

Sources:

- Byrne, Carol. "The Night of the Saucer." *UFO Report* 8,1 (February 1980): 16-19,56,60-61.
- Clark, Jerome. "Phil Klass vs. the 'UFO Promoters'." *Fate* 34,2 (February 1981): 56-67.
- Durkin, Jim. "Deputy Is Knocked out in UFO 'Attack'." *Grand Forks [North Dakota] Herald* (August 29, 1979).
- "Follow-up." *The A.P.R.O. Bulletin* (January 1980): 1,3.
- Gaddis, Vincent H. *Mysterious Fires and Lights*. New York: David McKay Company, 1967.
- Hendry, Allan. "Minnesota CEII: The Val Johnson Story." *International UFO Reporter* Pt. I. 4,3&4 (September/October 1979): 4-9; Pt. II. 4,5 (November 1979): 4-10.
- . "UFO Bangs up Police Car." *Fate* 33,5 (May 1980): 55-64.
- . Letter to Joe Nickell (July 18, 1980).
- Klass, Philip J. *UFOs: The Public Deceived*. Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1983.
- "Others in, Near Minn. Town Relate 'Sightings'." *Rochester [Minnesota] Post-Bulletin* (September 12, 1979).
- "A Phenomenon?" *Eagle Bend [Minnesota] News* (May 25, 1961).
- Stone, Debra. "Deputy's UFO Story Evokes Other Tales." *Minneapolis Star* (September 11, 1979).
- "UFO-Patrol Car Encounter." *The A.P.R.O. Bulletin* (August 1979): 1-2.

MASSE, MAURICE. See Valensole CE2/CE3

MEIER CONTACT CLAIMS

In his telling of the story, Eduard Albert Meier, born on February 3, 1937, in Bulach, Switzerland, first heard from the space people in 1942. One day he and his father saw a fast-moving disc-shaped object pass near their house. Two months later young Eduard sighted it again. It descended as if it intended to land but then vanished. Moments after its disappearance a voice accompanied by mental pictures spoke inside his head. After that he heard from the voice daily, and he learned how to respond to it with his own telepathy.

The contacts ceased for a time. When they resumed, on the occasion of his seventh birthday in 1944, he

heard from a new voice. It emanated from someone named Sfath. In September of that year, he met Sfath, "a very old man who looked to me like a patriarch," and flew with him in his flying saucer. Sfath told him he had been chosen for an important mission, the exact nature of which would be revealed in the future; in the meantime he would learn much and have many experiences, good and bad. On his sixteenth birthday Meier heard Sfath's voice for the last time. A few months later a young, forceful female voice, that of Asket, introduced itself. Asket explained that she came from the DAL Universe, one of many universes that exist parallel to our own.

Meier had a troubled youth, running away from his parents on more than one occasion, taking a variety of odd jobs (including a brief stint with the French Foreign Legion), and serving time in a detention center on a theft charge. Finally Asket, who communicated with him less often than Sfath had, gave him some advice: travel and learn. So in 1958 he headed for the Middle East. Over the next few years he wandered through a number of countries, picked up any sort of work he could get, and listened all the while to Asket's spiritual teachings. "You are selected as truth offerer," she said, "like numerous others at very early times before you," including Jesus Christ. He told a reporter for the *New Delhi Statesman* (September 30, 1964, issue) that he had taken hundreds of spaceship photographs, but he would not permit them to be published. That same year Asket informed him that contacts would cease; he would be monitored over the next 11 years, and if found spiritually prepared at that time, he would meet the space people face to face.

Meier acquired the nickname "Billy" out of his interest in such Old West characters as Buffalo Bill Cody, Wild Bill Hickok, and Billy the Kid. While traveling near Iskenderun, Turkey, on August 3, 1965, he was seriously injured in a bus accident. He lost all of his left arm from just above the elbow down. After two weeks in a hospital, he was sufficiently recovered to move on to Greece, where he lived for a time. There he met and soon afterwards eloped with a 17-year-old girl named Kaliopé Zafireou and called "Popi." The next year, 1967, they moved to Pakistan and

produced a daughter with the imposing name Gilgamesha. (A son born three years later was named Atlantis-Socrates.)

In 1970 Meier was back in Switzerland. The couple settled in Hinwill and supported themselves uncertainly on Billy's disability check and Popi's chicken-raising. Their neighbors mostly viewed them with suspicion. Meier in particular was viewed as odd, a man who had strange ideas and whose comings and goings at all hours violated small-town Swiss notions of propriety. In 1974 Meier borrowed money from a friend and placed an ad in the German magazine *Esotera* inviting interested readers to participate in a metaphysical study group. Soon a small number of people were meeting regularly at Meier's farm.

It was to this group that Meier made a dramatic announcement and set in motion the circumstances that eventually would turn him into the most famous and influential flying-saucer contactee since George Adamski (see *The Emergence of a Phenomenon*, pp. 1-12). Meier reported that on the afternoon of January 28, 1975, he had seen a disc-shaped spacecraft. Used to such things by now, he took several photographs of it. (Meier claimed to take such pictures from the hip, with the camera focus set on infinity.) Then, however, the craft did something he did not expect. It landed in the nearby meadow, and a beautiful pale-skinned, amber-haired spacewoman stepped out and approached him. An hour and a half's worth of conversation ensued.

The woman, Semjase (pronounced Sem-Ya-See), from the planet Erra, told him she was a representative of an extraterrestrial civilization which originated thousands of years ago on a planet in the constellation Lyra. A war which eventually destroyed that world caused much of the population to scatter to nearby solar systems. Semjase's ancestors were those who settled in the Pleiades star system. At one point the new Pleiadians discovered the earth, which housed primitive humans. The earth was so congenial that some Pleiadians stayed there, educated the original inhabitants, and intermarried with them. In due course they were destroyed in a war, as were later Pleiadians who came along in a second wave of immigration. Semjase was part of a peace-loving third wave which sought to help human beings evolve in a constructive

direction. They had contacted other earthlings via telepathy, but for one reason or another all had proven unsatisfactory. Only Meier had passed all the tests.

Semjase spoke of the "detrimental effect" religion has had on the human race. (Unsurprisingly, this antireligious message would generate considerable controversy and resistance even among those who might otherwise have been receptive to the supposed pronouncements of advanced extraterrestrials.) Only the laws of Creation, which can be observed in nature if one looks carefully enough, "are irrefutable and totally valid."

To prove their reality to skeptical human beings, Semjase said, the Pleiadians would make their "beamships" visible to Meier; in turn Meier was to take as many photographs as he could manage. In the months ahead he produced hundreds of them. He would be summoned to the spot via telepathic message, a flying saucer would appear, and he would take pictures. Sometimes he would board the beamships and fly into space. On July 17, 1975, from a beamship he photographed the link-up of the American Apollo and Soviet Soyuz space capsules. He also traveled to the Pleiades and into the DAL Universe. On other occasions the beamships took him through time. He brought back pictures of dinosaurs, a caveman, and a future earthquake in San Francisco. Perhaps most memorably, he photographed the Eye of God in deep space. The other Eye, he said, was blinking at Semjase.

Billy Meier, Inc. To most people, including most ufologists, Meier's claims seemed too farcical to merit refutation. Yet by 1976, owing to coverage in European magazines and newspapers, Meier was fast becoming a regional occult celebrity, and pilgrims were showing up by the hundreds—to Popi's pronounced displeasure—at his Hinwill farm. (In April 1977 the Meiers moved to a mountain home in the village of Hinterschmidruti. Followers had raised the \$240,000 needed to purchase the property.) Among the regular visitors were several contactee-oriented UFO enthusiasts, prominent among them Lou Zinsstag, an educated but credulous woman who had been a close associate of Adamski. Zinsstag did not much



Eduard (Billy) Meier, a Swiss contactee, reports numerous contacts with beings from the Pleiades, including the beautiful Semjase (pictured on wall), who fly to earth in "beamships." His admirers call him a prophet, his detractors a charlatan.

like the Meier/Pleiadian view of religion, but otherwise she was intrigued. She would play a crucial, though indirect, role in taking the story out of Western Europe and into the rest of the world.

In 1964 violinist Timothy Good was in New Delhi touring with the London Symphony Orchestra when he happened to meet an artist who knew Billy Meier, whose story of space contacts and photographs had recently appeared in the newspaper (where he was identified as "Edward Albert"). She said that Meier had just left the country. The following year, when his occupation took him to Zurich, Good found where Meier was living, but Meier was not home when Good showed up. Soon afterwards he spoke with him by phone. Subsequently Good told Zinsstag, with whom he shared an interest in Adamski and contactees generally, about Meier. But she did not meet him personally until 1976. By August she was judging him, as she put it in a letter to Good, "the most intriguing man I have ever met."

The next month she and Good, who were in the United States doing research for a biography of Adamski, stopped in Tucson to meet with Wendelle C. Stevens. Stevens, a retired Air Force officer, collected photographs of alleged UFOs, and in correspondence Zinsstag had mentioned Meier and his pictures, though without providing much in the way of detail. She was reluctant to put the photographs in the mail. Thus when they met, Zinsstag handed them personally to Stevens, who was immediately impressed. Two other houseguests, Lee and Brit Elders, were also intrigued.

In due course Stevens contacted Meier personally, and the two entered into correspondence. In October 1977 Stevens visited Meier for four days and returned with many color photographs of Pleiadian beamships. He returned for a second visit in April 1978. Thoroughly dazzled, convinced that he had come upon the greatest UFO story of them all, he turned to his friend Lee Elders, a private detective

and head of a newly formed corporate-security firm, and asked for his help in investigating and documenting Meier's claims. Though initially reluctant, Elders changed his mind when he, his wife, and Stevens spent time with Meier, who showed them yet more photographs and his diary on his ongoing contacts. Back in Arizona Elders's business partner Thomas K. Welch joined the effort.

Stevens, the Elderses, and Welch formed a partnership, Genesis III Productions Limited, and signed an agreement with Meier. In return for his cooperation in their investigation, Meier would receive a share of the profits from their marketing of books and other materials.

The first Meier-related product to come out of the arrangement was a coffee-table book, *UFO . . . Contact from the Pleiades, Volume I*, released in 1979. The bulk of the book consisted of photographs. The text, however, characterized the "investigation" Stevens, the Elderses, and Welch had conducted as "one of the most intense scientific probes ever undertaken in the history of the UFO contact phenomena [sic]." As other Genesis III books and videos were marketed in the years to come, this claim would be repeated. A 1987 book by writer Gary Kinder, *Light Years*, presented Meier's story as fantastic but credible. It also portrayed Stevens and his associates as capable, conscientious investigators who had done their best to crack a puzzling case before having to bow to the mass of positive evidence.

Like Adamski before him, however, Meier had many critics in the ufological community. Few mainstream ufologists believed his story, and several actively sought to refute it. The most relentless of these, a young Californian named Kal K. Korff, published and distributed a 124-page monograph hyperbolically titled *The Meier Incident: The Most Infamous Hoax in Ufology* (1981). Korff was able to demonstrate that the beamships were in fact small models, some supported by strings, others apparently held by hand. Shots allegedly taken in space from beamships were traced to NASA footage. More than Meier, however, Korff's principal targets were Stevens, the Elderses, Welch, and their associate Jim Dilettoso, whom he accused of misrepresenting the evidence and worse. Korff con-

tinued the attack in much greater detail in the exhaustive *Spaceships of the Pleiades* (1995).

In November 1982 Stevens was arrested on 16 felony counts for crimes unrelated to his UFO interests. The following February, in a plea-bargaining arrangement, he admitted guilt to three of the charges and entered Arizona's Santa Rita Correction Facility on June 1, 1983. Even during his confinement his by-line appeared on books about Meier and other contactees. Meier's followers—and Stevens himself—asserted that sinister forces, presumably government agents seeking to discredit Meier through his leading promoter, had framed him. Since his release in 1990, Stevens has remained an active UFO/New Age publisher, entrepreneur, and business agent/partner for Meier. Currently he is releasing a multivolume series of Meier's notes on his various contact experiences. As Korff remarks:

The Eduard "Billy" Meier case is the subject of . . . twelve books and video documentaries, and dozens of audiocassettes. Moreover, each year thousands of Meier's . . . "UFO" photographs are sold around the world in the form of direct prints, calendars, paintings, and posters. The Billy Meier "evidence" is now a money-making machine that shows no signs of slowing down [Korff, 1995].

Sources:

- Alnor, William M. *UFOs in the New Age: Extraterrestrial Messages and the Truth of Scripture*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1992.
- Bord, Janet, and Colin Bord. "Contact from the Pleiades?" *Flying Saucer Review* 26,3 (September 1980): 11-13.
- Davidson, Keay. "Farmer's Tales of Space Travel Won't Fly with Many UFO Buffs." *San Francisco Examiner* (June 24, 1987).
- Elders, Lee J., Brit Nilsson-Elders, and Thomas K. Welch. *UFO . . . Contact from the Pleiades, Volume I*. Phoenix, AZ: Genesis III Productions, 1979.
- . *UFO . . . Contact from the Pleiades, Volume II*. Phoenix, AZ: Genesis II Productions, 1983.
- Fry, Margaret. "The Eduard Meier Case—Final Evidence?" *IUFOPRA Journal* 4,7 (Summer 1995): 15-16.