

SPECIAL TWELFTH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

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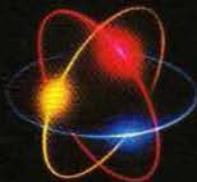
OCTOBER 1990

SEX

THE RATIONAL, THE BIZARRE
AND THE
UNCERTAIN FUTURE OF GENDER

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UFO UPDATE:

Good sightings come from South Africa, as well as Zimbabwe, Malawi, and Mozambique



For the UFO buff who wants to cast a little light on the African continent, there is now *UFO Afrinews*. Published by Cynthia Hind in Mount Pleasant, Harare, Zimbabwe, the third issue of this 48-page publication will soon go to press.

A writer by trade, Hind became involved with UFOs in 1968 when she was assigned to do a sighting story. Since then she has investigated the full range of African reports, from daylight discs to close encounters of the third kind. Sightings have taken her to South Africa, Mozambique, and Malawi and eventually to her typewriter.

The best sightings are in South Africa, she says, though "the government there doesn't answer any questions." The quality of sightings is also high in Zimbabwe, where the black population has become more educated since independence in 1980. These people now report more true UFOs, Hind notes, "because they know the difference between truly mysterious objects and Venus, Jupiter, or satellites."

Some Africans, however, prefer to avoid involvement. In a recent *Afrinews* story Hind tells of a young boy who called her on a radio phone-in show. One night, while visiting his grandmother, he saw a circular object pass over the village, which was "about the size of two or three huts put together," says Hind. The soundless craft emitted sparks, and burning material fell toward the earth. When Hind pursued the case further, however, the boy's father, a doctor, told her his son had seen a reflection of the lights from a nearby village. Of course, that village didn't have electricity, says Hind. "It's my opinion," she says, "that the doctor didn't want his son involved."

Good reports also come from the bush, where people are isolated and do not particularly relate to the notion of outer space. There these sightings are considered witchcraft. For example, when Hind asked one witness about the silver-suited beings he had seen, he told her they were "the ghosts of my ancestors." Asked if he had considered the extraterrestrial hypothesis and reminded that the United States and the Soviet Union had already landed on the moon, he told her that the E.T. explanation had never occurred to him and that he didn't think space travel was possible.

It is such superstition that makes UFO research in Africa a particularly demanding task. For instance, Hind recalls the time she was asked to make a guest appearance on a local television show. The host started the show with some eerie music and pictures of

UFOs. As the UFOs came up onto the screen, the cable blew. "Everyone ran out of the studio," Hind recalls. "They were terrified. They thought it was black magic. And I noticed that when the women monitoring the screen walked back into the room, they stayed at the far end of the wall and warily continued to watch me. I thought the show came out pretty well, but it was never put on the air. The sort of weirdness associated with UFOs is less well understood in Africa than it is in the United States."

To help her deal with local resistance--and to make her work more believable--Hind investigates UFOs with the help of a team. For investigative backup, she calls on a doctor, psychiatrist, geologist, and psychologist. And to bridge the cultural barrier, she has recruited a number of young Africans to do interviewing.

This investigative savvy has not gone unnoticed in the United States. Walt Andrus, international director of the Mutual UFO Network (MUFON), notes that Hind is his group's continental coordinator for Africa. She has presented the findings of her African investigative work at several MUFON symposia in the United States, according to Andrus, "and has been one of our stalwarts."

—PAUL McCARTHY

UFO Afrinews, published annually, is available for \$4 from Cynthia Hind, Box MP49, Mount Pleasant, Harare, Zimbabwe.

