

# WHAT THEY'RE DOING TO US

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Mr Budd Hopkins, who has reported exhaustively on his investigation of the abduction phenomenon in his books *Missing Time* (1981) and *Intruders* (1987), has very kindly given his consent for this important article to be reprinted in FSR. It has already appeared in the USA. — EDITOR

It is in the nature of human psychology that an event as dramatic as contact with extraterrestrial intelligence cannot be thought about neutrally, without deep-seated hopes and preconceptions. Most of us, I'm certain, prefer to believe that extraterrestrials would arrive on our planet as friendly, helpful beings, eager to share their technology and to aid us in solving our social and ecological problems. Upon this basic and very human wish certain people have erected a powerful set of interpretations of modern-day UFO reports. These hopes, hardened into a kind of theology, can be described as a modern religion, willed into existence after the decline of our more traditional deities. After all, we have been told more than once that God is dead.

On the other hand, our recent wars, both hot and cold, and the venality and deceit we have seen in many of our political leaders have also inspired an undercurrent of pessimism, global in extent. International chaos, terrorism and governmental incompetence have trained many of us always to expect the worst. And so, if the majority opinion, or hope, is that extraterrestrials would arrive as Space Brothers, a strong minority opinion fears the opposite: that we would find ourselves taken over by a band of intergalactic conquerors. Our popular science-fiction films spell out these hopes and fears quite literally. We have the kindly Space Brother, Michael Rennie, stepping out of a gleaming spaceship to help earthlings through their troubles, and then we have Body Snatchers out to do us all in. I've dwelt on these basic attitudes about extraterrestrial contact for an important reason: when we examine reports of actual contact, especially as revealed in UFO-abduction encounters, we must always bear in mind how our basic preconceptions might influence our reading of these events.

After 12 years' experience investigating the abduction phenomenon, I will not deal with the validity of such reports in this paper. I've considered this issue elsewhere, in two books and a number of articles, so we will here assume that the abductees I've worked with, more than 150 in all, are telling the truth as they best recall it. I will concentrate, instead, on what their accounts tell us about the moral nature of the UFO phenomenon. Are the UFO occupants, as they are described by their abductees, good or bad, friends or foes, or is the situation just not reducible to such terms? The very first step, previously, is to analyze what the abductees say they feel about their captors, and that, every investigator knows, is a complex task. My 12 years' experience leads me to a distinct conclusion: each abductee's emotions are invariably intense and many-leveled — and usually mutually contradictory.

First of all, confrontations with UFO occupants are generally experienced as frightening, so fear, at some point, is an almost universal element in the emotional mix. Second, there is a kind of awe or wonder at the power and seeming magic of the aliens' technology. This often translates itself into a kind of affection, even love, that an abductee might feel for the captor with whom he or she senses a special relationship.

On the other side of the same coin is an almost universal anger — verging sometimes on hatred — that



**Budd Hopkins, author of the important books *Missing Time* and *Intruders*, lecturing on UFO abductions at Truro, Cape Cod, Mass, USA. Summer 1985. (Photo by Geraldine Proctor.)**

abductees feel toward their abductors because of their enforced helplessness, their sense of having been used, involuntarily, and even, upon occasion, of being made to suffer severe pain. According to every broad study of the abduction literature that I know of, and Thomas E. Bullard's is the most authoritative, fear, awe, affection and anger are the basic emotional components of almost every UFO-abduction experience.

It is safe to say, then, that *powerful and confusing* emotions follow such experiences, and that after their encounters abductees do not believe they have been taken either by purely malevolent foes or by selfless, angelic Space Brothers. The situation is far too complicated for either simplistic reading.

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During the past eight years I have conducted an informal support group for UFO abductees in the New York City area and have kept in touch with many others in various parts of the country. These circumstances have allowed me to observe a number of men and women over an extended period of time and to see various patterns of response to their abduction experiences. The weight of each component in the standard emotional mix varies widely from individual to individual and also changes with time within any one psyche. But the basic components always seem to

remain, subtly at odds with one another, in each abductee.

Several things must be kept in mind, however, as we study the abductees' emotional charts. First, when one is abducted, he or she is in something of an altered state, not unlike a hypnotic trance. The abductee is *controlled* by the abductors and his or her behavior is in many ways far from normal. The abductees may be told things, shown things, that may not be true or "real". So in this context we must consider the abductee's occasional affection for his or her captors. Psychologists have shown that this phenomenon, the "Patty Hearst" syndrome, all too often appears in earthly kidnapping experiences.

Therefore, in evaluating the four emotions commonly described by UFO abductees, three seem appropriate but one must be dealt with warily. Fear is something one would surely expect if the aliens actually look and act as reported by their captives. Feelings of awe at the aliens' technological magic are an emotion that again seems appropriate. Anger, often extreme anger, seems to be most abductees' reaction to being paralyzed and controlled by their captors. The physically invasive and sometimes painful operations performed upon them underline this response, which is often deepened because the UFO occupants usually refuse to discuss the purpose of these disturbing procedures. One has no choice except to submit to needles, lights, knives, "scanners" and so forth, with no power to protest or refuse. "I feel like a lab rat," one abductee said, her anger entirely appropriate to her situation.

**It is the odd affection abductees often report feeling for their captors that seems suspect, under the circumstances. Is the feeling possibly an artificial emotion, induced telepathically through some kind of quasi-hypnotic control? Is it a version of the Patty Hearst syndrome? Is it a genuine reaction? Obviously no one can answer these questions satisfactorily, but it seems to me that affection is the one common abduction response that must be viewed with suspicion.**

When one tries to tally up the pros and cons of an abduction experience as it immediately and visibly affects human emotion, it can be said that two reactions are essentially negative, or even damaging. Fear and anger, which are often felt deeply as terror and hatred, are surely disruptive of anyone's life. The sense of awe, while basically neutral and sometimes tinged with fear, may enhance one's world view and thus contribute positively. The fourth and most suspect emotion, affection for one's captors, if genuine, is a positive one. So the emotional "score" after an abduction experience does not support either a simple "Space Brother" or "Body Snatcher" interpretation. Judging purely by obvious surface reactions, we are still in ethically mixed territory, though to me and to many abductees the negative effects seem more powerful than the positive.

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Moving away from the patterns of the abductees' immediate emotional responses, we can evaluate the ethical content of an extraterrestrial presence by considering another, larger plane. Is there any evidence that extraterrestrial intelligence has actively intervened in human affairs, either helpfully or destructively?

The modern era of UFO activity begins in earnest in 1947, but many UFO reports surfaced during World War II in the phenomenon labeled "foo fighters" by our airmen. No force, either extraterrestrial or otherwise, put a stop to the Holocaust until Allied armies conquered Nazi Germany. By then it was too late for millions of innocent people, murdered by a system no one seemed able to stop. The United States developed nuclear weapons and used them to incinerate tens of thousands of children, women and men. No one, terrestrial or otherwise, prevented those bombs from falling. Continuing Stalinist butchery, international terrorism, American intervention in a Vietnamese civil war — all meant that thousands upon thousands of innocent people lost their lives because of the cruelty or indifference of political leaders of every persuasion. No one intervened. Michael Rennie, alas, never stepped out of his spaceship to save us from ourselves.

We have polluted our planet, spreading cancer by industry's greedy indifference to the consequences of chemical "bonanzas". No one came to our rescue; the Chariots of the Gods evidently drew up just to watch the damage deepen. And now we have a new plague — the disease known by its ironic acronym AIDS ... something fresh and new that we apparently did not have before the advent of the modern UFO era.

Now all of this means one thing. As a moral presence the UFO phenomenon seems sublimely indifferent to what we do to ourselves. Intervention is evidently not part of the plan, as diving into the surf to rescue a drowning child is sometimes not part of an indolent sunbather's plans. On the other hand there seems to be no evidence that an extraterrestrial presence has inflicted any excess pain upon us, either. If Michael Rennie's alien saves us only in Hollywood films, the evil, intervening Body Snatchers seem to exist only there, too. I believe that the cruelty that mankind has endured in this century has an all-too-human origin; one doesn't have to look to spaceships for its cause. And we look to them in vain for salvation.

But how should we evaluate what seems inescapable evidence of extraterrestrial indifference to human tragedy? I feel that the grades should be harsh. The power and technology revealed by UFO report upon UFO report indicate that investigation of some kind should have been possible; help should have been given. Apologists for a Space-Brothers theory use the same argument as Christian apologists: The UFO occupants, like God, tolerate evils such as the Holocaust because life is only a fleeting reality — the afterlife, or a reincarnated life, renders this question moot. As a Humanist I disagree. The death of a child at the hands of a gun-bearing adult is an abomination, not a necessary learning experience. The only excuse I can offer for extraterrestrial indifference is some kind of flaw in their apparent power, some very real vulnerability that might provide them with an excuse to avoid moral responsibility the way our indolent sunbather could avoid trying to save the drowning child because he, himself, might be unable to swim.

A few valid UFO cases contain accounts of healing, descriptions of wounds made whole, eyesight strengthened and so on, after UFO abductions or encounters. These rare examples of healing, however, raise more ethical problems than they solve. If the occupants of UFOs *do* have the power to heal, why is it used so sparingly, so arbitrarily? Why save one swimmer and let the others drown?

A woman I've worked with and know well was abducted along with her older sister. Each had had childhood abductions; each had lived uneasily with



her memories. Last spring the older sister was murdered in a park, by an apparently deranged individual. The tragedy had nothing to do with UFOs, but my friend said this to me: "I've always thought, somehow, they were looking out for us, watching over the people they'd taken in these experiments. Now I know I'm no safer than anyone else. They don't seem to care." And yet in one case I know about an abductee was apparently saved in a similar situation. The arbitrariness of it all undermines any attempt to accept a Space Brother reading of the entire phenomenon. Amorality is the term that comes most quickly to mind.

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If the immediate emotional reactions to UFO abductions are usually more negative than positive and there is literally no sign of benign extraterrestrial intervention in world affairs, there is still one more area to examine, and it is extremely important. It is the long-term psychological and physical aftereffects of UFO-abduction experiences. Dr. Aphrodite Clamar, a clinical psychologist with whom I have worked in many such investigations, has stated that she feels almost every abductee she has dealt with has been psychologically scarred by the experience. This is surely my opinion also, and I believe that the psychological tests of abductees administered by Dr. Elizabeth Slater, as well as the psychological histories taken through Columbia Presbyterian Hospital in New York City, all provide support for this thesis. Though she points out that cause and effect obviously cannot be established with certainty, Dr. Slater describes the psychological profiles of the nine abductees she tested as resembling those found with rape victims: a low self esteem, a distrust of their bodies, their physicality, their sexuality, and a hesitancy to trust others. Not a pretty legacy from our would-be Space Brothers.

My case files include three instances in which individuals — all males and apparently somewhat depressed to begin with — committed suicide after what were described by their friends and family as UFO-abduction experiences. And there is more on this debit side of the ledger, including what seems to have been an accident following a car-stopping incident and abduction; the driver, the only surviving parent of four children, died later of complications suffered in this encounter. Two female abductees I've worked with either planned or carried out suicide attempts when they were 10 years old, and another recent attempt involves a frightened, despondent 14-year-old girl.

No one who has had this experience regards it as an unmitigated blessing. Some live in perpetual terror. Some have suffered nervous breakdowns and as a result of their experiences and the chemical and shock treatments administered by baffled and incompetent doctors are living thoroughly damaged lives. I have seen disfiguring scars on the bodies of abductees who have involuntarily been used in the UFO occupants' "medical" procedures. Yet I have also seen abductees whose lives have been undeniably broadened by their bizarre experiences: survivors who have managed the human task of surmounting their traumas and gaining something from them.

The reports, again, are mixed, but the pain and suffering are immense. Deaths, injuries, terrors and mental breakdowns must be weighed against a philosophical broadening in many individuals, an aware-

ness that the universe is larger — and closer — than anyone has imagined. The cost, of course, has been tremendous, and the gain due more to human resilience than alien kindness.

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But there is, I believe, an explanation for the apparently callous and often destructive behavior of the aliens who perpetrate these temporary kidnappings of innocent men, women and children. One vivid example should make the point.

Two years ago a Minnesota man whom I shall call Earl wrote to me about his partially remembered UFO experiences. Eventually I visited him on his farm and we began a series of hypnotic regressions. He recalled a time years before when his wife had been helping him harvest a crop of hay in a rather isolated field. She lay down to rest on the wagon while Earl worked a few hundred yards away ... but then he saw three small UFOs fly in at tree-top level and hover above his sleeping wife. One of them lowered to the ground as Earl put his tractor in gear and raced to her side to protect her from whatever was happening. A normal-looking blond man, speaking English, stepped from behind the clump of trees where the UFO had landed and asked Earl to stop. "Everything is all right," he said, "She won't be hurt."

Earl ignored him and leaped off the tractor, continuing on foot toward the wagon where his wife lay, surrounded now by small, gray-skinned figures. Earl suddenly found himself paralyzed and helpless. He stood there, unable to move, as the blond man continued speaking, assuring him that "everything is all right. Nothing will happen to your mate."

Earl watched in horror as his paralyzed wife was undressed. A long needle was pushed into her abdomen as she lay on a bed of hay, crying out at the pain but unable to resist. Skin and hair samples were taken, and a thin probe was inserted into her vagina. Still frozen in place, Earl cursed and raged, and the blond man seemed genuinely surprised by his reaction. "We want you to see this," he said. "We're not hurting your mate. She'll be fine. Why are you upset? We're not hurting her..."

The scene ended shortly thereafter, and the couple returned home, aware of a period of missing time but with no memories of the UFO encounter. In the days and weeks after this event, Earl's wife began suffering from nightmares, clawing in her sleep at the area near the bridge of her nose, between her eyes, and screaming for them to "take it out, it's hurting." She dug deep gouges in her forehead while the nightmares continued unabated. Other symptoms of her terror appeared, half-understood recollections of the events in the hay field. Eventually she had to be hospitalized, suffering from a severe nervous breakdown. She lives at home now, tranquilized, no longer herself.

This story is but one of many that I could present to illustrate a central point about UFO occupants and their relation to their human subjects: they simply appear unable for the most part to understand us, our feelings, our terrors, our love for one another. They seem psychologically blind to basic human emotions. In *Intruders* I recounted case after case in which women were artificially inseminated or endured ova-retrieval operations, but whose reactions of rage or terror surprised their captors. These impassive UFO occupants seem as remote from our "peculiar" human emotions as they are from our obviously differing anatomy: perhaps more so. And their lack of under-

standing offers a kind of excuse for their callous behavior.

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It seems to me that we are left with but two possibilities, neither very attractive. If the UFO occupants actually do understand us and can empathize with our needs and emotions, then they are morally deficient — even in their single-minded selfishness. Not malevolent or deliberately evil, but as callous as the sun-bather who watches the child drown in the surf. At some point, amoral behavior becomes immoral behavior. But if these same alien beings *simply do not understand our feelings*, then they have an excuse of sorts for their behavior. And the evidence suggests they really may not know what disasters they sometimes cause. A female abductee recently wrote me a letter which goes in part:

"I was watching a show about animals, because I love animals. I don't know if it was *Wild Kingdom* or some *National Geographic* show, but these scientists were tracking some polar bears. They had all kinds of weird looking equipment and were using a white board which rendered them invisible in the snow to the bears. As I watched I got a real sick feeling in the pit of my stomach. These scientists were dressed in identical white suits, lured the bears closer, and drugged the big one with the cubs. The whole time they were tagging her they were taking blood samples, measuring fat, checking eyes, mouth, etc. And whenever the bear struggled they would pet her, talk to her, tell her everything was going to be fine. The scientists placed a device on her that would track her movements for so many years. They even marked her with a special paint that could be spotted from the air. Then when they were through with her they ran and hid behind the big screen so that when she woke up she wouldn't see them. She got up, looked around, and ran so fast her cubs could hardly keep up. Imagine how she must have felt the other times when they followed her in a helicopter. She could run, but with the paint and homing device she could never hide! I think all we are is a bunch of animals to these beings. Some little experiment that has been ongoing for who knows how long. I don't like the idea of being something's lab animal."

I thought about her letter, her understanding of the animal's plight and traumas inflicted by the scientists upon the bear and its cubs. These zoologists — as well as the occupants of UFOs, one hopes — are all acting from decent, scientific motives. And yet in both cases pain is inflicted, paralysis is imposed, and traumatic terror is the result. Some animals might abandon their cubs after such an experience or die of a mis-measured dose of a tranquilizing drug or even die from pure shock, just as some humans, like Earl's poor wife, may never recover from the horror of their experiences. Sad though this alternative seems, it is easier for me to believe that the occupants of UFOs simply do not understand what they are doing to us, what traumas they are inflicting, than to believe they do know and are merely indifferent to human suffering.

I have talked with many people who will not give up on the benign Space-Brother reading of these cases, no matter what. At the outset I said that our quasi-religious hopes die slowly. And so, despite massive negative evidence, there are still many people who cling to the idea that somehow, some way, there may be *two* alien groups, one bad and one good. The bad group, according to this theory, does the abducting and experimenting while the good group really

loves and understands us. Sometimes a kind of sub-rosa Aryan racism can be detected beneath these hopes, in that the "grays," as they have been called, are the bad aliens, while attractive "blonds" are good.

In my 12 years of investigation, however, the more human-seeming aliens, whenever they are reported (as in the cases of Earl and his wife or the Travis Walton abduction), seem to be operating as a team right along with the so-called grays, participating in abductions-as-usual. I am unaware of a shred of evidence that supports this simple-minded good-guys, bad-guys dichotomy — but there is plenty of evidence that this kind of wishful thinking is an all-too-common psychological habit.

The contactee phenomenon, discounted by almost all serious investigators, represents the triumph of hope against reality, of need against evidence. The abduction cases I've studied over the years can be defined as being, in effect, "all evidence and no ideology," while the contactee cults are essentially the opposite. Contactee messages, as passed on through helpful "channels", reduce themselves generally to soft entreaties to love one another, to make peace, not war, and to take care of our planet's precarious ecology — in other words, the kind of cliché even people like Reagan and Gorbachev routinely utter in their formal speeches. (This kind of nebulous message, it should be said, is sometimes also reported in valid UFO-abduction cases. What we really need, one abductee said to me, is actual alien help in solving our problems, not just another newspaper editorial pointing them out.) In short, there is no reason to assume that any benign group of aliens anywhere has yet done anything truly helpful to our planet. Such evidence simply does not exist.

The final difficulty in the cultist view of a good alien-bad alien duality lies in the age-old problem of evil. If the bad aliens are hurting us by their abduction, why don't the good aliens prevent it? For centuries we've asked ourselves, if God is omnipotent, how can He permit, say, the torture of children? Many of us felt that since no answer consistent with the idea of God's omnipotence could satisfy us, there was something seriously wrong with the theology. And so it is with this kind of alien theology, apart from the fact that no credible evidence of any kind indicates a struggle between rival alien groups. If there are various groups of aliens from different places of origin in the universe, they are apparently all cooperatively doing the same thing to us — and I for one think that what they're doing is, in the short term at least, immensely destructive.

Once again we are back to the only two available alternatives. Either the UFO occupants have not grasped the psychological toll they are taking in these abductions and genetic experiments because they really do not understand human psychology, or they must be viewed as an amoral race bent solely upon gratifying its own scientific needs at whatever cost to us, the victims. The question of which alternative is true cannot now be answered. There is evidence to support both interpretations, but I, for one, wish to choose the former.

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19 November 1987

"Letters to the Editor"  
MUFON UFO Journal  
103 Oldtowne Rd.  
Seguin, TX 78155

Dear Editor,

Recent letters in this Journal section have contained vague but deeply denigrating remarks against FLYING SAUCER REVIEW. The last letter of this kind (Oct. 1987 issue) was unsigned, but I would judge that was due to the Journal's editorial error. I would suggest that the author of that letter specify his or her specific objections to FSR. Then appreciative and admiring readers of FSR (and there are many) can answer them.

The author(s) of these letters apparently have other objections besides FSR's opinion about the so-called "Cheesehead mystery rings". Incidentally, the explanation by the consulting meteorologist gave my family a hearty laugh (a rare commodity these days!) Even my resident skeptic, who decries anything ufological, remarked that the meteorologist's theory was even crazier than the ufologists'. We are both well acquainted with whirlwinds, dust devils, tornadoes and waterspouts and cannot accept the idea of a "recurring, stationary whirlwind".

Personally, I prefer to speculate that the swirled rings in Cheesehead might be linked somehow to the (admittedly mysterious) ley-line energies. There's no reason in the world why anyone should have to agree with anyone else on anything. Everyone is entitled to his/her own reasonable opinions, and I have yet to find anything unreasonable about FSR's contents or editorial philosophy. With very best regards,



Ann Druffel  
Pasadena, California, U.S.A.

Dear Gordon, You must be doing something right to merit such vitriolic objections!

Best regards,  
Ann Druffel



# RECENT ASTRONOMICAL REPORTS FROM RUSSIA

## 1. SCIENTIST CLAIMS "SIGNS OF LIFE" FROM FOUR DWARF STARS OF OUR GALAXY

(Translation from Spanish newspaper, *La Vanguardia*, Barcelona, of May 1, 1987. Credit and thanks to FSR Consultant J. Plana Crivillén.)

MOSCOW — *EFE Spanish News Agency*. The concentrations of radio waves — as distinct from "cosmic noise" — around four dwarf stars located in our Galaxy may be an indication of extraterrestrial life of a high technical level.

Alexei Arjipov, a member of the Ukrainian Institute of Radio-Astronomy affiliated to the USSR Academy of Sciences, asserts that he has located various radio signals floating around in the Cosmos and has interpreted them as the work of some intelligence or other.

"The radio waves, which range from 100 megahertz to 1,000 megahertz, are", so he says, "very distinct from the background cosmic noise, and it is my theory that we have found an industrial centre of some other civilization that has a high degree of intelligence."

According to advanced studies that have been made, there are about 600 million planets in our Galaxy, the Milky Way, which could possess the conditions necessary to sustain life, and in some 530,000 of them the life could be intelligent and technological.

All these figures derive from the work of a large number of specialists in various countries.

This discovery and location of the four dwarf stars by the Soviet scientist is apparently the first proof which might confirm the theoretical studies made on life outside the Earth.

Some theories, supported by the early work of the American chemist Stanley Miller, assert that the formation of life is a common phenomenon on planets that are similar during their period of formation and have as their components water, ammonia, methane, and hydrogen.

Miller investigated the consequences of mixing these four basic components of planets in formation in a sterile container, applied ultraviolet rays as a substitute for the Sun, and put an electrical charge through it. A week later it resulted in the appearance of complex molecules, including glycine and alanine, the simplest of the aminoacids contained in proteins.

Here in the USSR, the discussion of possible extraterrestrial life is handled with great prudence, inasmuch as in this country all the means of communication belong to the State and, as a consequence, seek to avoid sensationalism.

This report of the discovery of cosmic radio waves by the Soviet astronomer was issued by the official TASS news agency, and although they gave the report without comment, they indicated that the discovery is important, and opens a new path in the investigation of Space. However, the Soviet authorities have not indicated the precise locations of the four dwarf stars which might harbour intelligent life, and this has aroused the curiosity of many specialists in other countries, who have now launched an intensive search for the four stars.

## 2. "RUSSIANS SCOUR SPACE FOR INTELLIGENT LIFE"

An article under this title in *The Times* newspaper, London, September 8, 1987, quotes Soviet astronomer Nikolai Kardashev, Deputy Director of the Soviet Institute of Space Research, as saying recently that he is optimistic about finding signs of the extraterrestrial civilizations "by the end of the 20th century".

(Older FSR readers will recall that many years ago — maybe nearly twenty — Kardashev issued a fabulous claim that extraterrestrial signals had been picked up by him and had been "decyphered". Very soon after that he was obliged to retract the statement. For all we know, he may indeed have actually "decyphered" something — the Russian word used was *deshifirovat*, which is unequivocal — but Western scientists, with the Soviet Government, all poohpoohed the story at the time.)

The Soviet News Agency APN goes on to say that Academician Vitaly Ginzburg, a leading Soviet theoretical physicist, shares Kardashev's views. Both say that failure so far has been because our astronomers were uncertain as to which areas of the sky they ought to concentrate their efforts on, and uncertain about the best radio frequencies likely to be used by any notional transmitters that aliens might be operating. Ginzburg assumes that any extraterrestrial civilization would be broadcasting in the 1.7 millimetre waveband, this belief deriving from the work done by U.S. scientists over 20 years ago when they discovered "relic radiation" containing information about the evolution of the Universe after the "Big Bang", and they found that the most powerful signals coming in were precisely on the 1.7 mm. wave-length. Furthermore, this particular wave-length would, it seems, be ideal for communication over vast distances owing to the almost total absence of any other transmission.

In a single year recently the Russians allegedly recorded nearly 20,000 new sources of infra-red emissions with one of their tracking satellites. Of these, the brightest emission came from the constellation of Sagittarius, in the Southern Hemisphere. The *Times* article says the Russians concluded that this "might be coming from an artificial body".

Meanwhile, at the Special Astrophysical Observatory in the Caucasus Mountains, a group of other Soviet astronomers, under Viktor Shvartsman, are concentrating on a different line of research — namely optical signals — by the use of lasers.

In a "unique experiment", says the Soviet despatch, this group are scanning the Universe for artificial laser signals, using the six-metre mirror of the BTA-6 optical telescope, which is the world's largest. This telescope, linked to a multichannel Analyzer of Manosecond Variations in Brightness (known by the "somewhat unfortunate" Russian acronym "MANIA", as *The Times* observes) can detect any change in the brightness of a cosmic source, provided that it lasts one-millionth of a second. The Caucasus Group of