

# DO THE CHERUBIM COME FROM MARS?

A preliminary study based on the Gary Wilcox Contact Story  
by Peter Gilman

IN A RECENT issue of the New York *Herald Tribune* I was aghast to read that nuclear physicist Edward Teller had seriously proposed exploding a hydrogen bomb on the surface of the moon to find out what that heavenly body is made of. Now it may well be that the moon is only a lifeless rock, despite what Mr. Adamski and others have said, just as it may also be only an effect of blind mathematical chance that our satellite makes exactly one complete turn on its axis every month, instead of one half a turn or ten or thirteen. But it is the possible extensions of the Teller principle that tends to shock. Most scientists also believe that Mars is devoid of any but the lowest forms of life. Will Professor Teller next be suggesting that we use his delicate little method on Mars? If the Siberian explosion of 1908 was some Martian physicist's idea of a handy way to find out what the earth was made of, we should be very glad that they didn't try their experiment on New York or London!

In fact, I personally think there is cause to believe that Mars *is* inhabited by an advanced civilisation—and far more so than our own. So partly in the humanoiditarian interest of protecting whatever society is there from the mad bombers of Earth who may decide to put Professor Teller's ideas into practice, I shall set forth my 'new evidence for life on Mars' in this present article.

To begin with, let's recall briefly the classical old dispute about those canals. Are they real? Or just illusions? Solid lines? Or fortuitous alignments of spots—a kind of problem in Martian orthoteny, so to speak? Schiaparelli, who discovered the alleged network, thought that it was due to natural geological forces but declined to say just which ones and left open the possibility of intelligent origin. Percival Lowell spent most of his adult life gazing—or thinking that he was gazing—at the canals through his telescope and making careful maps of them. He was convinced that they were real canals and that they had been built by intelligent beings in order to bring water from Mars' Poles into its desert regions—which he reckoned were pretty extensive.

But though there are probably many people today who'd be willing to agree with Lowell as to the canals' intelligent origin, there are very few of us indeed who seriously think that the builders are still there. For our scientists have measured and analysed the Martian atmosphere in a variety of ways in recent years and on all accounts it seems far too thin to support any but the hardiest and shallowest-breathing lichens—to say nothing at all (if you please!) about little men. As a compromise solution, then, we 'canalists' have concluded that Mars is a dying planet, with practically nothing left on it to die. But the question then becomes: *how* did Mars lose its atmosphere and *when*? Was it a

long, slow process, geared only to the largely imperceptible rhythm of causes and effects now governing the evolution of our solar system? Or was the loss sudden and cataclysmic, the result of vast and brutal exterior forces acting on the planet at a given moment in its history and at that moment alone? In simpler terms, could Mars have been involved in a kind of celestial traffic accident?

In *Worlds in Collision*, published in 1952, Immanuel Velikovsky<sup>1</sup> goes a very long way to proving just that. In the words of Mr. Mossman's very timely and excellent review of a recently published book defending Dr. Velikovsky's theories<sup>2</sup>: "An intensive study of ancient sources, of early astronomical records and of universal legends and folklore brought him to a revolutionary concept: that vast and sudden changes have taken place in the Solar System within historical times, and that these have twice resulted in world-wide catastrophes in the last 4,000 years."

Dr. Velikovsky shows that the first of these two catastrophes was a series of near-collisions with Venus in the second millennium B.C. and that the second—and last—was a series of similar, though less disastrous, near-collisions with the planet Mars in the 8th and 7th centuries B.C. It was at this time, and in the course of previous 'brushes' with Venus (which as a comet trying to become a new member of our solar system was responsible for all of the catastrophes) that, according to Velikovsky, Mars lost the better part of its atmosphere to its two larger neighbours.

Dr. Velikovsky, commenting on the tradition of belief in a Martian civilisation, draws from his own revolutionary evidence the following conclusion: "After the contacts between Mars and planets which were larger and more powerful than itself, it seems very improbable that any superior forms of life could have managed to survive there, if they ever existed at all. Mars is most probably a dead planet. Any form of higher life must have been completely annihilated."<sup>3</sup>

Velikovsky doesn't himself believe that the canals were built by Martians. Like their discoverer Schiaparelli, he attributes the observed network to geological forces. But what is of interest to those of us who do believe the canals to be of intelligent origin is the great economy of Dr. Velikovsky's way of massacring the Martians, when compared to the old explanation which supposed (and that's the word for it) a steady-state, no-change solar system. For on the older view, the Martians had to die slowly because the oxygen seeped away slowly—but why the oxygen did go away, no one could imagine. In Velikovsky's greatly-improved version, Mars lost its atmosphere and its civilisation at the same time and due to the same catastrophic accident.

Now anyone who flatly accepted Velikovsky's theories on the basis of what Mr. Mossman or I say about them would be very gullible, let's admit that at once. But as Mr. Mossman has pointed out, "implications of (Velikovsky's) theories which looked fantastic 15 years ago are being verified by more advanced techniques." Among them Mr. Mossman cites: "The high surface temperature of Venus, the presence of hydrocarbons in the Venusian atmosphere, the emission of radio waves by Jupiter, the extent of the Earth's magnetosphere." And Velikovsky is, very slowly but surely, gaining recognition in the scientific community, as the *Velikovsky Affair* has shown.

Now I have been going along, so far, almost as if I were myself a devout 'canalist' of the modern school—that is, believing that the canals were built by Martians, but at the same time being very sure that these Martians were, every manoid-jack of them, dead. But in fact, of course, I don't believe anything of the sort. I've only pretended to, a little bit, in order to present the dead-Martianist viewpoint as forcefully as I could, Velikovsky and his catastrophes à l'appuie. For, paradoxically, as I hope we'll all soon be persuaded, it is precisely the Velikovsky annihilation theory that is going to provide us with perhaps our first serious grounds for belief that the Martians have survived and are still going strong—canals or no canals!

Although the Gary Wilcox story has appeared in *FLYING SAUCER REVIEW* and has been reprinted subsequently in *The Humanoids*, where it is apparently the *only* contact story in which we have to do with little men claiming to come from Mars, I myself first read it in a paperback collection of true (or allegedly true) stories from *Fate* magazine,<sup>4</sup> and it is on this very detailed and excellent version of the story, written by Olga M. Hotchkiss, that I shall be basing my present résumé.

On a Friday morning towards 10 o'clock, April 24, 1964, 28-year-old Gary Wilcox, who was working on his 300-acre farm on Wilson Creek Road in Newark Valley, New York, "saw a bright flash" in a nearby field. On going to investigate, he was startled by the sudden appearance of an object which resembled the "wing fuel tank from a plane": the thing just seemed to pop out from nowhere when "he was about 150 feet away from it . . ." "It appeared to be about 20 feet long, 12 to 15 feet wide, and about 4 feet thick, with both the front and rear ends rounded off" and "appeared to hover a few feet above the ground. He approached it and put his hand on it. It was 'just like touching an automobile' and was not hot to his touch. He could hear a sound like 'a motor idling'."

When Wilcox touched the UFO, "two (human-like) figures about 4 feet tall dropped to the ground from beneath it. Both . . . were completely encased in silvery, one-piece suits. Their heads were completely covered with the same fabric . . . No facial features were visible. One of the figures approached him—the other stayed close to the ship." The two "were holding . . . trays about a foot square, filled with specimens of soil and sod. Their hands were completely covered, and he was not able to see any fingers."

Only the one who had stepped forward spoke. He did so with a "deep voice that seemed to come from somewhere within the suit, though not from the

creature's head." He told Wilcox not to be afraid, that they had "talked with people before". He asked what Wilcox was doing and was told "spreading manure". This seemed to interest the little man, who then proceeded to ask a lot of questions "mainly about soil, crops and fertilizers", and even ended by asking if he could have a sample of this marvellous fertilizer to take with him. Wilcox "said he would get it for them"—however, he didn't do so immediately and the conversation, which lasted over two hours, continued.

"We are from the planet known as Mars," said the visitor, who then went on to explain that *although they had been obtaining their food from the atmosphere, they had to find a way to rehabilitate their soil to raise food crops.*" (My italics—P.G.)

Let's pause at this point in the résumé and ask a question. Namely, if the alleged Martians "had been obtaining their food from the atmosphere" but couldn't any more, wouldn't that seem to indicate that something drastic had happened to that atmosphere in fairly recent geological times (geological, in a Martian sense, of course)? In fact, wouldn't it be reasonable to infer that the atmospheric change alluded to was a *thinning* of the atmosphere, seeing that food used to be obtainable from it but less so now? And since it was recent, wouldn't it also be reasonable to suspect that that thinning must have been the result of a catastrophe? In short, I suggest that the passage contains an implicit confirmation of Velikovsky's theory, according to which Mars lost most of its atmosphere due to catastrophic near-collisions with the Earth and Venus only about 2,700 years ago—not very long ago when one is considering such a large-scale event as the partial loss of an entire planet's atmosphere!

But as we shall see next, that isn't the only, or even the clearest, confirmation that crops up in the Wilcox story. For in the course of the conversation which continued, we learn that Gary Wilcox "was told that they (the Martians) had a *theory about coming changes in the Universe which would also affect our solar system, and that 'Mars may be where Earth is now.'*" (My italics—P.G.)

What is happening here? Isn't this an explicit reference to the same catastrophe that we indirectly inferred from these same alleged Martians' earlier remarks concerning their agricultural problem? For notice that although they are apparently only referring to a theory about possible future events, it must nonetheless be a theory extrapolated from definite knowledge of past and similar events. In other words, such changes in the solar system would have had to be predicted on the basis of a record of similar changes already effected—so that Wilcox's alleged Martians are apparently already familiar with truths we are now very slowly and hesitantly beginning to piece together on the basis of scattered and previously unheeded records: in short, they are familiar with Velikovsky's theory—a must for genuine Martians if Velikovsky is right! Furthermore—what is also necessary, under the same conditions—these same alleged Martians have indirectly, though still clearly, given us to understand that they themselves, or their ancestors (who can say what is a Martian longevity?), were directly and catastrophically involved in one or more of these vast interplanetary shuffles which form

the subject of their theory. But if the little men Wilcox said he spoke to may be said to have confirmed Velikovsky's theories, at least in part, isn't it at least equally true—and certainly (though with all due respect to Velikovsky's undeniable genius) far more important—to say that in so doing they tend to confirm their own objective existence?

I think so! But let's not go too fast!

The rest of the Wilcox account is not without its own interest, but what I have already quoted terminates the parts of it we need to consider here. The little man "volunteered a great deal of other information about space and other subjects", most of which Wilcox found too much "over his head" even to remember. They took leave of him towards noon, and he never saw them again. But, faithful to their agreement, he did carry out to the field a bag of fertilizer which he left for them—and which was gone the next day. "When asked if he thought that the Martians had returned for it, Gary said: 'Well, anybody who would walk all the way to that field to get an 80-cent bag of fertilizer would be crazy'."

The first question we might feel tempted to ask about Wilcox seems almost to have been foreseen and answered in advance by that same good-humoured remark. For Wilcox is plainly not the type of man to go pulling crazy stunts for no reason—no more than he could seriously imagine someone willing to walk miles for a bag of fertilizer. He has been content to go on milking his cows, just like before, and leave the Adamskis and Menzells to milk us. Consequently, he hasn't made any money out of his story. But if he wasn't money-hungry, he wasn't subject to recurring hallucinations, either: he'd never seen a UFO or Martians before that day and he hasn't seen any since. As for publicity, Wilcox did all he could to avoid it and for a long time refused to tell anyone except his mother about what he had seen and heard. As Olga Hotchkiss informs us: "No report was made to the authorities at the time of the incident; nevertheless, the story spread rapidly and an influx of curiosity-seekers invaded the site. Any reporter or interested individual who wanted to question Gary was hard put to get much out of him, as he worked continuously while answering questions . . . Eventually the story was reported to the office of the Tioja County Sheriff in Owego, N.Y., and Gary was called in for questioning.

"I don't care whether anyone believes me or not," Mr. Wilcox said. "It doesn't mean anything to me one way or the other. I told them what I saw and heard. I thought I should'." And in Newark Valley, Mr. Wilcox's brother, Floyd, said that he believes his brother is telling the truth. "If Gary said the thing happened, it really happened. He has nothing to gain and a lot to lose by telling a story like this. I know it is true." All of which, taken together, seems to indicate clearly enough that suspicions either about Wilcox's sanity or about his honesty are unfounded.

But of course the most significant difficulty in the way of our freedom to reject Wilcox's testimony is that although the alleged Martians' comments bear out Velikovsky's theories remarkably well, Wilcox himself does not call our attention to this verification—worse yet, he does not even render explicit the cause-and-effect

relationship between their remarks about a changed atmosphere, on one hand, and a theory about changes in the Universe affecting our solar system, on the other. Instead, we are obliged to find out that connection ourselves—and it is pretty well camouflaged, for (1) the thinning of the atmosphere must be inferred indirectly from a context ostensibly having only to do with agriculture, whereas the theory about the solar system is spoken about only later and as a purely scientific matter "over (Wilcox's) head", as he puts it; and (2) the business about the food problem seems to relate to past and current events, whereas the theory about the solar system is treated in an abstract and hypothetical light—something that only affects an unknown future.

Is it reasonable to think that Wilcox first put this fantastic scheme together after a good deal of reading which he seems never to have the time to do, and then subtly chopped it all up into apparently unrelated bits for us to piece together later on, and at our own leisure, like a jig-saw puzzle?

One believes what one can believe, in this sort of predicament! Or: you puts yo' money and you takes yo' choice! But for those still straddling the fence. . . .

Almost a year after I'd read this nettlesome story about little men from Mars, I happened to ask myself another question about it, half unconsciously—and the 'answer' jumped into my mind so fast that it gave me goose bumps.

Quite possibly some of the readers of this article have already asked it, and 'answered' it, themselves. The question is: "What would food taken from the atmosphere be likely to resemble?" The 'answer' that occurred to me at once was that it would *not* resemble any *earthly* foodstuff: it would be like no edible substance we knew, for it would be, not animal, nor vegetable, but purely chemical and synthetic. Most likely it would be formless and easily malleable, like some kind of weird, extra-light plastic; probably also it would have no real colour, but rather would be transparent—or white; and it might have properties we weren't used to—for example, it might not even be stable in the air from which it was extracted and so it might evaporate or volatilize on being exposed to it for any length of time. Of course, all these properties evoke irresistibly and almost automatically that weird and sensational phenomenon which Ufologists have come to refer to as 'angel hair': the light, silky-white strands of unknown substance that have so often been seen drifting down to the ground—and then disappearing into the air within a few minutes or hours—during and after reported sightings of UFOs. But then: edibility?

In *Exodus*, the famous 'Pillar of Cloud and Fire' which is said to have moved through the air before the Hebrews during their entire 40-year sojourn in the Sinai desert, was associated with (a) the angel of the Lord—or his angels, who were said to have transmitted the Moral Law to Moses; and (b) the fall of celestial bread—or manna—which was described as raining from Heaven on to the ground. The manna, needless to say, reportedly possessed all the attributes of angel hair, including volatility, plus one more (at least, so far as we know): to wit, it was a *nourishing foodstuff*, thus *intended* as such. And all the natural explanations that

(continued on page 30)

# A SURVEY OF FRENCH UFO RESEARCH GROUPS

by Jacques Vallée

The UFO controversy in France has produced a situation unusually rich in contradictions. *Private* interest among professional scientists, engineers and military men is possibly greater there than in any other country. On the other hand, there has never been any effort on the part of the French government to promote active research on unusual aerial phenomena. The official reason, of course, is that the U.S. Air Force has already done this, and has found little significance to the whole question. This being the general attitude, some officials, in typically French fashion, behave in apparent contradiction to it. It is not rare to see two or three truckloads of gendarmes arriving within hours on the site of a reported landing, soon followed by intelligence specialists who gather samples, take photographs, then vanish: the 'fact sheet' of Project Blue Book is one thing. But somebody in Paris is not taking any chances.

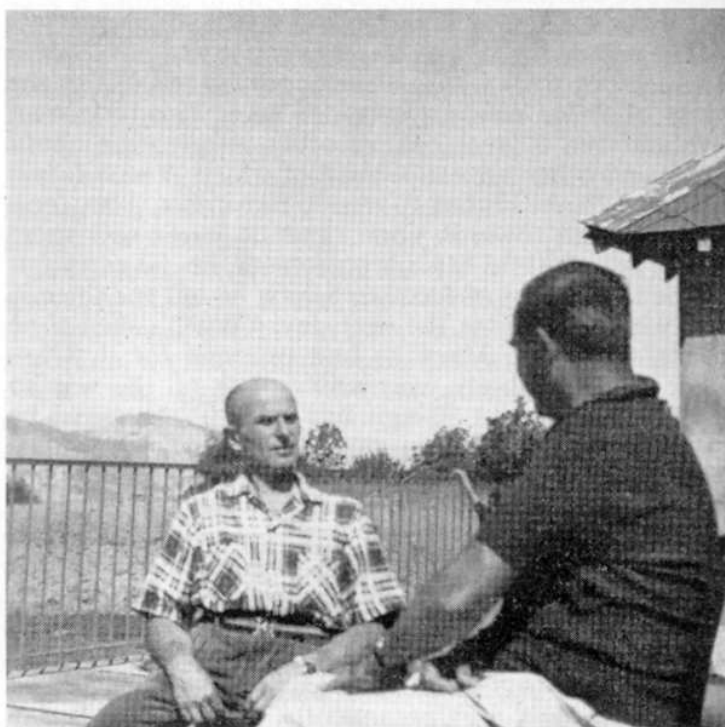
Under the current conditions, however, it is doubtful whether the official follow-up to such cases as the Valensole or the Bar-sur-Loup landings, which were carefully investigated by the French, is anything more than routine. There is a precedent for this: immediately after the 1954 wave, public pressure was such that the French Air Force did create a temporary clearing house for sightings of aerial phenomena made by its personnel. Although the reports centralised by this organisation were numerous, they were sketchy and poorly documented. They were never submitted to a scientific panel. From what this writer has seen, the reliability of the observers was generally above average. The reports came from control tower operators, pilots, meteorologists in France and the territories of Africa. Most witnesses were on duty on military airfields at the time of the sightings, but there was no follow up, and no organised research. A few elementary studies of the report frequently were included in the files, but the overall scientific value of the entire operation was less than sophomoric.

Fortunately, several groups of serious amateurs exist in France, and they have saved from oblivion much valuable data. Their contributions are marked by bold, original attacks on the problem. In recent years, there has been a strong re-activation of the controversy, and therefore it may be useful to review the background, motivations and objectives of the groups and individuals who have kept UFO research alive in France, despite official neglect and journalistic ridicule.

## Ouranos

Until the early sixties, one organisation had dominated the scene. It is a group called *Commission Internationale d'Enquêtes Scientifiques Ouranos*. It is often known only by its initials C.I.E.S.O. or by the name of its magazine, OURANOS.

The group was founded in 1951 and may be the oldest UFO group currently in operation (in the United



Aimé Michel (left) at his home in the beautiful French Alps with the Editor, Charles Bowen

States, the oldest group, APRO, was created in 1952). It had published twelve issues of its journal before booming into a major organisation when the 1954 wave swept the country. Directed by an extremely able researcher, M. Marc Thirouin, and actively served by a popular science-fiction writer, Jimmy Guieu (himself the author of two early books on UFOs), OURANOS set a standard that few publications in this field have approached. Professionally edited, dynamically written and enjoying a perfect presentation, the magazine was packed with results of field investigations carefully conducted by such people as Charles Garreau, Jimmy Guieu and Thirouin.

After its issue No. 25, published early in 1960, OURANOS felt severely the impact of the censorship of the national press and of the negative publicity given to the observations. The French public lost interest in the problem, and until recently it seemed that Marc Thirouin was courageously fighting a losing battle. There was a long eclipse in the distribution of OURANOS after its number 31, published in 1964. Efforts are currently being made to start the magazine again on a regular publication schedule. The group itself is still alive and has a network of about a hundred correspondents and investigators in France and abroad.

## Gepa

At the end of 1962, a group of engineers and other persons interested in starting a new organisation held a series of meetings in Paris and decided to publish a