

## UFOs join pilgrimage to USSR

By Esther B. Fein  
New York Times

MOSCOW — Everyone seems to be coming to the Soviet Union these days: entrepreneurs in search of joint ventures, actors looking for stage sets, heavy-metal musicians, arm wrestlers, even aliens.

According to the official press agency Tass, towering extraterrestrial creatures with little knobby heads have landed in the Russian city of Voronezh, joining the flood of foreigners who have invaded the Soviet Union in these days of *glasnost* and *perestroika*.

Scientists have confirmed  
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# The USSR's universal appeal

## Tass reports extraterrestrials frolicking in urban park

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that an unidentified flying object recently landed in a park in the Russian city of Voronezh." Tass said in a straight-faced news report.

"They have also identified the landing site and found traces of aliens who made a short promenade around the park."

The news agency did not say when the aliens were reported sighted in the city.

It was only a matter of time before aliens discovered the appeal of Soviet chic that has brought hordes of tourists to the Soviet Union and made Soviet watches and breads all the rage in sophisticated stores like Bloomingdale's.

But while Soviet citizens usually embrace foreign visitors with enthusiasm, Tass reported that the people in Voronezh who saw the aliens "were overwhelmed with a fear which lasted for several days."

The authorities in Voronezh, some 300 miles southeast of Moscow, could not be reached Monday night for comment. A spokesman for Tass, reached by telephone Monday night, said the report was neither a hoax nor a joke.

"It is a serious dispatch," the night duty officer at the agency said.

The press agency has seemed to undergo a bizarre metamorphosis in the last year or so.

### Tabloid sensationalism

In addition to its traditional role of dutifully reporting the comings and goings of Soviet leaders, Tass has taken to writing supermarket-tabloid sensationalism with all the seriousness due a superpower summit meeting.

Along with a steady flow of UFO sightings, Tass in recent months has carried reports on a man who, while sitting in a bathtub, can create a huge soap bubble, get inside it and remain there for 10 seconds; a "flamboyant" six-legged bull whose two extra appendages grow upward off its back (coincidentally, also from the Voronezh region); the elusive, mysterious creature called the yeti; and a Tibetan doctor's sex tips, advising that winter is the best time for amorous activity and summer is the worst.

People in the Soviet Union have long been attracted by the mysterious and the occult, and lately the authorities seem to be feeding this interest.

There seems to be a particular fascination here with outer space, and in February 1984 the authorities here set up a Commission Into Abnormal Phenomena after a "flying cigar" was spotted near the city of Gorky, east of Moscow.

A much talked about report last summer in the newspaper Sotsialisticheskaya Industriya told of a milkmaid's encounter with a stubby-legged alien in the Perm region of Central Russia.

### Milkmaid reports sighting

In that report, milkmaid Lyubov Medvedev was quoted as saying she encountered an alien creature "resembling a man, but taller than

(Scientists) have also identified the landing site and found traces of aliens."

— Tass

This summer Tass reported on a UFO hovering over a hill in the Soviet Far East, showering the area with more than 30 pounds of debris that included mysterious, tiny golden hairs.

But the agency also debunked a report in Sotsialisticheskaya Industriya this summer that asserted that a spaceship had landed near southern Moscow, leaving behind a huge scorched patch. Tass reported

that firefighters believe a haystack caught fire and singed the ground.

In the Voronezh case, Genrikh Silanov, head of the Voronezh Geophysical Laboratory, said in an interview with Tass that the landing site was identified "by means of bilocation."

According to Soviet reference books, bilocation is an extrasensory method of tracking objects or people invisible to the human eye.

Silanov said scientists found "two mysterious pieces of rock" that resembled deep-red sandstone, but "mineralogical analysis" determined that the substance "cannot be found on Earth."

Tass said Voronezh residents reported that the aliens visited the place after dark at least three times. They arrived in a large shining ball, or disk, and emerged through a hatch, accompanied by "a small robot," and went for a "short promenade about the park."

Mercury News wire services contributed to this report.