

SECOND LOOK

april 1979
vol.1, no.6

\$1.75



THE OCALA SIGHTING

HOUSE OF LORDS DEBATE UFOs

by Robert K.G. Temple

On an evening last January their noble lordships took time off from the woes and cares of a strike-ridden nation to spend four hours discussing those signs which are seen in the sky. Fourteen peers of the British realm were to quote the Bible so frequently to each other during the course of this debate that it is to be wondered whether any of them connected these heavenly apparitions with the accelerating ruin of their country, and conceived of the time at which the debate was held as "the latter days" when, as the Book of Revelations would have it, there are "Visions of the End":

Then as I looked there appeared a white cloud, and on the cloud sat one like a son of man . . . I saw an angel flying in mid-heaven, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those on earth, to every nation and tribe, language and people.

After a much prolonged debate on the Arbitration Bill, which kept the UFOs off the agenda from 3:30 p.m. until 7:10 p.m. and resulted in many representatives of the press throwing up both their hands and their press cards into the air and going away, suddenly the nearly empty chamber of the House of Lords seemed to quaver with a scarcely discernible new thrill, a sensation rarely known there. Like lemmings hurtling hindways back from the cliff, this nearly empty chamber was filled suddenly with peers and became alive with their scamperings. The benches which had been empty but for a few diehard "responsibles" (mainly elderly women and three or four earnest well-groomed young peers, plus a red-faced Lord Chancellor Elywyn Jones grinning at his old chum and opponent Lord Hailsham for the Opposition) suddenly, and with a rush and excited murmur as of public school boys scurrying to a

cricket match, the chamber was filled with these burbling peers.

I was firmly ensconced in my seat in the first row "below the bar" (i.e., behind the railing) on the same level with the peers rather than perched on high in the press or public galleries. I was thus subject to the gusts of wind as peers whistled past me to their seats, and it was as if the snowstorms outside were sweeping down the long corridors past St. Stephen's Chapel, through the lobby, and into this sanctum. Lord Hailsham, old war horse of the Conservative Party and member of more Cabinets than there are for sale at Harrods department store, adopted a public pose in keeping with his convictions: he slowly and ostentatiously strolled out of the chamber with the lapel of his jacket in one hand, and, preceded by his large stomach, said in a loud voice several times to no one in particular (except, vaguely, to the Tory benches): "I'm not staying for the debate on (and here he savoured each word for what he conceived its ludicrous quality) . . . *Unidentified . . . Flying Objects . . .* Not staying for the . . . *Unidentified . . . Flying . . . Objects . . . The Unidentified . . . Flying Objects!*"

At last they were all in their seats. Everyone expectantly looked across to the Earl of Clancarty who sits high in a corner of the chamber, and who had called this debate. He is better known as Brinsley le Poer Trench, author of many books on UFOs, and due to the death of his older brother in the past few years came unexpectedly to the family title, and as an Earl of course is entitled to sit in the House of Lords. Clancarty has the fortune or misfortune, however one wants to see it, of looking rather like the twin of the film actor Lon Chaney, star of so many horror movies. But what is far more striking is that Clancarty bears on his face not

only the resemblance to Lon Chaney but *Lon Chaney's most remarkable expression*. The Earl of Clancarty, in short, when he is about to speak to the House about UFOs, and when he is listening to the other noble lords speak of the same matter, manages to have on his face the exact expression which Lon Chaney developed on nights of the full moon, when he looked out of the window apprehensively and *realized that he would soon turn into a werewolf*. This indescribably melancholy look, this haunted expression must, one fears, owe something to the tragic unfortunate death of his wife about the time of the death of his brother. But partly, this expression may equally well be a result of the noble lord's conviction that the Earth and he are in the grip of superior, unknown, and occult forces—or, to put it as he has expressed it in his books, the Earth has a hole in the north pole which

Lord Clancarty suggested that since 1953 there had been a conspiracy by the CIA to clamp down on UFO reports . . . he suggested that the Soviet Union had initiated a cover-up also . . .

leads down into the hollow center, and from secret bases inside the Earth, UFOs emerge to spy on us. UFOs are to Clancarty what werewolves were to Lon Chaney in countless films: they threaten to engulf us.

Lord Clancarty stood up, and there was a hush from the galleries and from the benches. He then commenced the debate:

"It is with much pleasure that I introduce this debate this evening about unidentified flying objects—known more briefly as UFOs and sometimes as flying saucers. I understand that this is the first time the subject of UFOs has been debated in your Lordships' House, so that this is indeed a unique occasion. Before proceeding further I think I should declare an interest, in that I have written a number of books about UFOs. I am grateful to those noble Lords who are going to follow me in this debate and I am sure that it will be a most stimulating discussion."

Clancarty then gave a brief survey of UFO sightings commencing with one he maintained had occurred during the reign of Thutmose III of Egypt, circa 1504 to 1450 B.C. He referred to modern reports in which the UFOs were seen to be dangerous, stopping car engines, being a nuisance, and said "that witnesses have been burned on the face and hands if in too close a proximity to a UFO." He described how the electronic systems of a Phantom jet had been rendered useless by a UFO when the fighter pilot tried to launch an AIM-9 air-to-air missile at it in 1976 in Iran.

Clancarty suggested that since 1953 there had been a conspiracy by the CIA to clamp down on UFO reports, even extending to ridiculing pilots who reported them. He said that President Carter had failed to fulfill an election pledge to release the truth about UFOs to the public. He suggested that the Soviet Union had initiated a cover-up also, but that the French government took a different attitude:

"In February, 1974, the then French Minister of Defense, M. Robert Galley, was interviewed entirely about UFOs on France-Inter radio station. The interviewer was Jean Claude-Bourret. At the time there was tremendous publicity in France, but for some reason our newspapers did not even mention the broadcast. M. Galley stated that the

UFOs were real but admitted that it was not known where they came from. He said that since 1954 there had been a unit in the French Ministry of Defense collecting UFO reports. Some of this material was sent to the National Center for Space Studies in Toulouse, the French equivalent of the American NASA. In this Center there was also a unit—a scientific one—studying both UFO sighting and landing reports.

"A little over a year ago, I received some information that this particular unit was under government sponsorships and so I put down a Question for Written Answer. The noble Lord, Lord Donaldson of Kingsbridge, kindly confirmed to me in his reply that the GEPAN unit—those are the initials of the group—had been set up under the French Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Artisans at the center in Toulouse. M. Galley also added that the Gen-

darmerie were playing a very important part in UFO investigations, questioning witnesses and examining burnt circular marks on the ground where UFOs had landed, or were alleged to have landed. So the French have been taking it all seriously and keeping their own people informed. Nobody panicked and people did not rush like lemmings into the sea."

When the Earl of Clancarty sat down and the discussion of the issues which he had raised began, the first speech was from the dispatch box for the Conservative Party. It was a small, energetic, frequently fidgeting young lord who spoke. His name is Lord Trefgarne, he is 38 years old, and he has a worldwide reputation as a pilot. He holds many medals and international records for flying across the Atlantic. I asked Trefgarne afterwards how he had come to be chosen to speak for his party on this issue. He is one of six whips for his

LONDON EVENING NEWS



The Earl of Clancarty, who called the debate.

party in the Lords, which is the lowest official position. He told me that there had been more or less of a consensus amongst the small official group of Tories in the Lords that because he was a famous pilot, he might as well handle the UFO debate, presumably because both pilots and UFOs are aerial phenomena.

Lord Trefgarne began his speech with a curious mixture of timidity and provocation:

"My Lords, I am bound to say that I face making this speech with some trepidation. I had wondered whether we could justify the holding of what is in effect a full debate on this matter; but having seen the audience we have tonight, and indeed having heard the speech of the noble Earl, Lord Clancarty, I can see that that sort of thought would not go down too well. I may well be shouted down before I finish anyway, but let us see if we can avoid that right at the start.

I have some 2,500 hours as a pilot. I have flown across the Atlantic a few times as a pilot. But, unlike with the aircraft reported by the noble Earl, I have never seen one. I presume—indeed, I believe—that a good many of the sightings can be explained by logical scientific theory and I am, so far at least, convinced that those that cannot so far be so explained could be, if our knowledge were more advanced or if we had more information about the sightings in question. It is these unexplained sightings upon which ufologists rely so heavily in asking us to accept their theories. But I believe, as I say, that these unexplained sightings could be—and, indeed, would be—explained, if we had more knowledge about them; for example, better photographs. How many clear photographs of UFOs have your Lordships seen? All I have seen are hazy, fudgy photographs which could, or could not, be genuine."

Ufologists often rely upon radar information for evidence in their case, but I must tell your Lordships that radar plays more tricks even than the camera, and I do not believe that radar information, in this context, is valid. For example, the recent sightings in New Zealand, which were widely reported just before Christmas, including some rather strange-looking photographs which appeared on television, were also said to have been confirmed by radar information which was available to the

Here was an official spokesman for the Opposition, putting his party's position to the House, telling us that, in effect, we are the only intelligent species in the Cosmos because God "loves us and us alone."

aircraft in question. But I know from my own experience that radar is frequently used, and indeed, is so designed, for detecting anomalies in atmospheric conditions and in weather patterns, and I am not persuaded that radar is a valid supporting argument in this case."

This part of his speech was a fine example of reasonable skepticism, based on undoubted knowledge and familiarity with flying and radar, and weather conditions. But from this point, Trefgarne began to make some wild excursions into a bizarre fundamentalist theology, which was so extraordinary that I had to ask him later if he were actually a member of the Church of England. Trefgarne is an Anglican (Episcopalian in America), but that only goes to show what a broad spectrum membership of that church covers. Trefgarne began what was to be the first of a long series of lordly strings of quotations from the Bible during this debate. He chose Matthew and Luke, commenting on their descriptions of weather conditions during the Crucifixion. Then he said:

"Without wishing to pre-empt anything that the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Norwich may say," (as if he were expecting trouble, which was indeed to come though Trefgarne told me he had no personal acquaintance with the Bishop), "perhaps I may pose

the question as to whether the existence of another race or races outside our universe is compatible with our Christian principles. I speak only as a simple member of the Christian faith, but I think I believe that He loves us and us alone. I am not aware that there is any suggestion in the words of the Almighty, as recorded, that we must share his goodness with people from another universe. There is no suggestion that there is, indeed, any other such people."

By this point, my jaw had dropped. Here was an official spokesman for the Opposition, putting his party's position to the House, telling us that, in effect, we are the only intelligent species in the cosmos because God "loves us and us alone." In short, if Jesus Saves, and redemption is by Him alone, how can the little green men be "saved" if they are from a world where there has been no Crucifixion? I think I was not the only person present who was astounded, and do I err in thinking I heard gasps other than my own?

I pried a little more out of Trefgarne in a later conversation with him, for I discussed at some length with him a theory of my own (see *SECOND LOOK*, November, 1978) that RPVs—Remotely Piloted Vehicles—form part of UFO sightings. Trefgarne very readily agreed that he thought this most likely. In fact, he said that the primary interest of the RAF in UFO sightings was, he believed, the possibility that they were actually observations of RPVs intruding into British airspace. When I specified that such RPVs might be *Soviet* spy craft, he lapsed into vagueness and said that he had no more contact with the Ministry of Defense than I had. He emphasized that the Opposition have no access to information of that kind.

The next peer to rise to speak was a very genial member of the minority Liberal Party, the Earl of Kimberley, aged 54, whose passion is for big game fishing. He is the Liberal Party's spokesman on aerospace and Secretary of parliament's All-Party Defense Study Group. He is also a director of a company called Thermo-Skyship Ltd, which wants to build a circular, saucer-like airship commercially, and plans to do this in the Isle of Man (off the coast of Britain) to avoid being nationalized and forcibly incorporated into British Aerospace Ltd. Kimberley was a warm supporter of a UFO investigation, maintained that America and the Soviet

Union had formed a conspiracy to suppress UFO information, and he wanted the British government to react differently:

"In 1976, President Carter, in a pre-election pledge stated:

"If I become President, I'll make every piece of information this country has about UFO sightings available to the public and the scientists. I am convinced that UFOs exist. I have seen them."

This statement was a breakthrough against the United States cover-up as it admitted that not all UFO information is, or has been, available to the American public. For instance, do your Lordships know that three former United States Presidents before their election proclaimed their belief in UFOs? They were President Eisenhower, President Lyndon Johnson and President Ford, who I agree was appointed. During their presidencies they became completely silent and did not fulfill their promises. Why? I strongly suspect that Her Majesty's Government know why, and if they do know, why then, they should inform your Lordships.

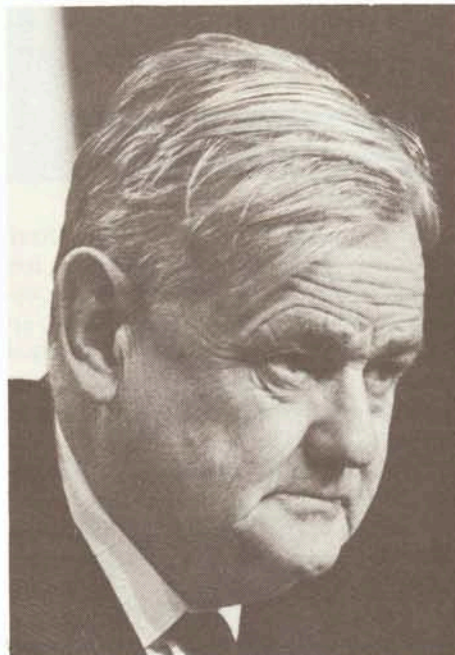
"I believe that there is much material evidence on UFOs in the national archives in the United States of America which has never been made known to the public, and even President Carter is finding it difficult to carry out his pre-election pledge. I am led to believe that he has tried unsuccessfully with NASA to do UFO research. The answer he has been given is 'No, due to expense.' That research which NASA has been required to do would cost a few million dollars, but a few million dollars is only the cost of two astronauts' suits. Therefore it appears obvious that for some reason there is a cover-up in the United States."

After Lord Kimberley had finished supporting Clancarty's motion for an official UFO investigation, a dignified, slender, white-haired man of 79 years of age, holding a sort of electronic ear trumpet to one ear, rose to his feet and made his maiden speech! The man's title was Viscount Oxfuird, and if you think that is an antiquated spelling and an unfamiliar title, you would be

perfectly right. In fact, a couple of years ago, this man successfully claimed the title which had been dormant since 1706!

The elderly Lord Oxfuird obviously felt no compunctions about having been born on the last day of the last century, for he rushed straight out into space and began rattling off information about the stars:

"There are many stars which have a solar system which might well be in the same position; they might have one planet, as we have, as good as ours and with the same amount of knowledge. On the other hand, we must accept the fact, as the noble Earl, Lord Kimberley,



Lord Hailsham, who left the debate.

was saying, that it would have to be something which we have not been able to attain on this earth and something that we do not understand on this earth, because if one wanted to get, say, from A Centauri, which is our nearest star, to here, it would take half a lifetime. Even travelling faster than anything we have ever produced in the way of space ships in this world of ours, the distance is 250,000 times the distance that we are from our sun, which is 93 million miles. It is a distance which would certainly take half a lifetime even at 100,000 miles an hour. So I do not think it would be reasonable to look at another solar system, say A Centauri which is very near, being only roughly $4\frac{1}{4}$ light years from us, which is not very much in space. There is of course the possibility

that the UFOs may come from some secret effort on this earth. This I very much doubt because one could not keep a thing like that secret for 20 or 30 years. I very much doubt the possibility of its being on this earth.

"So we get an entirely different picture. We have progressed in the last 30 years both in cosmology and in many other sciences, more than we have ever done before, certainly in my lifetime. I think the feeling really is that we are now on the edge of something in the universe which we do not understand yet. However, if we are going to understand the UFO question, we have got to move to the extent of understanding something beyond cosmology today. From our point of view, what we are looking at is the tip of the iceberg. We know perfectly well that we get information, we put it into computers and come out at the other end with a new model. Then in five or 10 years the model is thrown away and we are back with the one answer which applies, unfortunately, to so much of science today; we just do not know. But one hopes that it will be possible."

The irony of the oldest man in the debate making a maiden speech and quite possibly the most "modern" speech was remarkable. Everyone was very impressed, and it is the custom for all succeeding speakers to address their congratulations to a peer who has given his maiden speech but these congratulations in Oxfuird's case were certainly very warmly and genuinely intended. Oxfuird had the quaint habit of turning on his seat to face each speaker in turn and, as he was offered congratulations, Oxfuird would stiffly and properly bow forward from the waist, his face lit with a happy and dignified smile, and his ear trumpet clutched to his ear accompanying him in each bow.

It then came the turn of the only Labor party back-bencher to take part in the debate at all, the ebullient and effusive Lord Davies of Leek. He is a life-peer, made one after he had been a Member of the House of Commons during a long political career. He is small, white-haired, rather round, thoroughly jolly, and has a high voice like an Irish tenor. He was unquestionably the most obvious person in the entire debate, because he constantly

made his opinions felt by little interjections, exclamations, and other displays of his reactions to people's statements. He did not do this in a disruptive way at all, but obviously gets carried away with enthusiasm, and no one seemed to mind.

"Do noble Lords believe in angels? The answer from some will be Yes, and yet they have never seen one. We are asking you to believe in the phenomena of flying saucers, seen by now by, I should think, probably millions, at any rate hundreds of thousands . . ." He managed to quote Shakespeare and pepper his speech with folksy Welsh observations about his Welsh mountains.

"We know that they exist. All we are saying is that they are unidentified. They may be terrestrial or celestial. We are asking Governments to find an answer and that is all that this debate is about . . ."

"Let us ask a couple of questions. How can a flying saucer fly faster than sound and not create a supersonic boom? What is it? Secondly, have we the right to assume that we alone are in the universe? This anthropomorphic view of God that some people have built up does not build for the spirit and does not, I think, build for true holiness. It does not build up for real Christian spirit if it is followed too fully. Therefore, I should say that we have no right to assume that we are the only intelligent beings in the universe. Is the earth the only planet populated by intelligent technological life? I do not know and I do not suppose that we shall be able to find an answer yet. If in a year of Queen Elizabeth I had said to someone in London that I could show

him a picture of Philip of Spain in Madrid on a piece of glass in his room, I would probably have been burnt at the stake as a wizard, or as a witch if I were a woman.

"Are there flying saucers? Can these objects be explained? There are two basic facts. First, the scientific examination of the probability. That is due to mankind and Governments should look into it. The second aspect is to fathom the possibilities of the existence of this phenomenon. Astronomers are now increasing their search for extraterrestrial radio signals, but so far—despite what the noble Earl, Lord Kimberley, has said—none has really or truly been discovered. The billions of stars in the galaxy make the problem at present too much for us."

This direct rebuke to Lord Trefgarne's "isolationist" position was now to be followed by a further indirect critique by one of the leading British bishops, the Bishop of Norwich. Certain bishops, I should explain, are automatically lords and can sit in the House of Lords upon being elevated to their bishoprics. In fact, for this debate, the Bishop of Southwark was also present, though he did not speak. Both the clergymen were dressed in their clerical robes.

The Bishop began by remarking upon the futuristic speech of Lord Oxfuird, then he said:

"It is right that we should give a cool and scientific look at all unidentified flying objects, not only because of natural curiosity, not even only—as I think the noble Earl, Lord Kimberley, suggested—because of national security

...God may have other plans for other worlds, but I believe that God's plan for this world is Jesus.

but also for reasons of scientific research. There was a time when leaders in the Church were not always so enthusiastic about pushing out the frontiers of knowledge as I believe we are today. I very much hope that such a search will continue. Whether or not it should be an intra-governmental study I am not sure. We shall listen with interest to what the noble Lord, Lord Strabolgi, says to us on that. But that it should be studied, and seriously studied, I believe to be true."

He then quoted a passage from *Colossians* in the New Testament and set about suggesting that "I believe that Christ has not only a terrestrial, not only cosmic significance, but literally a galactic significance. It is good that our minds and eyes should be stretched further out because I do not believe that at any point of the universe we get beyond the hand of God. Therefore, it helps us to understand the majesty of the Godhead when we begin to stretch our minds to reach out to the far corners of creation."

At this precise point, Lord Trefgarne leapt impulsively to his feet, seemed (no doubt because he was a pilot) actually to fly a few feet into the air, and flail his arms with excitement, though perhaps my memory has exaggerated the scene, so startling was it. The Bishop of Norwich blinked for a moment as if he could not believe his eyes, while Trefgarne blurted out that he wanted to intervene. It is the custom of the House of Lords that when one is interrupted, one sits down immediately as an act of courtesy to the interrupting peer, which is often done grudgingly,

Lord Trefgarne leapt to his feet and interrupted the Bishop of Norwich: "Is he actually offering ecclesiastical authority for the existence of another race of people in another universe?"

for they often become quite furious with one another. The Bishop of Norwich bent himself double and thrust himself back into his seat, which, in his robes, somewhat resembled a hen scratching the ground for grubs. He has a quizzical expression at the best of times, and will scratch his right ear with his left arm arched over his head, looking puzzled. But Trefgarne's outburst really threw him.

Trefgarne exclaimed: "Is he actually offering ecclesiastical authority for the existence of another race of people in another universe? Is he saying that the existence of UFOs, together with their inhabitants such as are so often described to us, is compatible with Christian Faith?"

Trefgarne then sat down in a state of extreme agitation, and appeared to me to be trembling. The Bishop got to his feet again and tartly replied that Trefgarne would have his reply shortly: "However, there are about 20 seconds to go before I get to the noble Lord. Perhaps in the meantime he can have a glass of water from Lord Davies of Leek or something . . ." Not long after, the Bishop said: "Now may I come to the noble Lord's particular question a few minutes ago? His question went something like this: 'Do we believe in the existence of another race? Is it possible that there is another race further afield?' I must say that I do not know . . . God may have other plans for other worlds, but I believe that God's plan for this world is Jesus. That at least is how I view the question."

Trefgarne looked unhappy, and spent most of the rest of the debate with his feet thrust up on the central table beside the dispatch box with his chin sunk into his chest. Sitting beside him on the front bench was the young Earl of Avon, Anthony Eden's son, with whom Trefgarne seemed to have some rapport.

The next peer to speak was Lord Gladwyn, Deputy Leader of the minority Liberal party, speaking on behalf of his party, tall and looking rather gloomy. Gladwyn had a diplomatic career of some distinction, being Britain's Ambassador to France and to the United Nations. He was created a peer and received one of the last hereditary peerages, just before they went out of fashion altogether and ceased to be created. Gladwyn began by saying: "One happy thing about UFOs is that they have nothing whatever to do with Party politics! Another is that they take one's mind off the absolutely frightful everyday events." He said that, unlike Trefgarne, he did not contest the existence of UFOs and said that if they were extraterrestrial in origin, they must come from a different solar system than our own. He went through various possible ordinary explanations of what they might be, and took a comprehensive, open-minded approach to the entire matter, commenting along the way on "the discontent with the present human condition and . . . an unconscious desire to escape from the horrors or potential horrors of earthly life" as a possible motive for us wanting to believe that there were extraterrestrials in the UFOs. The speech was a balanced and respectable survey of the problem; and as the Liberal Party's official view, far superior to the Conservative Party's. Gladwyn concluded:

"What is the moral? I agree with the right reverend Prelate, who said so eloquently—we are indebted to him for his intervention—that perhaps the moral is that we had better not put our trust in saucers for salvation but, rather, concentrate on how best to conduct ourselves here below so as to live in charity with our neighbors and eventually die in peace. If the UFOs contain sentient beings, we can only leave it to such beings to get in touch with us

when, and if, they will. Up to now, if they exist, they have done no harm for the last two or three thousand years. So there seems to be no great need to set up intra-governmental machinery to investigate the whole phenomena. The mystery may suitably remain a mystery, and so far as I can see nobody will be in any way the worse off if it does."

Lord Kings Norton was the next to speak, a life-peer who is President of the Royal Institution, which is perhaps the second most distinguished scientific body in Britain (after the Royal Society itself), Chancellor of a technical college, Fellow of Imperial College of Science and Technology, and a former President of the Royal Aeronautical Society.

"I am sure that many—and perhaps most—of the sightings recorded and reported are terrestrial in origin: Aeroplanes with navigation lights glowing at night; satellite launching rockets burning up on re-entry; remotely piloted vehicles, now beginning to be called RPVs, up on trial flights; weather balloons; trick reflections of light. In the extraterrestrial class I am afraid that I cannot think of anything other than meteorites, Northern Lights and ball lightning, but there are probably other well known physical phenomena within the knowledge of astronomers and meteorologists."

Although he felt there must be natural explanations for UFOs, it was clear we needed to look into them: "It would be worthwhile trying to explain them, and if there are people who know what they are, they ought to tell us. The high probability in my mind is that they are terrestrial in origin . . . But if they are terrestrial phenomena, we ought to be able to identify them." He then pointed out that we could not exclude extraterrestrial possibilities, and quoted

. . . perhaps the moral is that we had better not put our trust in saucers for salvation but, rather, concentrate on how best to conduct ourselves here below so as to live in charity with our neighbors and eventually die in peace.

Lord Halsbury was interested in the tendency of the human mind to clothe visions in the garb which it expects them to have, and was honest enough to tell a story about himself when at age six he saw an angel.

both Shakespeare and Conan Doyle, stressing that it was not "merely to satisfy our curiosity" which should motivate us in wanting to get to the bottom of UFOs. He then explained why:

"There is a social danger, in my view, in leaving people in ignorance of the origins of these phenomena. I have recently learned from a number of sources that there have grown up, in North America particularly, many groups and cults whose attitudes are based on beliefs that UFOs are influential outer-spatial manifestations interested in this earth. In some cases these groups are looking to outer space for Man's salvation. If this is right, it is rather disturbing."

Lord Rankeillour was the next to speak. He has a reputation for frequent attendance but rarely speaking in the House. I am told by a relation of his that he travels home all the way to Inverness in Scotland every weekend, which must mean that, as the House sits on Tuesdays, Wednesday, and Thursdays, Lord Rankeillour spends all of Friday and all of Monday in trains, which may explain why he is still a bachelor!

Rankeillour made a plea for the facts:

"Each year there are many sightings of UFOs throughout the world. Some of them are very close at hand, while others are not, but always the effect upon those who see them is one of concern; and yet this very point is ignored and ridiculed by most Governments right around the globe. In the United Kingdom's case, those who report seeing UFOs are taken to be misinformed,

misguided and rather below par in intelligence. If this is so, why has some of my information on this subject been given to me by the Ministry of Technology? Why should this Ministry waste its time gathering false information? Of course, it is not false information; it is data reported by civil and Air Force pilots, policemen, sailors and members of the general public who have all had personal experience which has intrigued and/or frightened them.

"My Lords, what are UFOs? I do not know; and nor, seemingly, do some Governments: but these machines do exist in one form or another, abstract or solid, and they do travel at stunning speeds which seem to defy proved natural physics. Let the United Kingdom be told by Her Majesty's Government the real details on UFOs so far as they know them, for by continued silence the position only becomes worse."

Lord Gainford then rose and was the first to report having actually seen a UFO—only three weeks previously, in fact:

"I am the 10th person to speak in this debate. I have noticed that so far none of your Lordships have actually reported a sighting, so here goes! I am going to stick my neck out, open my big mouth and trust I am not going to put my foot in it! I saw a UFO a little while ago. It was on 31st December about 8 p.m. All right, my Lords, have a good laugh, it was Hogmanay! Up in Argyll it was a New Year's Eve party and somebody said there was something funny flying across the sky. Fifteen of us came out to have a look, including some children. They had been drinking soft drinks anyway! The object was like a bright white ball with a touch of red followed by a white cone. In fact the whole object had the appearance of a small comet. It was heading eastwards and seemed rather low in the sky, passing over the hills between Loch Sweeney and Loch Fyne. The position from which we viewed it was outside the village of Tayvallich in Argyllshire on the West coast of Scotland about the same latitude as Glasgow.

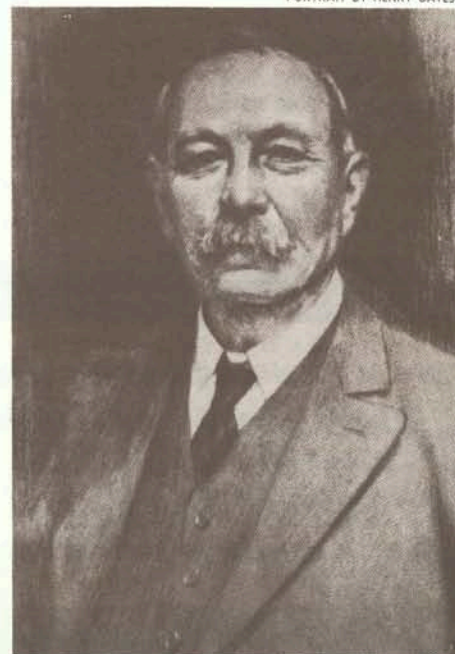
"As the ball disappeared into the distance it seemed to divide into two parts. It may have been a comet or a meteorite, but I should like to know what it really was. It would have been very beneficial if there had been some sort of center to which I could write or

telephone to report such an incident. No doubt setting up such an organization would be an invitation to pranks, but for starting such a center I suggest that volunteers could readily be found from the ranks of the former Civil Defense Service and/or the Royal Observer Corps.

"Suggesting that such an organization be set up, particularly at times like these, can naturally give rise to a protest about the waste of public money; but volunteers who might be willing to work for a few hours are quite prepared to do it for a very small remuneration, if any at all. I have mentioned the Civil Defense Service, and I did not know whether or not I should declare an interest, but I was a member of it during the 'sixties and I was one of many who were bitterly disappointed when it had to go into abeyance. I recall particularly the comradeship and the sense that we were doing a useful job for the community.

Next, another distinguished scientist and Fellow of the Royal Society, the Earl of Halsbury, took part in the debate. He is Chairman of the National Institute of Cancer Research and President of the National Institute of Industrial Psychology. He gave a fascinating catalogue of strange scientific phenomena which could explain certain UFO sightings. He explained how cigar-shaped "zeppelins" could be seen in the sky which were really due to "the lenticular shape that the perspec-

PORTRAIT BY HENRY GATES



A. Conan Doyle, who was quoted.

tive of a searchlight thrown onto a cloud-base makes." He described how you can see "sundogs," which resemble UFOs—"the effect is of a rather dilute mirror" in the sky, due to a peculiar diffuse reflection of the Sun actually down through a cloud by means of ice crystals within the cloud. And at sunset there is the "green flash," which can also be misinterpreted by people—a last flash of green from the sun just before it is lost to sight. Halsbury has actually seen all of these phenomena himself. He also described ball lightning, though he said he had never seen it, and said: "There is no theory of it. It appears to take the shape of a football-shaped (English footballs are round, I should add) mass of glowing gas which hops around . . . It has never been satisfactorily photographed, to my knowledge."

Lord Halsbury was also interested in the tendency of the human mind to clothe visions in the garb which it expects them to have, and was honest enough to tell a story about himself "at the age of six, when I saw an angel . . . there was my guardian angel sitting on the edge of my bed. Naturally, with the imagination of a child, I clothed this presence in human form with a large pair of feathery wings. This presence proceeded to rebuke me for initiating a practice which it said would get me into trouble if I persisted in it. Having remembered the rebuke all my life and acted upon it, I am not prepared to deny the reality of the presence that was there with me." I later discovered that Halsbury had had a most treasured object at that age, a stone with a jewel crystal inside of it, and that he had thought of using it to practice some black magic with, though how he got that idea at the age of six I cannot imagine. Anyway, this angel actually appeared to him and rebuked him, as he said, and made such an impression on him, that Halsbury went and threw his

most treasured object into the sea as a result, and never dabbled with such notions again.

Next was Lord Hewlett, a recent life-peer, company director, and former Conservative Party official. Hewlett's entire speech was based on repeating the sentiments of his personal friend and neighbor, Professor Sir Bernard Lovell, the astronomer. Hewlett began in a way calculated to let everyone know that he was not a team player, and I know that he definitely alienated some peers by his approach. From the very top of the Conservative back benches, he had to shout somewhat to be certain of being heard, and this too did not go down too well with some. The first thing Hewlett did, after the ritual congratulation to Lord Oxfuird, was to make what could be construed as an insult to Lord Davies of Leek by saying that Lord Davies might accuse him "of being an anthropological arrogant specimen. I am not quite sure what that means, and I am not quite sure that he knows what it means." This was the first time the knives had come out in the debate with the kind of personal venom usually reserved for political matters, and Hewlett may perhaps have some violent dislike of Lord Davies.

Hewlett then decided to take the position of the evening's Official Martyr, and said: "I am only sorry to appear to be a veritable Daniel in a lions' den of UFO believers and to spoil the fun, and I have no doubt that today's flight of—dare I say it—fancy will command far more attention than our debate yesterday upon British industry, which scarcely made today's Press at all."

Having thereby purposely alienated everyone except perhaps Lord Trefgarne (whose feet, I seem to recall, were still up and whose chin probably only rose slightly from his

chest). Hewlett then proceeded to give Sir Bernard Lovell's speech rather than his own, because every single thing he said he acknowledged had come from Sir Bernard's lips (or those of his staff at Jodrell Bank Radio Telescope, who briefed him). It is a pity that, first, no one wanted to listen to him after his adopted posture had been taken, and also that he was not speaking his own mind but as someone else's mouthpiece.

"What is noticeable is the close correlation between the position of the planet Venus and the reports of UFOs, for when Venus is low and bright in the sky and when it is shining through thick mist or thin cloud it does much more resemble something other than our next door planet of the solar system. Why, indeed, we are told even the great President Carter has spotted one, but it is a pity we did not read the rest of the subsequent report. It was later discovered that that was Venus precisely in those conditions I have described. If the great President of the United States can be wrong, it is just possible the few noble Lords remaining in this House tonight might be, too. Let us face it, we all would love to escape from the miseries and frustrations of our world, and particularly in these recent past days. By all means go and see "Star Wars" or "Jaws" or any other myth, but do not confuse that with very serious scientific study. That is carrying romance a little too far. We must make sure we do not make your Lordships' House a laughing stock by doing so."

Lord Hewlett eventually sat down, much to the relief of all those whom he had insulted, and a distinguished gentleman arose, of ancient lineage, indeed a 13th Earl (created 1620) who then delivered a marvellously calm and reasonable speech. The Earl of Cork and Orrery seemed with effortless ease to wind up the debate in the most pleasant way. He began:

"My Lords, I hope that the noble Earl, Lord Clancarty, will not be cast down by the speech to which he has just listened. I myself must confess that I know remarkably little about unidentified flying objects. I know a few things about them, I know quite a bit, and I have learned more since the beginning of this debate, about attitudes towards them. They are almost as interesting in some ways."

Lord Cork directed a frontal blast at Lord Trefgarne, and said:

"I must make a remark—nobody has done so so far, I suspect rather to his

I do not know what it implies to say that you do not believe in an unidentified flying object. You do not believe in the object? You do not believe in its flying? You do not believe it is unidentified?

surprise—about the speech of my noble friend Lord Trefgarne. If he had been speaking as a private Back-Bencher I would probably have not said anything, but he was speaking from the Dispatch Box. Therefore, he presumably represents the views of the Party to which I belong. It is a view I wish to disown entirely, because if a Party of any magnitude cannot produce better views than that on a serious subject, I confess I am ashamed of it. If this represents all that the Conservative Party can produce in the way of thinking on what is undoubtedly a serious subject, whatever your opinion about it may be, then this is deplorable.

"If the noble Lord really thinks that there is no serious interest or belief taken nowadays in witchcraft, perhaps he does not read the right newspapers, but I can assure him that this is far from true. He is not a believer in unidentified flying objects. "I am no believer in UFOs," he said. I do not know how you can not believe in UFOs. You can take it for granted, if your mind takes a leap ahead, that by an unidentified flying object something is intended that is supposed to have originated in outer space, and you can say you do not believe in that. But I do not know what it implies to say that you do not believe in an unidentified flying object. You do not believe in the object? You do not believe in its flying? You do not believe it is unidentified? There are things that are unidentified. Perhaps we are not trying. I do not think it is reasonable to say that

ENGRAVING AFTER DROESHOUT



Shakespeare, invoked by Lord Kings Norton.

I have certainly suggested to more than one of their Lordships that they should have an informal and unofficial Lords Study Group on UFOs regardless of the refusal of any official support.

they do not exist. Nobody, except my noble friend Lord Hewlett, has seriously contended that they do not exist. The question is, what are they?"

At this extraordinary public disavowal of his own Party's spokesman, Lord Cork was interrupted by Trefgarne, who said: "I do not deny the existence of unidentified flying objects. I simply say that most of them are identifiable . . . I agree one cannot deny the existence of unidentified flying objects. It is simply a question of how we identify them."

Lord Cork then wound up the discussion in the House with the following summation:

"Let us get this matter cleared up and into the open, and by all means let us take it seriously, because this is a serious subject. Far too many people are taking it seriously for it not to be a serious subject . . . This is the first such debate that has occurred in any society such as this particular one; and this society, by which I mean this noble House of Parliament, is probably the only legislative assembly in the world in which it could happen. I hope that it will have repercussions which will spread far beyond this Chamber."

(I am pleased to add that the Earl of Cork and Orrery has agreed to contribute an article in the near future to **SECOND LOOK**).

The evening then drew to a late close with Lord Strabolgi's reply for the Government:

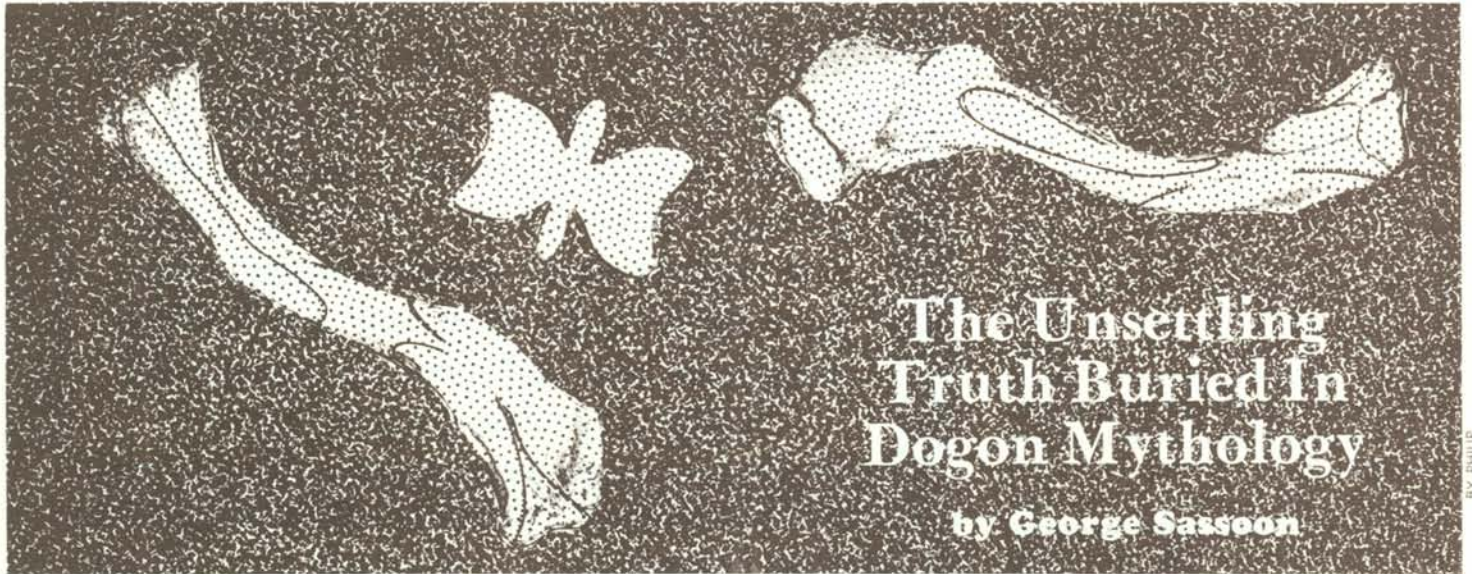
"My Lords, I should like to join with the noble Earl, Lord Cork and Orrery, in saying how grateful we are to the noble Earl, Lord Clancarty, for initiating this debate on UFOs. Of course, the subject has been of considerable interest in this country, and I hope our discus-

sions, which, as the noble Earl rightly said, have been the first that we have had in your Lordships' House, will help to increase public understanding."

However, it became clear that the Government were firmly and unhesitatingly rejecting any form of official inquiry into UFOs. Strabolgi was very pleased with Lord Trefgarne's position for the Opposition, and said "I welcomed his constructive speech." Strabolgi's speech, prepared with all the resources of a Government, was amply and impressively researched, and gave a great deal of information on specific UFO sightings and related phenomena. However, the tone was rather contemptuous of UFO enthusiasm and the speech was a straightforward debunking exercise. Strabolgi strayed very close to the edge of the House's etiquette by making deprecatory remarks about some people who even believe that there is a hole in the Earth. Everyone surely knew that he meant Clancarty, though no one had breathed a word of this during the debate, as it was an unspoken agreement that Clancarty was not to be embarrassed by having his hole in the North Pole flung at him. Strabolgi simply could not resist it, however.

"Then the noble Earl, Lord Kimberley, implied that there was some kind of cover-up. There is no cover-up and no security ban. It is true that when people ask to see the Ministry of Defense UFO files they are told that the papers must remain confidential, but there is a very mundane reason for that. The files contain voluminous correspondence from people, and we cannot divulge the identity of the correspondents. It follows that the files must remain closed under the rules laid down in the Public Record Acts, passed by Parliament, which at

Continued on page 26



The Unsettling Truth Buried In Dogon Mythology

by George Sassoon

ESSAI SUR LA COSMOGONIE DES DOGON by Eric Guerrier
Robert Laffont, Paris, 1975

Many people will already have heard of the Dogon, a West African tribe who possess a remarkable collection of oral myths and legends. Their cosmogony, that is their ideas about how the world was created, is a document—albeit an oral one—which is comparable with our own creation story as told in the book of Genesis.

This material remained unknown to the outside world until the 1930's, when Marcel Griaule, a French anthropologist, gained the confidence of the Dogon to the extent that he was initiated into their priesthood and was entrusted with their secret knowledge. Over a period of forty-odd years, Griaule and his colleague Germaine Dieterlen mounted a number of expeditions to the Dogon tribal lands in the present Republic of Mali, and amassed a huge collection of their traditional lore. In 1965, they published the material in a book entitled *Le Renard Pale (The Pale Fox)*.

This book seems to have attracted little attention in the decade following its publication, for a variety of reasons, according to Guerrier. Griaule and Dieterlen were not altogether accepted by the scientific establishment because they published the material 'raw', without comment and interpretation, and the book is said to be very difficult to read and so would not have become a best-seller with the general public. Fortunately, however, for students of astro-archaeology, its significance in this field was finally discovered; and this appears to have happened simultaneously, in the French and English-speaking worlds. Eric Guerrier's book on the cosmogony of the Dogon appeared in 1975, while Robert Temple's *The Sirius Mystery* came out in early 1976. Temple in his book concentrated on the peculiar significance of Sirius in the Dogon mythology, using it to trace the ancestry of the tribe back to ancient Egypt, and for this reason he was not able to give much attention to other, equally fascinating aspects of the Dogon legends. Guerrier, on the other hand, does not seem fully to have appreciated the significance of the astronomical knowledge embodied in the legends, but nevertheless his book gives an invaluable summary of Griaule's material. From the passages quoted by him, it is clear that *Le Renard Pale* is indeed a difficult book. It gives the impression of having been put together from working

notebooks without any attempt to arrange or classify the material, which makes it very difficult to follow for one not already familiar with it.

Guerrier has split the material up and arranged it under five headlines: 1. The structure of the world (*po-pilu*); 2. Astronomy (*sisi-tolo*); 3. the memoir of history (the *sisui* and the road of blood); 4. Astronautics (Nommo's ark); and 5. Theogony (Nommo sacrificed). According to the Dogon, in the beginning was the god Amma, who was enclosed within an 'egg'. Having decided to create the universe, he first laid down the laws of nature, and then produced a tentative design. The first creation took place secretly within the clavicles (or shoulder blades) of Amma, resulting in a universe based upon the *sene*, or acacia seed. Dissatisfied with this, Amma destroyed it, and performed a second creation, producing this time a universe based upon the *po*, or millet seed. This is how the Dogon describe the act of creation:

"He opened his eyes. This act caused the 'yala' (signs) to go out from the spiral, which, turning inside the 'egg,' presaged the future expansion of the universe). This was how Amma pierced the envelope of his own womb, and his 'eye,' as if rising from a hole, became a light which illuminated the universe and revealed the existence of all things in the process of formation."

This remarkable passage appears to echo not only modern cosmological theory—the big bang, the expansion of the universe, the rotation of the galaxies—but also a more ancient one—the kabbalistical world-view of the Zohar, a Jewish mystical work. According to the Zohar, the act of creation began as a thought, a design for the universe within the head of God; several universes were created and destroyed before the present one was brought into being; and the act of creation was seen as an explosion of light from within the head of God Himself. Now, many of the ideas expressed in the Zohar originated in ancient Egypt, so the appearance of this material in Dogon mythology lends further support to Temple's view that the tribe originated in that country. In this reviewer's opinion, the entity described in the Zohar as the Ancient of Days was a machine for making manna, the 'food of the angels,' which was given to the

Israelites by an extraterrestrial. This in turn gave rise to the belief that God in some way had fed mankind with food from His own body. This too is echoed in the Dogon beliefs: "Nommo shared his body with men in order to nourish them." Likewise, the manna-making process was observed to be akin to a type of fermentation, and sure enough, we find the Dogon creation myth continuing with Amma transforming the *po* seed into all other species of life by means of a brewing action carried out within his own head.

There follows a summary of the remarkable astronomical knowledge of the Dogon; it seems that they knew of the rotation of the Earth upon its own axis, the satellites of Jupiter and the rings of Saturn. In addition to the details of the Sirius star system which modern astronomers have only recently discovered. Furthermore, "The spiral worlds of stars are populated universes; . . . there are beings who live on the other worlds, just as on this planet." It is difficult to see how the Dogon could have acquired this belief from European sources, bearing in mind that the monk Giordano Bruno was burnt at the stake in 1600 for saying precisely this.

The Dogon preserve various versions of the events which followed Amma's creation of the universe. However, in most of them he also formed in his 'placenta' various living beings, who included Ogo and Nommo. Quarreling with his creator, Ogo departed to roam the universe, and a battle ensued which culminated in the sacrifice by evisceration of Nommo, followed by his resurrection, and the circumcision and mutilation of Ogo, who took refuge on Earth in his 'ark,' bearing fertile seeds stolen from Amma. These flourished in the rays of the Sun, created by Amma from Ogo's 'ark' or placenta so as to deprive him of the means of leaving Earth again and causing further trouble. The blood and viscera which resulted from these gory acts gave rise to various stars and planets, including Sirius.

Space does not permit of a full summary of the manoeuvrings attributed to their gods by the Dogon, but if allowance is made for the strange language used, it does sound rather like a scenario for 'Star Wars,' and it possesses many features in common with the legends of the middle eastern civilizations. This is all the more remarkable because the Dogon are illiterate, the only fixed elements in their traditions being mnemonic diagrams, whose forms are carefully preserved. Contrasting this with the strictly literary traditions of Mesopotamia and the eastern Mediterranean, it is surprising to find so much material still recognizably common to both cultures.

Having summarized the material given by Griaule in *Le Renard Pale*, Guerrier goes on to give some observations of his own concerning it. In addition to drawing attention to the more obvious astroarchaeological significance of the material, he points out the peculiar importance of iron in the Dogon culture. Like many other peoples, the Dogon regard iron as a sacred metal, and the smiths who work with it are accorded a special importance. This could be due to its immense strategic importance in early times, but Guerrier makes the further suggestion that it may be a result of the first sample of iron having been obtained from meteorites. Not far from the Dogon lands is Lake Bosumtwi, a crater-lake formed by the impact of a large iron meteorite about 1.5 million years ago. Guerrier suggests that the Dogon may have obtained iron at first from this object, and hence come to think of the metal as of heavenly origin and thus associated with the gods. It is possible that this also occurred elsewhere, as witness the similarity of the Latin word *sidus*, *sideris*, meaning a constellation, and the Greek *sideros*, iron.

Guerrier's book is to be recommended to anyone who wishes to make a study of the Dogon mythology, and who is unable to obtain *Le Renard Pale* (now out of print). There is still some confusion evident in the presentation of the material, but if the samples quoted are typical then Guerrier's version is a great deal easier to follow than that of *Le Renard Pale*. The book is well illustrated with line drawings of the Dogons' mnemonic diagrams, and it also provides useful insights into the way that oral traditions can change, as compared to literary ones. Despite the hazards of translation of books which rely heavily on linguistic analysis, an English-language edition of *La Cosmogonie Des Dogon* would be a source-book of considerable value.

POSTSCRIPT by Robert Temple:

It would seem advisable to add a note regarding the chronology of discovery and publication. The manuscript of *The Sirius Mystery* was delivered to my publishers in the Spring of 1973. There was a delay of three years before publication. During that time I continued working on the book and wrote all the appendices as well as Chapter 8, and rewrote the book in the light of the further material gathered from *Le Renard Pale*, which I had not used in the 1973 version. Photocopies of my book were in circulation round the world amongst various interested people (and I do not know who they all were by any means!) from at least 1973 and possibly 1972, in an earlier version before it was submitted to my publishers. Chapter One of my book was originally in the form of an

It seems that the Dogon knew of the rotation of the Earth upon its own axis, the satellites of Jupiter and the rings of Saturn, in addition to the details of the Sirius star system which modern astronomers have only recently discovered.

article which I wrote in 1968, and copies of which I sent to many people attempting to attract interest in the subject. I sent a copy, for instance to Carl Sagan in 1968, but he did not grant me the courtesy of a reply or an acknowledgement. The article seemed not to convince anyone that there was a genuine mystery and so it became clear that I would have to write a book in order to get anyone to recognize that this matter required attention and consideration. In the beginning I did not intend to or want to write a book about all of this. I have commissioned the preceding review because it is important that an apparent simultaneous discovery of the significance of the material be given attention in the English-speaking world, where I believe it is largely unknown to have occurred. Other aspects of my subject were also "simultaneously" discovered by various people, and I have been kept quite busy gathering together all of these threads in tracing the truly remarkable multiple birth of the Sirius Mystery in many minds around the world

at more or less the same time. The possibility that the ancient Egyptians may have known about Sirius B, for instance, was suggested in a book by the Argentine physicist Professor Jose Alvarez Lopez who had never heard of the Dogon and who discovered my book by chance in a New York bookshop and then wrote to me. At some point I may give a full account of the remarkable eruption into world consciousness of the phenomenon of the Sirius Mystery in a manner which reminds one of the occasionally suggested mechanism of the *Zeitgeist*. Robert Anton Wilson has given a full account of his own "simultaneous eruption" in his book *Cosmic Trigger*, which takes its title from a phrase of mine. □

George Sassoon is a linguist, engineer, and co-author of The Manna Machine. He lives in rural England, near Stonehenge.

Temple from page 23

present preclude disclosure until 30 years have elapsed since the date of the particular correspondence. The earliest reports the Ministry of Defense hold are dated 1962.

Strabolgi then made his final remarks as follows:

"I repeat that I am grateful to the noble Earl, Lord Clancarty, for raising the subject of UFOs, and I am particularly grateful to him for informing me in ad-

vance of the points which he proposed to make to your Lordships. However, from all I have said, I am sure that your Lordships will agree that there is no reason for my right honorable friend the Secretary of State for Defense to make a broadcast interview about UFOs, as the noble Earl, Lord Clancarty, suggested. As for telling the public the truth about UFOs, the truth is simple. There really are many strange phenomena in the sky, and these are invariably reported by rational people. But there is a wide range of natural explanations to account for such phenomena. There is nothing to suggest to Her Majesty's Government that such phenomena are alien space craft."

The debate was soon closed, at well after 11:00 p.m., and the house and all spectators rose, and the Yeoman Usher of the Black Rod, his sword at his side, took the giant gold mace over his shoulder and, accompanied by the Deputy Speaker in his wig, marched solemnly from the chamber, after which all and sundry dispersed, some of the peers to correct the texts of their remarks with the *Hansard* office. Within 48 hours every copy of *Hansard* containing the transcription of the debate had been sold out, and there were no plans to print any

more. Even the peers who took part in the debate themselves were unable to get their allotted quota of copies for their own uses. The British press printed mostly silly reports about the first two or three speeches (most reporters seem to have slipped away early and did not, like *SECOND LOOK*'s intrepid representative, sit riveted to the entire proceedings). Perhaps there will be ripples, as Lord Cork hoped. I have certainly suggested to more than one of their Lordships that they should have an informal and unofficial Lords Study Group on UFOs regardless of the refusal of any official support. No vote was taken, because of the etiquette of the House. Perhaps some hearty Lords will get together and go ahead anyway on their own. If they did, they would have most of their number in sympathy with them. And the world's first legislative debate on UFOs would have ended in more than a sold-out *Hansard* and some superficial press notices. For the Lords debate was earnest, intelligent, and worthwhile, and deserves a better issue than a footnote in parliamentary history. □

Robert Temple is SECOND LOOK senior editor and author of The Sirius Mystery. He lives in rural England.

It became clear that the Government were firmly and unhesitatingly rejecting any form of official inquiry into UFOs.