

DR. FELIX ZIGEL' AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF UFOLOGY IN RUSSIA: PART I

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As the older of FSR's readers may recall, there was a period, between the spring of 1961 and the summer of 1965, when the Review carried rather frequent items from or about the Soviet Union. This was because at that date I had regular access to many Soviet newspapers, magazines and technical journals, several of which are not normally available outside Russia. The result was that, over the period in question, FSR had some fifteen or sixteen articles or translations on the general themes of Space and Space-Travel and even on UFOs, as currently reflected in the thinking of Soviet scientists and scientific writers. Several of the articles had titles such as *What the Soviet Press is Saying*, or *What do the Soviets know?* Some of the articles were straight translations of work by leading Soviet scientists of the day, such as Academician L. A. Ambartsumyan, Professor Krassovskiy, Dr. Asratjan, Dr. Kardyshev, V. Davydov, N. Kozyrev, Klyatkovo, and two or three of the accounts even dealt with actual UFO reports from Russia — the very first to reach us from that country. Notable among these reports was the article *Amazing News from Russia: Can This Be True?*¹ This was a translation which I had made from an article in Italian by Alberto Fenoglio, relating a number of truly remarkable Soviet UFO stories that he claimed to have gleaned from Soviet scientists and diplomats during their official visits to Italy. (While it has, naturally, never been possible to secure any confirmation of these Russian UFO reports supplied by Alberto Fenoglio, one can at least say of them that, amazing as they seemed to us at the time, they appeared to bear some stamp of truth, if only for the reason that they were entirely in line with what we were already getting from the rest of the world.)

Many years were to elapse before we were to receive anything else so extraordinary from Russia, but now that day seems to have come, for there is even more fantastic news out of that country. To cap it all, the source of this fresh information is reported to be Dr. Felix Zigel' himself, the best known of the Soviet Ufologists.² These new developments will be covered in the second part of this article.

Meanwhile, let us return to a brief consideration of the years since 1961-65. FSR's Editor throughout most of that time was Waveney Girvan, after whose sudden death Charles Bowen stepped into the breach and took control. As we look back now at some of the titles that Waveney Girvan selected for my items from the USSR, it looks as though he may have been

tempted at times to believe the Soviets were on the point of "coming clean" and being the first "to tell the world the truth about UFOs."

As the course of subsequent History has shown, that was not to be. But undeniably all those Russian articles were infused with an infectious sort of enthusiasm about the Cosmos and about the possibilities of Space-Travel and of finding intelligent life elsewhere, and indeed one might say that Russian writing and thinking on such questions is still notable for the same sort of quality. But the Soviets clearly never had it in their heads to "be the first to tell the world about UFOs." Their minds were set on something else. They were revealing their total determination to be the first into space, to be the Masters in the Space-Race, and to use this superiority to further their ambitious plans for our Planet.

Dr. Felix Zigel'

For many years after 1965 FSR received little material from the USSR, but what we did see from that source seemed to indicate that a number of their leading scientists and science writers were open-minded about the UFOs and were expressing themselves pretty freely. Foremost among these scientists was Dr. Felix Zigel', Professor of Cosmology at the Moscow Institute of Aviation (which, by the way, is a body under military control). His pupils at the Institute included the Soviet cosmonauts. Zigel's rise to eminence had been rapid. Graduating from Moscow State University in 1942, he forthwith took his place as an *Aspirant* (i.e. a junior member) in the Astronomical Section of the USSR Academy of Sciences. By 1943 he was teaching Astronomy and Mathematics in various universities, and in 1963 he moved to the Moscow Institute of Aviation and began to have charge of the cosmonauts in training.

He has been taking an interest in UFOs from as early as 1955, and since FSR started its existence in that year and has been regularly in Russia, it is not impossible that we will have played some part in forming his opinions about our subject. Meanwhile others too in the USSR were beginning to be sufficiently interested to talk of establishing some sort of semi-civilian investigative group in that country. Our friend Dr Jacques Vallée visited Moscow somewhere around 1968 and met the Soviet ufologists, and on his return from there he told us that the Soviet Air Force were said to have no less than 15,000 UFO reports on

file (half as many again as the US Air Force, who were said to have about 10,000 at that date).

General Stolyarov's Group

In October 1967 Major-General Porfiriy Stolyarov of the Soviet Air Force (possibly recently retired?) was made chairman of an important body known as the USSR All-Union Committee on Astronautics, and it was reported that *inside* this body the new group for UFO study was to be set up. We learnt that Major-General Stolyarov, knowing of the existence of this mass of top-secret reports, had asked the Soviet Air Ministry whether his group could have access to them.

"Yes", he was told. "First set up your Group, and then you can have the UFO reports."

But nothing came of it, after all. Somebody had clearly had time for some second thoughts. As we heard the account from Jacques Vallée, it seems that, when Stolyarov went back to the Minister and said his UFO Study Group was now in being, so could he please have the reports, the reply consisted of that most important of all Russian words: "NYET!"

When Stolyarov asked *why*, he was told:—"Because this is *Too Big* a matter, and *you* are too small!"

But Soviet newspapers and magazines still continued to carry frequent references to UFOs. Evidently interest in the subject was widespread. It was not yet taboo. For suddenly an absolutely amazing thing happened.

Zigel's Television Appeal

On November 10, 1967, two individuals, seemingly acting with the consent of the highest authority in the land — for they were Professor Felix Zigel' and Major-General Stolyarov — appeared in a programme on the Soviet Television, and told the Russian public that the UFOs were real and were a matter of great scientific importance. Zigel' said, *inter alia*:—

"Unidentified Flying Objects are a very serious subject which we must study fully. We appeal to all viewers to send us details of any observations of strange flying craft seen over the territories of the Soviet Union. This is a serious challenge to Science, and we need the help of all Soviet citizens. Please write to us at the following address in Moscow. . ." (which was given).

The appeal went out at peak viewing time. Millions heard and saw the programme. The well-disciplined Soviet citizen could no longer be in any doubt. His *duties* towards the State now actually included the reporting of UFOs!

The immediate result of the appeal was a veritable inundation of reports. After only one or two days, Zigel' and his colleagues had over 200 good new

reports, and still they went on coming in. (Indeed, since a Moscow address had been given, they are still coming in, and this was subsequently to constitute quite an embarrassment for the Russian authorities.) The press too was full every day of readers' letters giving details of what they had seen.

The Clamp-Down

Then came the *volte-face*. Someone very high up in the Soviet Hierarchy had evidently taken alarm at the situation, so the weather-vane swung round, and Soviet Officialdom switched from tolerance to sharp disapproval. By March 1968 those same Soviet newspapers which only a few days previously had such a profusion of stories about UFO sightings now unleashed a campaign of carefully sponsored ridicule. UFO reports were now "unscientific balderdash"; "figments of the imagination"; "mass-hysteria"; "anti-Soviet products of degenerate-capitalist warmongering", and so forth.³

Simultaneously the USSR Academy of Science also swung into action, exercising its immense and ponderous influence, and ruling categorically that there were absolutely no scientific grounds whatsoever for the possible existence of UFOs. The Oracle had pronounced, and that was that. The matter was therewith closed — and permanently.

Professor Zigel' was ordered to terminate his UFO research, and to stop collecting eyewitness accounts. (This, be it remembered, was in March 1968. The *Condon Report* was not to be published in the USA until January 8, 1969. So, if not actually acting in collusion, the Soviet and American governments were evidently on parallel courses where UFOs were concerned.)

And an interesting comment from someone who did believe that there was such collusion had already appeared in *FSR*, Vol. XI, No. 3 (May-June 1965), in the World Round-Up Section under the heading: **France: Secret Services get-together on UFOs?**

"The Bordeaux newspaper *Sud-Ouest* of February 17 carried the headline SURPRISING LECTURE AT MOURENX over the following account: 'George Langelaan, novelist, journalist, and ex-officer of the Intelligence Service, who during the War was parachuted into France after he had been given a new face by plastic surgery, gave a lecture on Monday evening at Mourenx, Landes, where he had been specially invited.

" 'On the subject of Flying Saucers, George Langelaan, who seems extremely well informed, declares that *the Russian and American Secret Services have collaborated*, and have arrived, as he says, at this astonishing conclusion: The flying saucers exist, their source is extraterrestrial, and the future — relatively quite soon — should permit confirmation of this statement.' "

Zigel' lies low

Let us return meanwhile to Professor Zigel'. Some

of the Soviet scientists had already called him “a dangerous dreamer,” and, important as he obviously was to the Soviet authorities in his post as a trainer of their astronauts, it was clear that he would now have to be extremely careful. Naturally he at once complied fully with his new instructions, keeping fully within the legal limits in all he did or said, and adopting an extremely low profile. He made no further attempt to seek TV or radio time for programmes on UFOs, or to appeal to the public for additional UFO reports. And he was expressly forbidden to have any dealings whatsoever with foreign journalists.

But it was too late. Everybody from one end of Russia to the other now knew his name, and knew that he was Russia’s “top UFO man”. The reports continued to pour in to him, and they are still doing so, for a Moscow address had been given.

Parapsychology in Russia and the *Nautilus* story

Meanwhile, for almost a decade past, the USSR had been building up a significant lead over the West in its knowledge of those vast uncharted realms that we lump together under blanket-terms like ESP or PSI or Parapsychology. Students of the UFO Problem do not need to be told of the links which seem to exist between these areas and the whole field of UFO research. Many already perceive that we may here be confronted not by two enigmas but by only *one* and that, if such be the case, we have as yet scarcely an adequate vocabulary for even beginning to think about the problem, let alone explain any of it.

This upsurge in Parapsychology in Russia had begun in 1960 as the direct result of a popular-scientific article in a French journal about alleged experiments in telepathy conducted by the Americans with their submarine, the *Nautilus*.⁴ Ever since the death of Lenin, and throughout Stalin’s bloody reign of terror, it is a certainty that no such activities as these could have been pursued openly anywhere in the USSR; the very idea of telepathy would have given the shudders to your good atheistic-materialistic Marxist. But in fact there was one man in Russia, still alive, who had once conducted precisely such experiments back in Lenin’s time, and even under Stalin! This was an internationally recognized Soviet physiologist, Dr Leonid Leonidovich Vasiliev (aged 68 in 1968). In April of that year he rose to address an assembly of top Soviet scientists, who had met together to commemorate the discovery of Radio. None of them expected to hear from him revelations about that prime piece of bourgeois fiction, telepathy. But this is precisely what Vasiliev spoke to them about. “Mental Radio” he called it.⁵ The French story about the American experiments with their atomic submarine *Nautilus* must have detonated in Vasiliev’s head like a bomb. He now told his dumbfounded colleagues:—

unreported investigations into ESP during the Stalin regime! And today the American Navy is testing telepathy with their atomic submarines. Soviet science conducted a great many successful telepathy tests over a quarter of a century ago! It is urgent that we throw off our prejudices. We must again plunge into the exploration of this vital field!”

Dr. Vasiliev, though largely forgotten in 1968, was undeniably a respected Soviet citizen. Had he not been a corresponding member of the Soviet Academy of Medicine; Chairman of the University of Leningrad; holder of a Lenin Prize? Naturally the Soviet Hierarchy lost no time over heeding his advice. After all, had he not told them, uncompromisingly: “The discovery of the energy underlying ESP will rank with the discovery of atomic energy.”

So the Top Comrades hastily swept the dust of a quarter of a century from Vasiliev’s old notebooks and at once set him up in a fine new parapsychological laboratory — no expense spared — and indeed they proceeded to equip the USSR with a whole string of such establishments, all dedicated to the rational proposition that the Soviet Empire must be Top-Dog in these matters as in all others, be they sport, science or nuclear weaponry.

The Moscow Conference and the Ostrander-Schroeder visits, 1968-1970

One of the first results was a high-powered gathering, the *First Moscow International Conference on Parapsychology*, which opened in June 1968. Among the foreign visitors who had come to meet the Soviet scholars active in this new field there were two ladies, Sheila Ostrander, Russian-speaking and a graduate of the University of Manitoba, Canada, and the American Lynn Schroeder. Both had travelled widely and written on a variety of subjects. The fruit of this, their first visit to Russia, and of several subsequent visits which they made there, was to be an extremely successful book, *Psychic Discoveries behind the Iron Curtain*.⁶

Officially the “thaw” with the West was still on in 1968. “Détente” was the watchword of the day, and the “thaw” being still on, the two ladies from North America were permitted to travel around remarkably freely and meet many folk of note in the Soviet parapsychological field, including both scientists and mediums and sensitives. They saw laboratories and talked to investigators with a freedom that would be quite unimaginable today, now that the whole of Soviet psychical research has vanished behind the impenetrable screen of direct KGB control. (Already, by 1970, the Soviets knew how to send coded messages by telepathy through one human mind to another, and were on the road to the development — as Dr. Andrija Puharich and others are now warning us — of weapons of a parapsychological nature.)

“We carried out extensive and, until now, completely

One of the Soviet scientists who talked enthusiastically to the two ladies was Edward Naumov, a biologist, and one of the leading lights in Soviet Parapsychology. He had already travelled throughout the USSR giving over 460 lectures on ESP and showing scientific ESP films at scores of institutes.

Naumov's enthusiasm reached far beyond mere ESP and telepathy, and into such lines as psychic photography (like the work of Ted Serios in the USA), dowsing, "eyeless sight", precognition, and so on. Before long, Edward Naumov was to find himself an inmate of one of the KGB's slave-labour camps. His "enthusiasms" may have struck someone in the Hierarchy as excessive. But more likely his main offence was just that he was too fond of talking to foreigners about the parapsychological findings in Russia.

Zigel's views on UFOs in 1968

However, there was one man whom the North American ladies were not permitted to meet, much as they tried, and this was Dr. Felix Zigel'. The ban on his seeing foreign journalists was still very much in force. But the ladies were able to gather a lot of information about him and his work in UFO research. They reported in their book that for Zigel' the reality of the UFOs was an unquestionable fact. In his view the UFOs were extraterrestrial probes. Nothing however in the ladies' book refers to any statement by Zigel' about UFO landings or UFO occupants, and this is interesting, in the light of what we shall have to say later about the evolution of his thinking regarding the UFOs.

The Gris — Dick visits: 1972-1975

In the early 1970s (from 1972 to 1974 or maybe 1975) two more foreign writers made a series of trips to Russia, and they too finally produced a highly successful book, *The New Soviet Psychic Discoveries*.⁷ The authors were Henry Gris, Latvian-born and a fluent Russian-speaker, and William Dick, born in Britain. Gris graduated from Columbia School of Journalism and was a newspaperman with *UPI* in Russia in World War II and after it. Since 1969 he has been with the American tabloid *The National Enquirer*, and he is today their Senior Roving Editor. His colleague William Dick joined the London bureau of *The National Enquirer*, in 1963, and is now this paper's General Editor, specializing in reporting on the latest advances in Science, particularly in Medicine and Parapsychology.

By 1972, when Gris and Dick arrived in Moscow, the "climate" in general there was still not too unfavourable so far as foreign journalists were concerned, and, like the two ladies before them, they seem to have received a lot of help from the Soviet authorities and from the scientists, and to have done an equally

good job in interviewing many parapsychologists, doctors, astronomers, and so on, as well as a number of the outstanding psychics and mediums whom the scientists were studying. Gris and Dick's book is a worthy follow-up to the work of Sheila Ostrander and Lynn Schroeder.

Gris and Dick meet Zigel'

In one most notable respect Gris and Dick succeeded, after very much effort, where the two women had failed. They were able to meet Dr Felix Zigel' privately, in the apartment of author and historian Aleksandr Kazantsev. It seems that Zigel' and Kazantsev both felt at this time that things had become slightly more relaxed, insofar as talk of UFOs was concerned, and that this would be a good opportunity for getting Zigel's views out to the West. However, Zigel' insisted on checking afterwards every word in the text of the interview, so what Gris and Dick tell us about his views on UFOs can presumably be taken as authentic and authoritative. Zigel's long talk with them, on the question-and-answer basis, occupies the whole of Chapter XIII of their book. What is notable is that Zigel's views about UFOs have developed since the date of the Ostrander/Schroeder visits to Moscow. *For he now admitted to Gris and Dick that he held the UFO Phenomenon to be an "other-dimensional" or "multi-dimensional" problem.* (Thus ranging himself with the views of some researchers in the West.) On the matter of *UFO occupants and landings*, Zigel' was still cagey. He would not go beyond admitting that there might well have been landings on Earth in past ages, when mankind was more primitive, but he went on to declare: *"Apart from a few reconnaissance excursions now and then, I contend that there have been no landings within the span of our current civilization."* And he emphatically denied any knowledge of any confirmed landings or any confirmed sightings of UFO entities on Soviet territory, though he did say he had seen some claims of such.

Zigel's views on UFOs develop further

It is not clear precisely when Gris and Dick managed to talk to Zigel', but as it was only after many attempts and many requests, it seems it may have been during one of the later of their trips to Russia, most likely in 1975. At any rate, what they say Zigel' told them is interesting, because, in the second part of this article evidence of a truly startling nature will be adduced, indicating that by now (1981) Professor Zigel's thinking about UFOs has progressed to the point where he accepts that there have recently been many landings in and around Moscow, and that entities have been seen or encountered in a considerable number of the cases. He has, moreover, as will be shown later, even gone so far as to say that certain

types of the alien beings resemble Earthman so closely that they may well be here, living amongst us, without our being aware of their presence.

The second part of the article will give details of some of these landings, and will relate the fantastic events of the night of June 14, 1980, when a vast disc, at least 120 metres wide, was said to have been stationary over Moscow for five minutes, creating much panic; over various parts of the USSR for a total of forty minutes; and was photographed.

Notes and References

1. "Amazing news from Russia: Can this be True?" In FSR, Vol. 8, No. 6 (November/December 1962). A translation of an article by Alberto Fenoglio in Issue No. 105 (June 1-15, 1962) of the journal *Oltre Il Cielo: Missili e Razzi* ("Beyond the Sky: Missiles and Rockets," — A Rome publication devoted to rocketry and Space-research, not a UFO journal).
2. FSR has recently had an interesting article, "Ufology in the USSR," by Nikita A. Schnee, in Vol. 27 No. 1, which is marred by its harshly polemical tone, particularly against Dr. Felix Zigel', for whom Schnee evidently cannot find a good word to say. Clearly this is just one more example of the bickering and backbiting which are such marked features of UFO research everywhere, so it seems.

Nikita Schnee's article was unquestionably valuable for its over-all picture of UFO research in the USSR, but

it goes without saying that FSR takes no side in polemics, and sees its own role as that of a forum for discussion and no more than that. We belong neither to an Azhazha-Schnee faction nor to a Zigel' faction, and hopefully we shall do justice to all sides.

3. The rich and expressive Russian language seems to lend itself particularly well to scorn and humorous invective, as anybody knows who has read Nikolai Gogol' or, descending to a much lower level, certain of Stalin's coarser utterances. It may be recalled that a few years earlier, when brushing off tales about UFOs, official Soviet spokesmen were variously reported as saying that (a) "*The UFO stories are concocted by the American Government, in order to create an excuse for re-arming,*" and, (b) "*The UFO stories are concocted in America in order to keep the minds of the American people off the bread-line.*"

(I bet your average Russian, like the average Pole, could tell us a thing or two about queues and bread-lines.)

4. See "Du Nautilus," article by G. Messadié, In *Science et Vie*, No. 509, Paris, February 1960. So far as I can ascertain, nobody on the American side, to this day, has revealed anything whatsoever as to the truth or falsity of this report of successful telepathy between Washington D.C. and a nuclear-powered submarine cruising beneath the Arctic Ice-Cap. If the story is a "phoney", it has at any rate been of incalculable benefit to the Russians, for it alerted them to the possibilities of Parapsychology and has reportedly helped to give them some terrible new military weapons!
5. One of Vasiliev's books, *Mental Radio*, was translated

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into English a few years ago and published under the same title.

6. *Psychic Discoveries Behind the Iron Curtain*, by Sheila Ostrander and Lynn Schroeder. Introduction by Ivan T. Sanderson. First US edition by Prentice-Hall Inc., 1970. British paperback edition by Abacus Books, London, 1973, under the slightly altered title: *Psi: Psychic Dis-*

coveries Behind the Iron Curtain.

7. *The New Soviet Psychic Discoveries*, by Henry Gris and William Dick, publ. by Prentice-Hall Inc., USA, 1978. British edition by Souvenir Press, London, 1979. (It seems a pity that these two authors do not appear to grant a shred of credit, or even make any mention of the book by the two women, Sheila Ostrander and Lynn Schroeder, which had preceded theirs by eight years.)

FSR BOOKSHELF — 11

New UFO books reviewed by . . .

Janet & Colin Bord

FOR many years English-speaking ufologists have read brief reports of the contactee claims of white South African **Elizabeth Klarer**. Now her story is available as a book, **Beyond the Light Barrier** (published by Howard B. Timmins (Pty) Ltd., and available from them at Sanso Centre, 8 Adderley Street, P.O. Box 94, Cape Town 8000, South Africa, price R9.90 plus R1.20 postage; 190 pages, illustrated with photographs). Her interest in UFOs was first sparked when, aged six, she saw a daylight disc above the family farm. Then in 1937, the light aircraft in which she was flying was paced by a glowing craft. Twenty years later she made telepathic contact with the UFO occupant, who in 1957 landed on a remote area of her farm. He was Akon, a handsome, virile space scientist from Alpha Centauri. "Laughing gaily he caught me round the waist and swung me up on to the hull of his ship and we both laughed. . ." On subsequent meetings, of which there were several, Akon obviously enjoyed picking Mrs. Klarer up in his arms and carrying her around, as well as burying his face in her long blonde tresses. "We rarely mate with Earth women," he said. "When we do. . ." Naturally a golden-haired space baby was born, and for this Mrs. Klarer travelled to Akon's home planet of Meton.

Ufology can now add a new word to its vocabulary: along with contactees and abductees we now have *seductees*, Mrs. Klarer hopefully being the first and only one of these.

As an entertaining space story the book might have had possibilities if the author had more talent for writing. Instead it reads as though Arthur Shuttlewood had set out to write a romantic novel. Between the passages of romantic gush are gobbets of indigestible cosmo-scientific philosophy, much of which is as incomprehensible as it appears meaningless. There are, scattered throughout the text, a number of unintentional and pertinent clues to the mainspring of this work. Attitudes such as "Perhaps I was planted here as a child, because I do not resemble my family," and, when she first meets her space lover, "Longing to cast off the formality of my English upbringing, I tried

hard to stifle my natural reserve" will not be unfamiliar to the psychologist.

Also of interest is the facial similarity between a portrait of Akon, presumably drawn by the author, and a photograph of her, which suggests that she may well have been communing with her alter ego. Overall this work of fantasy is likely to be of more interest to the clinical psychologist than to the ufologist.

Another space enigma is presented by **Greta Woodrew**, an American woman who apparently has many psychic abilities. Mrs. Woodrew is a protégé of psychic researcher Andrija Puharich, and if you have read *Uri* by Puharich or Stuart Holroyd's *Prelude to the Landing on Planet Earth* you will have a fair idea of the development of events in Greta Woodrew's **On a Slide of Light** (Macmillan Publishing Co., New York, \$12.95; Collier Macmillan Publishers, London, UK price not known; 176 pages).

The author, a successful business-woman, wife and mother who has been strongly psychic since childhood, met Puharich in 1976 and they soon embarked on a series of experimental sessions with Mrs. Woodrew acting as a channel after being hypnotised by Dr. Puharich. While hypnotised she made contact with extra-terrestrial beings from a planetary system named Ogatta which exists in another galaxy. Through Mrs. Woodrew the Ogattans channelled information and predictions, and although these predictions forecast cataclysmic upheavals on earth in the coming decades, as have many similar predictions, their tone is less oppressive than usual, for, as the Ogattans themselves say, they want to "keep it light." Nonetheless the message is the same as many others received by similar means in recent years, that if mankind does not alter its thinking and behaviour, cataclysmic annihilation by natural means is inevitable.

In later chapters Puharich takes a minor role and Mrs. Woodrew's personality is replaced by various Ogattan entities, sometimes, when in public, with embarrassing results. The level of psychic phenomena which accompany these 'channelling' sessions is rem-