

NR

PHILIP J. KLASS
560 "N" STREET, S. W.
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20024

Feb. 16, 1976

Dr. David M. Jacobs
History Dept.
Temple University
Philadelphia, Pa.

Dear Dr. Jacobs:

Recently I obtained a copy of your book through Allen Hynek's Center and took it with me on a recent trip to Atlanta. You will be pleased to know that I literally had trouble putting it down because of your very comprehensive and fascinating history of early USAF actions and attitudes that predated my own interest and activities in the UFO field.

I recognize that I can hardly lay claim myself to being an unbiased observer on the subject. Still I think your book would have been much the better had you yourself been able to remain a more impartial observer, although I recognize how difficult that is on so controversial a subject.

For example, I am surprised that during your seemingly extensive research, including one or more visits to Washington where I live, that you made no attempt to contact me, by letter, telephone or in person, to obtain "my side" of the controversy and to check out some of the allegations made against me that you repeated in your book. This is especially surprising since you characterize me on p. 221 as "rapidly becoming the new leader of the anti-UFO forces." Nor did you interview Dr. Donald Menzel, judging from the contents of your book and its footnotes.

Had you contacted me you could have avoided a number of errors of fact, of which the following are typical. ~~My~~ My personal concern is not so much for errors that involve me, but rather whether this implies that there may be comparable errors of fact in those portions of your book dealing with early USAF actions and documents where I lack first-hand knowledge.

P. 221: [In discussing McDonald's appearance before the American Society of Newspaper Editors, on Apr. 22, 1967.] "...Besides that, Klass would be on the panel, and since he was eager to promote his book..."

FACT: I was not invited to appear on the panel nor did I. (I was a member of the audience.) Since this meeting was held nearly a year before my book "UFOs--Identified" was published, and I was not a panelist, it would be difficult to "promote" my book even if I were so inclined.

"McDonald's civilian adversaries, particularly Phil Klass, also wanted to fireproof him."

COMMENT: I do not understand the meaning of "fireproof" in this context. If you mean "silence," then you err. All I ever sought was a direct debate and confrontation on the issues, in the best tradition of science.

P. 240: "The Stanford Research Institute had written sections [in the Univ. of Colorado report] on plasmas, in which it criticized Klass's theories..."

FACT: On page 41 of the Colorado report, it states: "The Colorado project engaged the services of the Stanford Research Institute to make a general study of the functioning of radar systems from the point of view of the relation of their indications to UFOs. The study which was carried out resulted in the production of Section VI Chapter 5..."

I have examined this SRI chapter, p. 655-715, and fail to find any mention of me or my plasma hypothesis.

P. 259: "The American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics released its promised UFO Subcommittee report in November, 1970. The subcommittee included Hynek, McDonald, Page, Phil Klass..."

FACT: You have mistaken members of an AIAA symposium on UFOs, held in early 1970, with members of the AIAA UFO Subcommittee. (I was invited to be a panelist at this symposium, but the invitation was not extended until two hours before it began, providing scant time for my preparation.)

I am not, and never have been, a member of the AIAA UFO Subcommittee, and was never asked to join.

P. 286: "Phil Klass, busy at work on a new book that would 'solve' the UFO mystery..."

COMMENT: At the time that you wrote this, you had never contacted me to discuss the book. Isn't it a bit presumptuous to try to "devine" its contents by ESP?

P. 221: "McDonald charged that Klass had told columnist Jack Anderson that McDonald used navy funds on a trip to Australia to study UFOs..."

COMMENT: Had you given me a chance to comment on McDonald's allegation, I could have shown you a copy of a UPI Dispatch, dated July 29, 1968, that resulted from a UPI interview with McDonald following his appearance at the Roush Congressional UFO symposium. This UPI dispatch included the following:

"He [McDonald] had spent the last two years studying UFOs under a grant from the U.S. Office of Naval Research, spending several months in Australia, New Zealand and Tasmania tracking down sightings."

Or, I could have shown you a copy of an article in the Oct. 1967, issue of an Australian UFO magazine ("UFO Contact") which told of McDonald's visit and said: "Prof. McDonald's visit is being sponsored by the U.S. Government."

Feb. 16, 1976

It is clear that on at least these two occasions, McDonald freely spoke of the Office of Naval research sponsorship of his Australian trip to investigate UFOs. And at the time when the Anderson column appeared, a few weeks after McDonald's UPI interview, I had never spoken with Jack Anderson! (My very first conversation with Jack Anderson occurred several months later, in connection with an article I was writing for Parade magazine, with which Anderson is associated.)

There was no need for me to utilize this "backdoor" approach in the fall of 1968, for I had in late 1967 (almost a year before) brought to the attention of ONR officials the fact that McDonald was conducting his worldwide travels to investigate UFOs under the guise of conducting research on atmospheric physics--which is what his ONR contract called for. I was told at that time that ONR already had discovered this, as a result of a complaint from the U.S. Embassy in Australia (which found it surprising that the Navy was financing McDonald's trip and lectures in which he lambasted the U.S. Defense Department's handling of the UFO question.)

I had brought this misuse of Navy funds to ONR's attention privately, rather than use the columns of Aviation Week magazine to lambast McDonald and ONR, with the hope of preventing a repetition for I had learned that McDonald planned to use ONR funds for a trip to the USSR on UFOs. And I had been assured that corrective action would be taken. In the fall of 1968, I learned that McDonald was still preparing for the trip and at that time I brought the matter to the attention of the Chief of Naval Operations.

The official Navy reply was that McDonald was not guilty of any wrongdoing--but that they had taken steps to see that it would not happen again!!! My complete files on this incident are available to you if you are interested.

P. 279: [In discussing the Pascagoula case.] "Eventually Hickson and Parker took lie detector tests."

FACT: So far as I can determine, Parker has NOT YET TAKEN A POLYGRAPH TEST--some two-plus years after he volunteered to do so. (You will recall that Parker reportedly experienced a "nervous breakdown" at the time that Hickson took his carefully arranged test and was hustled off to the hospital. A few days later, Parker made a miraculous recovery--just in time to appear on the Mike Douglas NBC-TV network show. Apparently those who are exposed to UFOs gain the ability to quickly recover from a nervous breakdown??)

I hope that some time you will visit Washington and join me for dinner and discussion. To encourage your visit, and knowing how expensive Washington hotel rooms are, I would be pleased to have you bed-down ~~in~~ in my apartment.

Although your book reveals your initial views on the UFO controversy, I would hope that you can spare the time to hear "the other side" of the controversy--just in case you ever revise the first edition.

Cordially,



Philip J. Klass