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Review - 'Spaceships of the Pleiades...'

From: Don Allen <dona@totcon.com>
Date: Wed, 23 Apr 1997 21:32:42 -0400
Fwd Date: Thu, 24 Apr 1997 09:29:19 -0400
Subject: Review - 'Spaceships of the Pleiades...'

Apologies if this has been posted here before, but I came across it while doing lookups in search engines and thought it might be of interest to others.

This article was found at -

<http://www.rutgers.edu/~mcgrew/mufon/journal/Feb-96-Books.html>

Don

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** begin excerpt **

The UFO Press

Spaceships of the Pleiades: The Billy Meier Story

by Kal K. Korff

Prometheus Books, 439 pages, illus., hc, \$25.96

Reviewed by Dennis Stacy

<Picture>

At a conference several years ago I was having breakfast with a scientist from a major university. It wasn't a UFO conference per se, but over granola in his case and ham and eggs in mine, the talk soon turned to that subject. To my surprise, he reached into his briefcase and pulled out a small portfolio of UFO photographs -- the clearest I had ever seen. The photographs were taken by one Eduard "Billy" Meier; the scientist had purchased them on a personal visit to Meier's headquarters (now known as the Semjase Silver Star Center) near the small village of Wetzikon, Switzerland.

My gut reaction -- in which I was hardly alone at the time -- was that the pictures were simply too good to be true. In general, UFO photographs are a haphazard business at best, one reason why they remain so controversial. But part of the early Meier mystique was not only the quality of pictures involved, but their sheer quantity. Visitors to the Semjase Silver Star Center, named after an alleged female saucer pilot from the Pleiades, can now pick and choose among (and pay for) over 1000 "UFO" photographs taken by a one-armed farmer with a reportedly defective 35mm camera. Many of the pictures were so good that they appeared posed, which, indeed, is just what Meier and his followers would eventually claim, particularly for an impressive series of photographs taken at nearby Fuchsbuel on July 9, 1975. Reportedly, at Meier's request for the definitive UFO photograph, Semjase flew her Pleiadian "beamship" around a large tree overlooking Lake

Pfaffikon. When researchers later noted that the tree had mysteriously disappeared from view, it was patiently explained that it had been sent back in time because of radioactive contamination!

My scientist friend wasn't the only one who swallowed this story without so much as a single antacid -- or attempt at corroboration. Two glossy, coffeetable-sized collections of the Meier photographs by Tucson-based Genesis III Productions quickly became high-priced collector's items among the UFO community. More books followed, including Gary Kinder's ostensibly impartial *Light Years: An Investigation into the Extraterrestrial Experiences of Eduard Meier*, from *The Atlantic Monthly Press*. The pictures and claims escalated from snapshots of the planet Venus and the future destruction of San Francisco, to dinosaurs, cave men and the alleged "Eye of God." They culminated, if that's the word, in Meier's publication of the *Talmud Immanuel*, which, according to Kal Korff, "professes to be the last true testament of Jesus Christ written after his crucifixion." In it, Meier claims that Jesus was not the Son of God, but a Pleiadian, of all people.

Over the years, I corresponded with the scientist and again bumped into him on occasion. Each time I expected him to recant, or at least pull back slightly from his public support of the Meier "mystery" in the interest of science, but his belief only grew stronger. The last time I saw him he was working on an English translation of the *Talmud Immanuel*.

How could such a scenario unfold? How could a man of reason, trained in physics and other scientific disciplines, take leave of his senses so uncautiously and completely? How could logic be so assiduously abandoned for the blatantly unbelievable claims of a charlatan? The answer, as far as my scientist friend is concerned, is probably purely a personal one, involving something akin to religious faith. Yet he was hardly alone in his acceptance. Another part of the answer, as made painfully clear in Kal Korff's stunning expose of the Meier cult, *Spaceships of the Pleiades: The Billy Meier Story*, is that ufologists must share at least some of the blame -- if for no other reason than that of not demanding enough of ourselves and our field of study. By not policing ourselves, by not requiring airtight evidence and critical thinking, we leave ufology (and the public perception of same) wide open to pseudoscience, rumor and tabloid innuendo of every sort and stripe. Of which the Roswell "alien" autopsy film is but likely the most recent, if hardly the last, example. Everyone's pockets are enriched by the process but ours.

This is not to say that mainstream ufology as a whole ever accepted or promoted Meier's photographs and his other claims of so-called evidence, but certainly some fringe figures who style themselves ufologists did, and it is unfortunately with the same tar that we are all ultimately feathered. *Spaceships of the Pleiades* was delayed several times while in press, and it's my personal suspicion that the delays were probably due to the publisher's legal department, for author Korff certainly doesn't treat his subjects with silk gloves. Dissemblers are called dissemblers, sloppy (or no) investigation is so named, and so on. (In an increasingly familiar and disturbing trend, falsely claimed college degrees are the least of sins revealed here.) Duplicity and incompetence everywhere abound. In short, the whole sordid story of Meier and his many misguided supporters is laid out in often excruciating detail for the reader to see and judge for him or herself. If anyone's reputation has been injured thereby, more often than not that damage has been wholly self-inflicted.

At 439 pages, *Spaceships of the Pleiades* is a big bruising book -- it's also a long overdue and necessary one. The year is young yet, but if you care about the field and buy and read only one book this year, you could do considerably worse. Don't be put off by the fact that Prometheus Books, a sort of CSICOP clearing house for long, self-referencing manuscripts, is the publisher. Korff isn't out to demolish or debunk ufology so much as to improve it. Whether from within or without, however, probably remains to be seen. Since when do exposes, for example, ever sell as well as the original pose?

** end excerpt **

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