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BOOK REVIEW

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GENERATIONS OF WINTER

By Vassily Aksyonov

Translated by John Glad and Christopher Morris

(Random House: \$25; 600 pp.)

War and Peace, Part II

The 'Russian J.D. Salinger' turns
to the broad canvas to write a
Tolstoyan novel of the 20th Century

Reviewed by Adam Hochschild



Aliens Attempt to Save Earth!

ABDUCTION

Human Encounters With Aliens

By John Mack, M.D.

(Scribner's: \$22; 432 pp.)

Reviewed by Susan Dewan

This book is not fiction. It is not quite fact. It belongs to a category we do not possess in literature—works about the unknown or the unknowable. "Abduction" is a thoughtful documentation of the cases of 13 men and women who have come to John E. Mack, a Harvard psychiatrist and Pulitzer Prize-winning author (for his biography of T.E. Lawrence, "A Prince of Our Disorder") seeking to gain access to their own memories and integrate these memories into their daily lives and relationships. These are people who have experienced abductions by alien beings. Often these incidents began in early childhood; in a few cases, experiences predate physical birth as we know it.

Mack has carefully and consciously built on the work of UFO and abduction researchers such as Budd Hopkins and Jacques Valles, who have been working in this field for many years.

This provocative work should not be judged in a debate over whether UFOs and their alien crews are "real." In every case described by Dr. Mack there are concrete physical findings that follow abductions, ranging from UFO sightings in the community, burned earth where the ships have landed, unexplained or missed pregnancies, a variety of physical lesions and also the recovery of tiny objects from the bodies of the abductees.

But much more important than the endless debate over whether UFOs are real is Mack's focus on the similarities in what people say



A 1952 photograph (by George J. Stock) in Air Force files shows what is ostensibly a UFO over a field in Passaic, N.J.

they learned from their abduction. There is a central message that emerges in every case. It is not a message that is unique to alien beings. The messenger may be strange, having gray skin, large heads and huge dark almond-shaped eyes, but the message can be heard all over the world. Let me put this simply. We are being told by the aliens that we are a species run amok. Our greed and destructiveness have taken us to the brink of destroying ourselves and our planet. According to Dr. Mack, virtually every abductee receives information about the destruction of the earth's ecosystem and feels

compelled to do something about it. Some receive this information in childhood and others as part of the growing trust in their alien/human relationships.

Why would intelligent life from other planets or dimensions care if we destroy ourselves? Perhaps it is as one of the abductees said: "If you take one part of the tapestry and put a hole in it, or you rend it, you wreck the parts that are next to it." If one part of the universe can be harmed by another, can there also be a self-correcting mechanism as well? This would be similar to what some biologists and the environmentally attuned call

how we live on this planet and with each other that the Western mind and culture will not be able to ignore for too much longer. It also raises questions about the nature of reality; of time, space, energy and the true nature of humanness. It opens the door to a very serious redefinition of life as we know it.

This evening I caught the tail end of the news on a local station. Recent findings show that the residues from pesticides and herbicides found on fruits and vegetables can't all be washed or peeled off. What does this have to do with aliens you might wonder? I guess I just have a hard time viewing intelligence as alien, especially when it presents me with another view of what I know to be true.

The physical laws we know are coming up short. The U.S. government-funded program, SETI (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence) operates on the assumption that extraterrestrial intelligence could be found by sending radio waves into space. As philosopher Terence McKenna has suggested, "To search expectantly for a radio signal from an extraterrestrial source is probably as culture-bound a presumption as to search the galaxy for a good Italian restaurant." ■

"Gaia" in regards to the functioning of the planet Earth. Could it be the same in the universe as well?

This book is a challenge to any reader. It raises questions about

"Abduction" is also available abridged on audiocassette, read by Josef Sommer (Simon & Schuster Audio, two cassettes, \$17).

DAVID HALBERSTAM

Summer of '49 was a #1 bestseller.

Now, five years later, its author gives us a new book about one of the most dramatic seasons of all time.