

IS THERE INTELLIGENT LIFE ON EARTH?

BY ALEXANDER BARON

London Broadcasting Company (LBC) calls itself 'the information station,' and by and large this piece of self-trumpet blowing is well deserved. All the news is up to the minute: London, national, international, financial, sport, weather and much more. It also has some very intelligent discussions and phone-ins on the station with guests, some eminent, some not so eminent speaking on a wide range of subjects from conservation to current affairs.

LBC has never been afraid to tackle the controversial or the unusual, and on certain programmes the paranormal. UFOlogy and associated 'fringe' subjects have been earnestly and intelligently debated. Every so often though, somebody slips through the net who has no business being represented as an authority, expert or even a well informed layman. And while the cranks and weirdos are politely answered when they phone in, there is no earthly reason for them to be invited into the studio under false pretences.

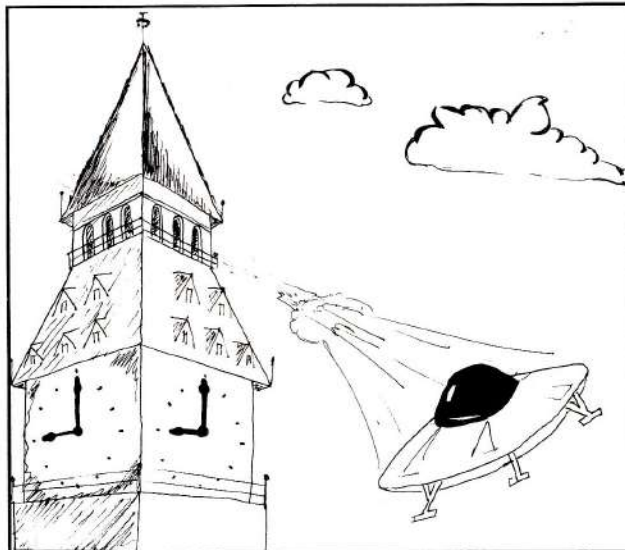
I am referring specifically to the Aetherius Society here, who have somehow managed to wangle a spokesman onto LBC talk-ins on more than one occasion. Recently, Peter Deeley, who was chairing the 'All Things Considered' programme, had three guests who were discussing UFO's. One of these was the highly regarded ufologist and researcher Jenny Randles, whose credits include the thoroughly researched and thought provoking 'Abduction' which catalogues hundreds of cases of alleged alien abductions. The second guest was another lady, also named Jenny. The third was Dr Richard Lawrence, the secretary of the European headquarters of the Aetherius Society.

Pete Murray, another LBC broadcaster speaks very highly of the Aetherius Society, and once slagged me off over the air for denouncing it. Peter Deeley was more diplomatic. When I phoned LBC and asked them why Dr Lawrence had been invited onto an intelligent programme instead of being relegated to Beedle's 'Comedy Hour' he defended the decision by saying LBC had to allow all groups access to the station. That's what democracy is all about. Now here is what the Aetherius Society is all about.

In March 1954, plain George King was doing the washing up in his Maida Vale bedsit when a voice boomed out from nowhere: "Prepare yourself. You are to become the voice of Interplanetary Parliament." Needless to say he dropped his plates. A short while later he received a visit, a materialisation in the form of a well-known Eastern saint who, it appears, was a messenger from the Cosmic Masters. George had been chosen to save mankind!

Shortly after this, George founded the Aetherius Society, which is named after Master Aetherius, an inhabitant of the planet Venus, who was then a sprightly 3,456 years old. George communicates with him in a trance state. He also communicates with Jesus, (yes THE Jesus), who also lives on Venus, and with an entity known as Mars Sector Six. Presumably this fellow comes from the planet Mars. Oh yes, all the planets of the Solar System

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Joseph Beggan is mistaken (Briticism vol. 1, no. 2, p4); the British poll tax is not being used as it was in the American South to deny people the right to vote.

The government is using the lists of registered voters as a means of checking whether people have registered for the poll tax. As a result of this process, some people have decided not to have their names appear on the voting lists in an effort to be able to evade paying the poll tax.

So while the two lists are related, it is not correct to say that if you aren't registered for the tax you will not be able to vote.

Jorgen Rasmussen

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ing too few jobs. If a machine can replace ten, or even 100, men, then it makes good sense to employ the machine instead. The other nine or 99 men who have been made redundant do not need to be found work, but what they do need to be found is spending power. What the government should do is not create unnecessary or even useless jobs, but create the credit, ie the spending power, to enable these men to purchase the products they are eager to consume." "How is the government to do this?" I ask. "By the simple expedient of writing figures in a book," he says. "Provided it is done scientifically it need not lead to inflation; the banks do it all the time and charge us interest for the privilege of borrowing what is, in effect, our own money." At this point he loses me by going on to discuss the A+B theorem and unbalancing the budget, but I understand the gist of it.

According to Stan, if the government were to create its own credit and distribute it to the public instead of borrowing it from the banking system by the process of selling securities, there would be no national debt, and no unemployment because the resulting increases in purchasing power would mean we could all live comfortably by working a three, or even two, day week. I eye him suspiciously at this point, but he backs up his claim with concrete documentation. As long ago as 1981 the Economic Research Council concluded that the government should create all its own credit for public works and that this would have saved over £30 million since the War. "The problem," says Stan, "is an international one. The only place where the state does create its own credit is on the island of Guernsey. Every other country in the world borrows money at interest when it could create its own credit as a sovereign right." "Then why don't they?" I asked. "Why doesn't the government ban smoking? That kills a hundred thousand people every year." I shake my head. "Because it's a racket," he says, "the whole system is a racket."

ABOLISHING THE POVERTY TRAP

Greenwich Action Group on Unemployment (GAGOU) and other unemployed centres don't go so far as Stan, but they do, interestingly, advocate the abolition of the means tested benefit system, and its

replacement by a basic income. Amazingly this idea is also mooted in part by Milton Friedman, Mrs Thatcher's monetarist guru. Friedman inclines more to a negative income tax, but Hugh says that the basic income would solve all the problems. This is much like Stan's Social Credit, the main difference being that this would not be a credit created by the government, but one financed out of taxation. The problem most unskilled people have is that they can earn only a low wage, so that if their take home pay is, say, £70 per week, they might be no worse off, or even better off by staying at home drawing the dole. But, if they had a guaranteed non-means tested income of, say, £40 per week, anything they earned on top of that, by working part-time perhaps, would not be clawed back by the Department of Health and Social Security. This would give them a real incentive to work. If on top of that one applies Professor Friedman's negative income tax, it will be seen that the poor and those on very low pay will drop out of tax altogether. At the same time, the 'culture of dependency' will have been eroded. As Stan says, "What is needed is to destroy the poverty trap without removing the safety net."

Whether or not one inclines to either of these solutions, it is obvious that something is radically wrong with the present system. Certainly the idea of creating jobs for the sake of it is a pointless exercise.

Paying the unemployed to do nothing may seem to be an abhorrent concept to the British workers, but for the unemployed, Workfare is a medicine which, if it cures the disease, damn near kills the patient as well.

The Myth of Unemployment by Stan L. Goddard. Price £1. Available from: A Distribution, 84B Whitechapel High Street, London E1

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are inhabited, bar Mercury, which is presumably too hot even for the great JC.

In case the reader thinks I am winding him up, I can assure him that all this is Aetherean dogma and is accepted without question by the followers of George King. On a visit to the US he became Dr King; today he is Sir George. I telephoned the Aetherius Society's Fulham Road headquarters and spoke to their PR officer, Christine Aubry. I didn't ask if they still stocked tapes of Jesus speaking through their leader. This was very controversial back in the fifties, and led to accusations of blasphemy. However, I did ask about George's qualifications. Miss Aubry was very reticent to give a direct answer. Yes, George King does have doctorates, (note the plural). Yes, he does have a knighthood. No, not from the Queen; from an unnamed European source. Is that spelt 'source' or 'sauce' one wonders?

Dr Sir George King is now 70, and presides over an empire of thousands. Perhaps George really isn't so daft after all. One suspects that he is laughing all the way to the bank, and he has been to America, New Zealand and to the top of Mount Kilimanjaro in his endeavours (successful apparently) to save us unworthy Earthlings from the Fiends of Garouche - wicked fish-like creatures from the other side of the Milky Way - and from the evil scientist Lubek, an employee of none other than Satan! All this kind of makes the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection look quite tame, doesn't it?

No, George isn't daft, neither are the people at LBC. Misinformed yes, but daft, no. So perhaps after they read this they will not invite the Aethereans back to discuss UFO's. At least, not until April 1st.

University of Cambridge
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