

SAUCERS OVER RUSSIA

Widespread speculation officially deplored

TRANSLATION BY
G.W. CREIGHTON

THE following article appeared in *Pravda* on January 8, 1961, and attracted world-wide attention:

"Various stories have appeared among us of late to the effect that at certain places in the U.S.S.R. people have seen the so-called 'flying saucer.' Certain lecturers have indeed spoken of them as actual facts. Readers of *Pravda* are writing letters to us asking that we elucidate this question of 'flying saucers.' Our Correspondent has accordingly requested Academician L. A. Artsimovich to give readers his opinion on the matter:

'There is not a single fact,' says Academician Artsimovich, 'to indicate the existence, in the skies above us, of the mysterious physical objects which have been given the name of "saucer." All the talk on this subject, which has been so widespread of late, stems from one and the same initial source, namely the unscrupulous and anti-scientific information contained in talks given in Moscow by certain totally irresponsible individuals. These reports contained fantastic tales, borrowed for the most part from the U.S. press and relating to the time when flying crockery was the principal sensation in the United States.

'It is necessary to say a few words about this sensation, which at times bordered upon mass-hysteria. "Saucers" made their first appearance in 1947 when an American businessman who was flying in an aeroplane in the area of the Rocky Mountains (in the western part of the U.S.A.) saw a group of shining objects, in form similar to plates, flying at great speed over the tops of the mountains. Following upon this first report, which attracted the attention of the newspapers, came a deluge of others. Plates*, saucers and other objects of unknown provenance were sailing to and fro in the American skies in swarms, by day and by night, and appearing from all directions, both singly and in whole crowds.

'The evasive attitude adopted by the American governmental authorities, to whom the public had turned for an explanation of these reports, resulted in the dissemination of

the most absurd rumours. Amateurs were at once forthcoming who were glad to avail themselves of the exceptional effect begotten by reports of "flying saucers." And there appeared entertaining stories about space-ships aboard which, for some mysterious purposes, inhabitants of other planets or distant solar systems were paying visits to the earth.

'All these epic doings went on for some years. Then, when the uproar created by the newspaper stories had abated somewhat, the sober voices of certain American scientists began to make themselves heard in an endeavour to ascertain precisely what had in actual fact been observed in those cases where the reports were not faked and were not merely the results of self-deception or simple psychological hallucination. And it then became clear that the majority of the bona-fide sightings which had previously been considered to be proof of the existence of new flying objects could now be explained by far more mundane causes.

'The causes in question are the phenomena at times highly fantastic—connected with the passage of light through the atmosphere and the reflections of such light by clouds, drops of moisture in the air, ice-crystals and other components of the atmosphere. To the category such such phenomena, for example, belong the various types of mirage observed as the result of the bending of the course of a beam of light passed through air containing layers of varying temperatures. And to the same category of phenomena belong, likewise, the rainbow which is explained by the refraction of light in drops of water in the atmosphere and such things as "mock suns" and the columns of light observed at times of severe frost, etc. etc.

'To this same cycle of phenomena belong also effects of light which can cause a man who is unacquainted with the optics of the atmosphere to form conjectures as to the existence of hitherto unknown flying objects.

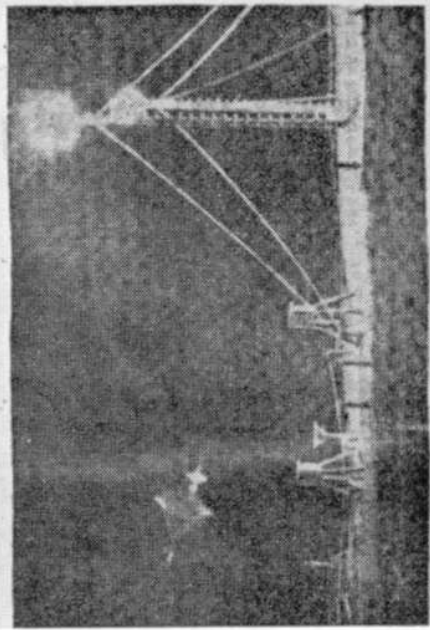
'The American astronomer Menzel devoted a whole book to the analysis of this question and came to the conclusion that "flying sau-

Это оптический обман, — говорят ученые



Мы лозиевский, являющегося фотооборудованного И. Тричера со статьи А. Минирова. Интересно — сказал он задумчиво — Попробую сам сконструировать летающую тарелку... Через час я вернулся... У памятник Юрию Долгорукому, как всегда, было полно в восемь часов вечера пролетающих самолетов на тротуаре человека, который не замечал на тротуаре человека, который не замечал на тротуаре человека... Ничего не было видно. А человек на тротуаре видел: на матовом стекле ясно были видны очертания летающей тарелки.

«КОМСОМЛЬСКАЯ ПРАВДА» 8 января 1961 г. 3 стр.



1. Прелесть снимка: фотооборудованная не совсем странный предмет. Не представляю, что это летающая тарелка — подумал он.

ЕСТЬ ЛИ «ЛЕТАЮЩИЕ ТАРЕЛКИ»?

В течение ряда лет в зарубежной печати появлялись материалы о волнтах необычайных небесных тел. Из них выделены «летающие тарелки», «стреловидные диски». Упоминаются их странности в их существовании. Упоминаются их странности в их существовании.

Необходимо отметить, что в ряде случаев речь о «летающих тарелках» была использована реакционными кругами капиталистических стран для антикоммунистической пропаганды, разжигания холодной войны.

Фототарелки «летающих тарелок» были получены в нашей стране. Ничего мы публикуем рассказ кандидата физико-математических наук А. Минирова о том, что собой представляют эти фототарелки.

Если посмотреть на снимок, сделанный Мухомовым, то видно, что на фототарелке изображены две звезды. Скорее всего, это звезды. Скорее всего, это звезды.

На самом деле же объект на снимке — это звезда. На самом деле же объект на снимке — это звезда.

Свет от этих источников, попадающий на объектив, частично рассеивается и частично отражается. Отражение — это вид от звезды, так и от звезд объектов. Так как звезда очень яркая, она создает блики на объективе.

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В том, что действительно фототарелки, можно убедиться, если приглядеться к снимку. Ничего не было видно. А человек на тротуаре видел: на матовом стекле ясно были видны очертания летающей тарелки.

Регулируя угол между объективом и объектом, можно получить различные фототарелки.

приведен на источник света (м. свет). Можно получить различные фигуры, вроде той, которая описана на снимке Е. Мухомова. Ничего не было видно. А человек на тротуаре видел: на матовом стекле ясно были видны очертания летающей тарелки.

Все эти наблюдения не только подтверждают существование летающих тарелок, но и позволяют предположить, что это звезды.

Если фототарелка, которую мы получили, это звезда, то она будет выглядеть так же, как звезда. Если фототарелка, которую мы получили, это звезда, то она будет выглядеть так же, как звезда.

Мы показали здесь фототарелку (фото № 2). Сделана она была в том же месте, где была сделана фототарелка, которую мы получили. Мы показали здесь фототарелку (фото № 2). Сделана она была в том же месте, где была сделана фототарелка, которую мы получили.

Таким образом, разницы между фототарелкой, которую мы получили, и фототарелкой, которую мы получили, нет. Так и фототарелка, которую мы получили, и фототарелка, которую мы получили.

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2. Вид фототарелки. Излучение от источника света падает на объектив и отражается от поверхности. Вид фототарелки.

А. МИНИРОВ, кандидат физико-математических наук.

Tell Your Friends About "Flying Saucer Review"

cers" were nothing but an optical effect.

'One would have thought that enough had been said about the matter and that there was no basis for the resuscitation of ridiculous rumours that were laid to rest long ago. But now, after the lapse of several years, we are once more witnessing lively discussions on the question of the mysterious saucers and their cosmic origin. And this time—in our own country.

'Are there any fresh grounds for this? Have facts now been discovered which were previously unknown and which compel us to reconsider the question and admit the real existence of all this assortment of strange crockery floating overhead?

'No. No new facts whatsoever have come to light and we possess no grounds for surmising that Martians or Venusians are making mysterious trips to the earth. The simple truth of the matter is that there are people who are playing upon the natural interest which, for every one of us, pertains to everything about space. Consequently, there has been presented, before a trusting audience, material of the very lowest and basest sort, borrowed, for example, from such sources as the writings of the American adventurer Adamski, who, according to his own statement, contrived to book a seat aboard a saucer manned by Venusians and fly to Venus with them.

'These "captivating" items of news have been reinforced by a host of nebulous rumours about the appearance of saucers from space over towns in Uzbekistan and Tadzhikistan, in the Soviet Republics of Central Asia. There have also been reports of diminutive Venusians who, as soon as they had landed, at once began running about in all directions looking for cheap oriental sweets. And yet a further factor to intensify the interest shown in "flying saucers" has been the photograph of a "saucer" taken in one of the northern regions of the country. As has been demonstrated by the laboratory experiments performed at the Institute of Applied Geophysics (belonging to the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences), this photograph, too, is the result of an optical effect. This effect can be artificially reproduced by any amateur photographer and such photographs can be turned out by the million for gullible folk.

'The time has come to put an end to the

dissemination of these fairy-tales, captivating as they may be. Saucers and other material objects which may perchance appear in the heavens exist to the same degree as do lights on water or the rainbow in the sky, that is to say simply as a play of light in the atmosphere. All else is either self-deception or wilful falsification of the facts.'

Pravda's junior partner, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, too, on January 8, attacked the flying saucers (see reproduction on page 4) and devoted greater space to a discussion of photographs, their significance and how they could be faked.

Pressure of public opinion

What caused this rumpus in the Soviet press? Presumably, the pressure of public opinion, as the result of a multiplicity of sighting reports which had become too great to be ignored any more. It should be noticed that the "expert" who is called in to denigrate the saucers cannot fall back on the old "party line" explanation which somehow or other implicated the Western imperialistic warmongers. Even peace-loving Soviet citizens have been seeing the objects, so Comrade Artsimovich was obliged to get out his copy of Menzel—it is interesting to notice that the subject had already received some attention on the other side of the Iron Curtain.

The story of the little men from Venus would seem to us to have had some ridicule injected into it: could the Venusians have been looking for sugar instead of sweets?

Whatever the truth of the stories which have forced a breach in the dam of Russian silence, one theory, at least, has been destroyed. It can no longer be held in the West that the objects are Russian secret weapons. No country would publicise its own secrets.

Whether Comrade Artsimovich believes his own nonsense it is hard to say and we can only hope that some Russian, braver than the others, will write in to *Pravda* to enquire how light refractions, etc., can have caused people all over the world to see solid objects with portholes and exhausts—objects which have also been tracked on radar.

The Russian press had hardly ceased its denunciations when the following item appeared in *Izvestia* for January 19:

"During the night of January 15-16, many

inhabitants of the islands off the coast of Northern Holland saw for a period of 15 minutes a large moving fiery ball at a height of 15 miles and at a distance of 50 miles from the coast. The Observatory at Utrecht is at present engaged in an enquiry into this phenomenon and witnesses have been invited to help."

This item of news is either a bad letting down of the side or just a part of a calculated policy of official "leaks" on the subject. Might the FLYING SAUCER REVIEW suggest to the leaders of the Western Powers that here is an opportunity too good to be missed. A message from the new

President of the United States calling on all nations to give serious study to the mystery in the skies of the world rather than to waste the peoples' lives in futile argument about dreary ideologies might well bring about a thaw in the cold war.

* *Translator's note:* The usual Russian term for "flying saucers" is "letáyuschie tarélki," literally "flying plates," and the Czechs use a similar term. Less commonly, the Russians use the word "blyudtsa," meaning a "saucer" or "dish." I have used the word "plate" in my translation. Kenneth Arnold, as a matter of interest, did say that the objects "looked like flat pie-dishes." G.C.

THE SECRET WEAPON THEORY

A word to newcomers

DURING the last six months, the FLYING SAUCER REVIEW has attracted a large number of new readers, many of whom, to judge from their letters of enquiry, are either completely fresh to the subject or are too young to have remembered the events of the fifties. As a result, we feel we must ask our older readers to excuse us if we devote some space to an examination of the theory that the flying saucers are really secret weapons.

The secret weapon theory deserves serious consideration and those who are anxious to convert others will have to explain very patiently the objections to this hypothesis. All of the objections are fatal.

Before we come to the objections, however, it is as well to remember that those who hold to the secret weapon theory have, perhaps unwittingly, rejected the temperature inversion, weather balloon, flying geese explanations which Dr. Menzel and others have employed. If the saucers are secret weapons then they are real machines intelligently controlled. It is as well to have this point

firmly fixed at the start: some sceptics are inclined to shift their ground rather than to admit that the saucers are real and extra-terrestrial. If the secret weapon theory is demolished, the sceptic is sometimes tempted to fall back upon Dr. Menzel as his last line of defence. This he must not be allowed to do.

The history of secret weapons does not encourage us to believe that the flying saucer is one. In recent times, there have been two excellent examples of how countries react who possess such a weapon. Hitler boasted of his V-weapons: he made no secret at all that he had something up his sleeve. The Allies, on the other hand, took an opposite course with the Atom Bomb. The strictest secrecy was observed until its first use against Japan. With the flying saucer, however, neither course has been followed. Even if it be a weapon, it certainly has not been kept secret: saucers have been seen flying over every country in the world, either in broad daylight or brilliantly illuminated at night. The objects have been seen by

tens of thousands and it is only man's incredulity that prevents their existence being even more widely known.

The other objection to the secret weapon theory is even more telling. If it is accepted that the saucers are real and intelligently piloted, then it can easily be proved by reference to Charles Fort and others that they have been seen over our skies for at least a hundred years. As Desmond Leslie has remarked, if they are secret weapons they must be the result of experiments initiated either by Queen Victoria or the Kaiser. Even if we start our studies with the Kenneth Arnold sighting of 1947, we have to admit that the experiments are taking a long time. Every month that goes by makes the secret weapon less tenable. Also, the flight and powers of the saucers would seem to us to have been perfected long ago and any country possessing a machine which made the jet plane look like a clumsy toy would have boasted about its engineering triumph. The secret weapon theory just does not work when tested by common sense.