact, quietly preparing the minds of its people for the day when contact with extra-terrestrial beings can no longer be concealed or denied.