

UFOs are here to help, Soviets say

BY T. ELAINE CAREY

Cox News Service

MOSCOW — Godlike aliens from outer space are coming to help Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev with his economic and political reforms.

Well, at least that's what almost every Soviet interviewed on the streets here in the capital said.

The Soviet Union has been invaded. It should be the Soviets' worst nightmare come true, but in fact they are delighted by their visiting extraterrestrials.

It is the hottest subject in town. It has captured subway schmoozing, office gossip and dinner table conversation the way "Who shot J.R.?" debates gripped Americans several years ago.

Everyone here knows that unidentified flying objects (UFOs) have been buzzing around the Soviet Union since September and in a few cases, aliens and robots have taken a stroll out of their flying saucers or flying bananas, as they have been variously described. Even the government-controlled

No glasnost in outer space

There may be good news in the Soviet UFO sightings for even the diehard, anti-Gorbachev-reforms communist.

A Soviet journalist in Siberia reported in *Komsomolskaya Pravda* Thursday that he met some extraterrestrials and asked them to take him from the land of the red star, which symbolizes communism, to their planet, which is called "Red Star" and apparently has

media has been hot on their trail.

But no one yet has said publicly what most people are thinking privately: that these are friendly creatures coming to lend a helping hand to *perestroika* and *glasnost*, Gorbachev's reforms.

"I don't think they mean any harm," said Yevgeni Artomenko, 37, an economist and engineer. "We lost our faith (in our style of government) and we are now try-

ing to improve our country, our life and they are trying to help us."

But it seems George Orwell was right in his book *1984* when he portrayed a society in which the government would police people's thoughts.

The alien refused to take the Soviet journalist because he would introduce "thought bacteria" to the planet, the reporter wrote.

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"They are here because of solar activity and probably because of *perestroika*," said Valentina Karpinskaya, 45, a lecturer in chemistry at Moscow State University.

"Whatever reason they are here, I am sure they are nice," she said.

Mikhail Vasiliyev, 22, a chemical engineering student, was con-

vinced the moment the first UFO sightings were reported.

"Naturally, they aren't coming here by accident. Something is wrong in our development and that's why they are here. They probably want to warn us that if we don't change, it will be disastrous for us."

Lisa Leonova, 40, an engineer, said the last time the Soviet Union had such a proliferation of UFO sightings and mania was in 1914, at the start of World War I and the early rumblings of the communist revolution. "Economically and politically, we are in just as bad shape as then. The times are unusual now and so people are attracted to the unusual."

How can the space creatures help the Soviet Union?

"To develop scientifically and technically. They think we are at such a low level in these fields that they are trying to help push us forward," said Vasiliyev.

"There are lots of inexplicable changes and processes here right now. Maybe they are influencing them," said Artomenko.

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