

A LOOK AT THE SEARCH FOR EXTRATERRESTRIAL INTELLIGENCE, AND AN INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR ARCHIBALD ROY,* DEPARTMENT OF ASTRONOMY, GLASGOW UNIVERSITY.

BEFORE setting out for the meeting of the International Astronomical Union in India in November, Professor "Archie" Roy of the Glasgow University Department of Astronomy was interviewed by FSR consultant Paul Whitehead, on the subject of SETI (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence), which was on the agenda at the Union's meeting in New Delhi.

Prof. Roy is one of a number of scientists, astronomers and physicists who have begun to talk about alien intelligences and possible contact. Last year Prof. Roy "went national" in *The Observer* newspaper in the UK with a series of statements which may have surprised more conventional astronomers of the "older" school of thought.

He predicted that once the SETI programme gets under way in earnest in 1986, "we can expect to make contact very quickly, probably within a decade". He added:

"I believe we are just an ever so 'umble form of galactic life. I am sure civilisations are ten a penny round the cosmos," he said. "Indeed, in the vast cathedral of the universe, it is surely very peculiar to argue that we are its heroes. We are much more likely to be bit players."

Then he moved on to what was perhaps his most contentious argument, after pondering why contact had apparently not been made so far (here he was talking about "official" contact, not the claimed contacts by some people).

The reason why aliens had not presented themselves to us was that "we may have been placed in quarantine while the aliens wait to see if we grow up or blow up".

The Observer's science correspondent, Robin McKie, commented: "such speculations are impossible to answer at present, as are concerns about how aliens might appear and act. All that scientists will say is that they expect their chemistries to be like ours and be based on carbon."

Mr McKie concluded: "most scientists expect the forthcoming searches for extraterrestrial intelligence to have fruitful results". But he noted that the US biologist Lewis Thomas had given the following caution, bearing in mind that any intelligence contacted will probably be superior to our own:

"We are going to be in for a shock. We are going to feel smaller than ever." Worse still — we could give up the ghost in determining our own fate "and could increasingly rely on our advanced neighbours to provide for us technically."

Echoes of what has happened here on earth when a less "advanced" civilisation has come up against a "superior" civilisation?

It was against this background that Prof. Roy was interviewed for the *Flying Saucer Review*. Had he been quoted out of context, or misquoted, when talking about humans being in quarantine? Did he think it possible that the earth was already being visited? And what did Prof. Roy think about UFOs, presuming them to be some form of craft or other device from outside our solar system?

"No, I was not misquoted or quoted out of context," he said. "If there are intelligent creatures, the big question is 'why don't we know of them?' One suggested reason is that we have nothing that could be of interest to them whatsoever — because we are so primitive.

"Or they may wish to see if we are going to blow up or grow up. We have not done a lot so far that would encourage them. We have done more damage to this planet than any other species."

My next question was, "Do you think the earth may have been visited at least once during the last 50,000 years (man's relatively recent past)?"

Prof. Roy shared the view that is not uncommon in certain scientific circles: "it's possible, but I don't know of any evidence".

The next question elicited a similar response. "Could an alien probe have been sent to our solar system, perhaps long ago, to monitor the progress of any species that might be present within it?"

Considering that the sending of unmanned probes (by man) to other solar systems has already been proposed by our own scientists, this did not seem an unreasonable question to ask. Prof. Roy stated:

"This is one of the possible ways of exploring the universe — using probes incorporating computers containing a high degree of artificial intelligence. These would visit stars, find planets, and send messages back.

"There may be one or more of these type of spacecraft in our solar system."

"There has been no sign of this. But somebody once said that *"the absence of the evidence is no evidence of the absence. That is important."*

Question number four was: "What is your view of statements, apparently bone fide, made by the United States Air Force and the CIA, that alien technology may be behind UFOs?"

Answer: "the situation is that until people bring forward hard evidence, people have to remain sceptical. Most of the reports about UFOs have not led one to believe they are visitors from another system. But there may be instances, I don't know, which are difficult to explain"

He went on to say: "if we are the product of natural evolution, it is highly improbable that we are alone in the universe. As I told The Observer, I do think civilisations are ten a penny".

Then he spoke about the SETI project, which had been agreed by the International Astronomical Union at its last meeting three years ago.

Already at least a couple of other solar systems (either forming or more mature) had been found, but real progress would start in 1986, and continue, when "big telescopes outside our atmosphere will scan nearby stars to see if they have planets"

In fact, 100,000 nearby stars will be monitored for various astronomical reasons, including SETI, and a larger telescope will turn its attention to the more promising ones. Light from planets may be analysed to discover their chemical composition, and sophisticated radio receivers, orbiting the earth, will be programmed to search for signals from the planets.

NASA has stated that is how it intends to hunt for alien civilisations — by using powerful receivers to listen for broadcasts.

One of the leading supporters of SETI is Professor Frank Drake, of Cornell University, New York, who says there are good reasons why we have not yet picked up broadcasts. We need bigger, better receivers, capable of carrying out billions of scans at many different frequencies.

Some critics of this suggestion reason differently from Drake, according to *New Scientist* former editor Nigel Calder in his book *Habitable Universe. Representations of other intelligences, if they existed, "would very likely be in our vicinity"*, the critics say. They argue the following:

If man could colonise our galaxy in what would be a very short time (starting probably in the 21st century), it makes sense that other intelligences could do the same — and may have already visited our solar system.

Instead of building multi-million dollar receivers, we should try to intercept any messages that may be going to an alien probe within our solar system.

In 1977 Tom Kuiper and Mark Morris of the California Institute of Technology gave several reasons why such a probe might not make itself known to us. The "visitors" might be waiting for us to achieve a higher level of knowledge before exposing us to "culture shock"; meanwhile, they could be looking on the earth as a kind of nature reserve, not to be tampered with.

Kuiper and Morris concluded that the best chance of spotting the alien intelligence would be to intercept communication signals beamed to the probe(s) from its/their parent star(s). Existing radio telescopes on earth would be adequate for that purpose.

Nigel Calder went on to point out that recent studies by physicists have looked out how this interception of signals could be achieved.

To conclude, we can perceive from what scientists, physicists and astronomers are saying that there is a good chance that alien intelligences exist in our galaxy, and that one day we may have contact with them.

They fight shy of the question of whether some form of contact may already have been made or is being made, preferring instead to theorise on how future contact will come about.

Some members of the scientific community have spoken out, however, Take what Professor Harry Messel said when he was Professor of Physics at Sydney University:

"The facts about flying saucers were long tracked down, and results have long been known, in top secret defence circles of more countries than one. Whatever the truth, it might be regarded as inadvisable to give people at large no clue about the true nature of these things. Hence the continuation of investigation programmes."

As the curator of Darling Observatory in Duluth, Minnesota, himself a professional astronomer, Frank Halstead, once said:

"Many professional astronomers are convinced the saucers are interplanetary machines. I believe they come from another solar system."

When less forthcoming scientists criticise others for calling for the "facts to be known", and when they dismiss suggestions that UFOs might, just might, conceivably be a manifestation of another intelligence, they should consider a statement made when the Russians launched the world's first satellite, Sputnik.

At the time, Professor Richard Woolley, Astronomer Royal, commented to the press that space travel was an utter impossibility, "complete bilge and absolute rot".

Similar expressions have been uttered by indignant opponents of the "flying saucer" theory of UFOs. I believe the voices of opposition are growing quieter, as they reflect on what an important group of physicists/astronomers/scientists are now saying about the nature of the universe we live in.

* Professor Roy receives FSR — Editor.

THE NEW "A.V.B." CASE FROM BRAZIL: FULL ACCOUNT

Luiz do Rosário Real

(SPIPDV UFO Investigation Group, Pelotas, State of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil.)

(Translation from Portuguese) (Account in SBEDV Bulletin No. 132/135, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, August 1980.)

In FSR 30/5 we published a translation of an Argentinian version of this case, as supplied to us by Antonio Ribera. Dr Walter Buhler, Editor of *SBEDV Bulletin*, Rio de Janeiro, has now written to me, however, pointing out that he had already published the entire story in much greater detail long ago, in his *SBEDV Bulletin*. Well, of course, we are sorry if we missed that, but the sad fact of the matter is that, unlike the Hindu deity Avalokitesvara, we are not exactly "octopoidal" in the number of our arms — though no doubt some other lucky folk *may* be! We hold complete (or well nigh complete) sets of the French, Italian, Spanish, Brazilian, and Chinese UFO journals, and we intend and hope, if it is possible, (*Insha' Allah!*), to go right through all of them before we pack up, and extract and translate into English all cases found of major interest. This we are indeed already doing, but it takes time, and hands, and arms, and in any case FSR has only 29 pages including its inside rear cover. And, in the case of the *SBEDV Bulletin*, we have not yet got up to the year 1980. Those who can do better will of course do so. — EDITOR

Summary of the Case

IN the town of Pelotas, in Rio Grande do Sul State, a young commercial worker and student has a UFO sighting, which leaves many questions in his mind. These result in difficulties of a psychological and a professional nature, with the result that the Ufologist consulted by him, Sr. Luiz do Rosário Real, decided to employ hypnotic regression. The two sessions of hypnosis given seem to suggest an abduction by extra-terrestrials had occurred. Following upon the hypnotic regression, the patient feels considerable relief from his psychological trauma.

Principal Details

The Witness: José Inácio Álvaro, aged 18, fourth son of Alfredo Assis Álvaro and Iracema Valadão Álvaro, part-time student in third (final) year of Electronics Course at the Federal Technical School in Pelotas; employed by the firm Agêpe S.A. (Foodstuffs), Pelotas.

Scene of Abduction: Rua Gonçalves Ledo 504, Fragata, suburb of Pelotas. The most populous suburb of the town, it is 8 kms. from the centre of same.

Home Address of Witness: Rua Quintino Bocaiuva 80, Cohab, suburb of Pelotas. Cohab is some 6 kms. from the town centre of Pelotas and about 12 kms. from the scene of the abduction.

Dates:

Abduction: Friday, March 3, 1978, at approximately 3.00 a.m.

First Hypnotic Regression: 9 to 10 p.m., March 16, 1978.

Second Hypnotic Regression: 9.30 to 10.30 p.m., March 28, 1978.

Investigation: Commenced on March 4, 1978.

Initial Approach to SPIPDV Research Group

At approximately 11.30 p.m. on the night of Saturday, March 4, 1978 (43 hours after the UFO event), José Inácio Álvaro and his friend Adão Costa e Silva came to Investigator Luiz Rosário Real's home in Pelotas.

In a visibly nervous state, José Inácio apologized for coming at so late an hour, and said he wanted to tell the Investigator about a strange and inexplicable thing that had happened to him during the night of March 2-3. He added that he had come to him as he had heard that he was a UFO investigator, for the matter pertained to a UFO sighting.

The Episode

José Inácio Álvaro attends night-classes. Two nights before the episode he had in fact given a talk on UFOs, and had been surprised that it had gone so well, since he had only read a little on the subject, namely von Däniken's "*Was God An Astronaut?*" plus a few articles in the local paper, *O Diário Popular*, of a series by Luiz do Rosário Real entitled "*The Enigma of Space*".

Between approximately 8.00 and 8.30 p.m. on March 2, a lady teacher named Izenozia Silva da Silva, residing at Rua Santos Dumont 35, suburb of Simões Lopes, Pelotas, stepped out from the front door of her house to investigate an electricity failure,