

[14] Discovered!

As one of the top parapsychology journalists in the field, Carla Bertelli had, of course, been looking forward to the Congress for months. She had planned to arrive early to relax for a few days in Paris, but a last-minute development had forced a change in itinerary that brought her into Paris the very morning the Congress opened. Eager to catch at least the closing minutes of the first day's opening session, Carla had driven desperately from Orly Airport to the Palais des Congres in a driving rain. To save precious time, she decided not to check into her room yet, which meant she had no access to hotel parking. Instead, she left the rented Volvo C-70 convertible coupe in front of the Palais in a no-parking zone. Hoping that the official "Press" documents she'd stuck in the front windows on both sides would hold off the local gendarmerie until the noon break between sessions, she hoisted her umbrella and ran up the broad steps into the main entrance.

Checking in at the convention registration desk, Carla received her official Congress press badge and hurried to the crowded conference hall. As she made her way as inconspicuously as possible down a side aisle, Dr. Viktor Khorev, the second and final speaker of the morning, was just closing his address before entertaining questions and reactions from the audience. She slipped into her assigned seat in the "Reserved for the Press" section near the front and settled back to listen. Carla had been following Khorev's research for years—that portion that was published in or leaked out to the West—trying to read between the lines to catch hints of the real data he wasn't sharing. This conference, at last, was going to provide the opportunity for a personal interview with this celebrated Russian parapsychologist on his first trip to the West, and she had some very pointed questions to ask.

Looking younger than she had expected, Khorev had an honest, open face that made one want to trust what he said. He seemed relaxed but earnest as he reached the climax of his talk.

"... So this Congress—and the future international cooperation that must

result from it—involves the highest stakes, the very survival of civilization. In summary, let me remind you of the following:

“1) In spite of widespread use for years—and an almost blanket acceptance by medicine, psychology, education, and crime detection—hypnosis can be used as a powerful tool to effect mind control. No one knows how it works or what force is behind it. Not only must we have international cooperation in such research, but we must also effect a means of preventing harmful use of this power.

“2) Contrary to popular belief, a subject can be hypnotized without his consent or knowledge and made to act against his will. I have given you several examples where we have done this at distances up to 2000 kilometers.

“3) The possibility of remote mental influence being exercised over the entire world is no longer science fiction. It could happen! A major purpose of this Congress, therefore, must be to prevent such an eventuality.

“4) Hypnosis is only one example. Psychic power can be exercised in many other, and even more dangerous, ways. It is the ultimate force that might very well make obsolete every conventional weapon—possibly within as little as ten years. International controls must be established before it is too late. For this we need the cooperation of all nations. Time is short!”

Khorev paused to shuffle through his notes. “I have a statement which I have been instructed by my government to deliver at this opening session of the Congress.” Finding what he was searching for, he began to read verbatim. “In the name of the peace-loving peoples of the Russian Federation, I call upon the delegates of this the first International Congress on Parapsychology to formulate an agreement for strict international controls upon future research and use of psychic power, and for the free exchange of all data. Nowhere is *glasnost*, or openness as you say in the West, so desperately needed as in the area of psychic development. The Russian Federation is prepared to cooperate fully with the other nations in making certain that psychic powers are used only for peaceful purposes. Thank you very much.”

The applause was thunderous, not so much because Khorev had said anything that was new to the other delegates, but because of the emotional appeal of his final statement. One by one, members of the audience stood to their feet as the clapping continued. At last, the chairman for the day—tall, thin, and personable Dr. Hans Erickson of Oslo, Norway, who had replaced Dr. Khorev at the microphone—managed to make himself heard.

“You may be seated. We’re running a bit behind schedule, but I don’t want

to cut short the question-and-answer period, so we may go 15 minutes or so into the noon break. When I recognize you, please direct your questions to Dr. Khorev—and confine them to the topic he has just addressed.”

“Yes, Dr. Jacques Rouzier, of France. Your question?” The chairman stepped aside and Viktor returned to the mike.

The French scientist was obviously agitated. “Dr. Khorev, are you implying that brain waves can travel 2000 kilometers—the distance over which your hypnosis experiment took place?”

“Obviously not. Brain waves only travel a few feet.

“Then why do you use the term ‘biological radio’?”

Gripping the podium and clearing his throat Viktor fought to control the anger he wanted to direct toward Chernov, seated nearby at the Russian delegation’s table. “It’s merely a matter of semantics. In Russia we use that term. In the West, of course, you call it ‘telepathy.’”

Rouzier was not satisfied. Clearly he intended to press the point. “There are proven experiments of mental telepathy halfway around the world. It has been demonstrated to function outside the

limitations of space, time, and matter. Would you agree?”

Swallowing hard, Viktor conceded, “I can’t argue with the evidence, but of course the exact explanation is a matter of interpretation.”

“But it obviously is not some form of ‘biological radio’—and the use of that term is misleading in the extreme.” He waited for Khorev to agree, but getting no response, Rouzier continued. “What about the involvement of intelligences who may be so highly evolved that they are beyond the physical state and exist as pure consciousness? Could they not act perhaps even without our perception, as the couriers or transmitters of telepathic communication that would thus operate outside the limitations of our physical dimension?”

Viktor was staring angrily at Pavlov” with an “I-told-you-so” look, and scarcely heard what Rouzier was saying. Only with great effort could he tear his eyes off “Pavlov” and concentrate upon the question, which was becoming very long, complicated—and embarrassing.

“This has become a major theory in the West” Rouzier was saying. “Do the Russians accept this as a viable possibility? The reason I ask, of course, is because in order to engage in treaties for the control of psychic powers—and I agree that it should be done—it would seem that we need, first of all, an agreement concerning the nature of that power. And if other entities are, in fact, involved, then it may not even be possible for us to exert control over it without

their permission or cooperation. Have these considerations been discussed in the Russian Federation at all?”

If I agree, Chernov will ship me back as a traitor to the materialist cause! If I disagree, I will only open this topic for further discussion, which would be disastrous! There was only one way for Viktor to resolve his dilemma. Turning to Hans Erickson, he strenuously objected, “Mr. Chairman, I think we’re wandering from the subject of my paper.”

“Not at all,” protested Rouzier quickly. “If human brain waves only carry a few feet yet telepathy has been demonstrated across continents, then the involvement of higher intelligences from a nonphysical dimension would be a good hypothesis, would it not?” When Khorev again gave no response, Rouzier persisted: “Have you had any indication of that in your experiments?”

Sensing Chernov’s murderous look, Viktor heard himself respond, “I think you’ve raised some important questions, but as I’ve already said, the Russian interpretation would differ from that current in the West—and that could very well cause problems. It’s something that I agree should be explored.”

Quickly he turned again to the chairman. “There are other hands out there.”

“Yes, over there,” said Erickson, pointing to someone with hand raised just behind the press section. “No, not you. Members of the press will have their special chance to ask questions later. Just behind—I believe that’s Dr. Mitsuo Nakamoto of Japan. Yes, Dr. Nakamoto.”

.. . . .

At that very moment, back at the secret base north of Moscow, Dmitri was also being confronted—not by an ardent audience of fellow parapsychologists, however, but by the feared Committee Overseeing Psychic Warfare Research. This was not a general inquiry, but a private one involving him alone, and it was being held in Viktor’s office for ominous reasons. There had not been time to call together the full Committee. Only two members were present

General Nikolai Gorby, his face dark with suppressed rage, sat behind Viktor’s desk, with Colonel Lutsky seated grimly beside him. Looking frail and vulnerable, but with his head held high, Dmitri stood before them. Two soldiers were guarding the door.

The general’s accusing eyes never left Dmitri as he angrily pushed the buttons to operate a tape recorder on the desk in front of him.

“Well, tell me, good comrade, how did it go today? I’ve been dying to find out!” Dmitri’s pulse almost stopped at the sound of his voice coming from the machine.

“I think it went well, Dmitri. There were some anxious moments when I feared my trip was finished, but in the end I think they were satisfied. I went along with their totally insane idea that the Americans have been killing our best men. That made them happy.”

General Gorky stopped the cassette player momentarily. “You admit being in here with Dr. Khorev two nights ago?” Dmitri nodded. “And you admit that we have just heard your voice and Khorev’s?” Dmitri nodded again. Gorky turned the machine back on.

“Don’t worry, old friend.” Viktor’s voice was confident and contemptuous. “Do you think they can hide an electronic bug from *me*? I put together my own detection equipment and use it to sweep this office every morning. As fast as they put their bugs in, I take them out.”

“You do?”

“I do. It was costing them a czar’s ransom. Those things are expensive. Finally they gave up. I haven’t found one for weeks—and I just checked again this morning, so don’t worry.”

Gorky pushed the pause button. “So much for your cocky comrade’s competence! Unfortunately, we didn’t check the tape until this morning, or he would not be in Paris now—but you may be certain that he will be on his way back very shortly.”

The general fast-forwarded the machine briefly. When it began to play again, Dmitri heard those shocking words from Viktor that had been haunting him ever since. Then came his earnest but ineffective pleading.

“Party ideology is an albatross around our necks! It stifles our research—and makes me sick! The whole human race may be in danger, and we can’t pursue certain possibilities because Marx and Lenin would be offended! They rule us from their graves!”

There was a long silence on the tape, then Viktor’s voice again: “I’ve made a big decision, old friend. What is impossible here is possible in the West They’re open to considering a nonphysical extension of the universe and intelligent life.”

“Viktor! You’re not... ?”

“I’ve got to talk with the Americans. I want to find Dr. Inman. We have to compare information.”

“You can do that in Paris at the Congress!”

“With Chernov breathing down my neck? Even if I had complete freedom in Paris, we’re only there a week. That’s not enough time to scratch the surface, and Inman may not even be there. Dmitri, old friend, we’ve been together a long

time, but I think we must now say farewell.”

The general stopped the machine and pounded the desk in a rage. “You, Dmitri Petrekov, knew that Khorev was planning to defect in Paris! Do you deny that?”

“I knew,” said Dmitri softly, but without shame. “I tried to persuade him not to.”

“You kept his secret!” Gorky was livid. “You put a traitor ahead of your own country! You’re a traitor, too! Not only that—” Gorky paused as though what he was about to say was too repugnant even to express. It seemed an eternity that he stared with contempt into Dmitri’s unrepentant eyes. “Tell us once again,” he said at last, “exactly what it was you were searching for when you were discovered early this morning in this office.”

Dmitri returned the general’s stare—not defiantly but fearlessly. “I was looking for the listening device that I suspected might be here.”

“And why should you be concerned about such a device?” asked Gorky coldly.

“I wanted to protect my friend,” came the honest reply.

“You wanted to save your own skin!”

“You may think what you wish, sir, but I was not concerned for myself.”

“Every man looks out for himself first!” interrupted Colonel Lutsky.

“Two months ago,” continued Dmitri courageously, “I placed myself in the hands of God—the God I had been taught all my life did not exist. Whatever happens to me now, I will accept as His will. What I have done was with a good conscience. Viktor Khorev has been loyal and conscientious in serving his country. He was not able, however, to tell the Committee what he really believed—that nonphysical beings were involved in the destruction of our psychics—because you would not have listened to anything that was contrary to Marxist materialism.”

The general held up his hand. “Stop!” he ordered. “We don’t need any further proof of your guilt—much less a religious lecture.” He was making an obvious effort to control his anger. “You understand, of course,” he added evenly, “that you have no right to a public trial—which is a pity, because I’d like to make a public example of both you and Khorev. But this work must remain secret.”

Gorky turned to Colonel Lutsky. “I’m taking Petrekov back to Moscow with me. I’ve already sent a cable to the embassy. Khorev will be on the next plane out of Paris. I’m looking forward to meeting him myself at the Moscow airport!”

.. . . .

At the First International Congress on Parapsychology, Chairman Erickson was recognizing a fourth questioner. “Yes, Dr. Derek Balfour of the British delegation.” Viktor stepped nervously back to the mike. His questioners were being polite, but they were also obviously attempting to discredit before the world the narrow-minded materialism of hard-core Marxism that had supposedly lost its power in the new Russia. Chernov was becoming increasingly agitated.

Just as the audience microphone was being handed to Balfour, Viktor’s attention was distracted by the sudden entrance into the conference hall of two burly men who made their way quickly to where Chernov was sitting. One of them leaned over and spoke to him quietly. What could be so urgent that they could not wait the few minutes until the session ended? Casting frequent glances at Dr. Khorev on the speaker’s platform, the three held a hurried consultation. The colonel seemed to grow more furious with every word. Viktor felt a sudden overwhelming sense of impending disaster.

Although the two men quickly finished delivering their message to Chernov, they remained squatting in the aisle next to the colonel. It took great effort for Viktor to concentrate his attention upon Balfour’s question—which itself only increased his apprehension.

“In out-of-body experiences—such as the clinically dead looking down on their bodies from above, hearing and seeing everything,” Balfour’s tone was just a bit patronizing, “as a *Marxist*, do you think something *physical* is outside the body looking back at it?”

Avoiding Chernov’s unnerving stare, Viktor replied: “The Russian position would be to call this a projection of consciousness.”

“A *physical* projection of consciousness, Dr. Khorev?” persisted Balfour. “Surely even a Marxist would see...”

Jumping indignantly to his feet, Chernov interrupted with an angry roar. “Is the purpose of this Congress to ridicule Marxism?”

Startled by this uncivilized outburst, the British scientist looked to the chairman for help.

Erickson stepped quickly to Viktor’s side and spoke calmly into the mike. “This is Alexandr Pavlov of the Russian delegation. I think his objection is a legitimate one.”

“My point is,” insisted Balfour, standing his ground, “that the narrow materialism of Karl Marx should not be allowed to limit the possible explanations of psychic events.”

“And this Congress,” shouted “Pavlov,” “should not be an excuse for attacking political beliefs! I demand an apology!”

“I said nothing that warrants an apology. My remarks were addressed to Dr. Khorev, and I would like to hear his response.”

“Pavlov” would not be put off. “Mr. Chairman, I will give the British delegation and the Congress Steering Committee three hours to deliver an apology. If not, then the Russian delegation is withdrawing from the Congress!”

Chernov had now revealed that he was the one in charge of the Russian delegation. *That can only mean one thing!* Viktor felt a sinking sensation in the pit of his stomach and had to hold onto the podium as a momentary dizziness swept over him. He watched in consternation as all of the Russians, following Chernov’s lead, stood to their feet and headed for the nearest exit. Viktor was stunned. He put his notes hastily back in the briefcase, closed it, and stood there too shocked to think. He looked desperately and longingly in the direction of Dr. Leighton, who seemed in a state of shock also. Should he run to the Americans right now, crying out for political asylum? Before Viktor could rationally evaluate that desperate thought, Chernov grabbed him by the arm and steered him toward the door—with the two newcomers following closely behind.

The convention hall broke into pandemonium. The growing babble of voices became a roar as delegations huddled together in earnest conversation, trying to comprehend this startling development and to seek ways to resolve it. Jumping to her feet Carla hurried to catch the departing Russians. *I thought Khorev headed their delegation. Who is this Pavlov? He must be bluffing. They’re not pulling out! What if they do? I can’t let Khorev get away without an interview!*

What Carla now observed heightened the mystery. While the rest of the Soviet delegation headed for the room elevators, “Pavlov” and the two men who had been in such earnest conversation with him pushed and pulled an obviously reluctant Dr. Khorev out of the lobby and down the front steps. Carla burst out the revolving front door just behind them. The rain had stopped and the sun was trying to shine through the thinning clouds. The Russians seemed to be heading toward a limousine parked directly in front of the hotel.

Hurrying down the steps in hot pursuit, Carla pushed her way through the crowd that had gathered on the sidewalk. She was just in time to see “Pavlov” shove Khorev roughly into the backseat of the waiting car.

“Dr. Pavlov!” she called, running up to him breathlessly. About to climb in beside Khorev, Chernov paused and turned around. Carla pointed to her Congress press badge. “I’m with the official press corps here.”

Chernov cut her off with an angry “Nyet!” The merciless, cold-blooded look in his eyes made her suddenly afraid for Dr. Khorev. Several other reporters had wormed their way through the crowd and were edging up to “Pavlov” and Carla, with tape recorders, cameras, and notepads ready. “Le Dr. Khorev, s’il vous plait!” The two men who had brought the limousine began shoving the journalists back.

Carla tried to step between “Pavlov” and the open door, only to be pushed roughly aside with such force that she almost fell to the pavement “I’ve come all the way from Washington, D.C.,” she protested loudly, “to interview Dr. Khorev!”

“Nyet!”

Slumped in the backseat, a thoroughly dejected and confused Viktor Khorev was trying to comprehend this sudden turn of events. Why had the other members of the Russian delegation apparently gone to their rooms, and only he had been hustled out to this vehicle? It was true that he had been speaking, but surely he was not being blamed by Chernov for what his questioners had persisted in saying. *Was there, after all, a device recording what Dmitri and I said? I checked that morning, but not after I had testified before the Committee! Or has Dmitri cracked and sold out our friendship? Somehow they’ve learned of my plan to defect!*

With terrifying certainty, he realized there could be no other explanation for what was happening. The best he could hope for would be a Siberian labor camp—if he somehow escaped the death penalty. His morose thoughts were interrupted by the sounds of aloud commotion on the sidewalk. Peering out the open door, he could see that Chernov and the two Russian Embassy FSB bodyguards had their backs to him and were viciously pushing back some Westerners and yelling at them in Russian, while the Westerners were yelling back angrily in English and French. In that instant he made a desperate decision. *Better to make even a futile attempt to escape than just sit here!*

Clutching the precious briefcase, Viktor shoved the door open on the street side and jumped out. Recklessly he began to thread his way as fast as he could through four or five irregular lanes of heavy traffic at the convergence of Boulevards Gouvion and Pereire. Not knowing how best to plot his course because of his total ignorance of Paris, he angled toward a smaller street that he could see just beyond the swirling mass of hurtling vehicles. If he could only get in there before Chernov saw him! Brakes squealed and horns blared as swerving cars racing around Porte de Maillot tried to dodge this insane pedestrian

challenging them in the middle of the wide traffic circle. Attempting to avoid Viktor, a small Renault sedan driven by an elderly woman cut in front of a racing taxi and the two cars collided. Three more in rapid succession piled into them. Within moments, the huge roundabout was jammed with bumper-to-bumper cars and frustrated, angry drivers.

At the sound of screeching brakes followed by the rapidly repeated crunch of impacted and crumpling metal, Chernov whirled around. Over the tops of a swarm of autos he could see Viktor breaking clear of the traffic jam and entering Rue Debarcadere. Reaching the sidewalk at last, the fleeing would-be defector ran as fast as the heavy briefcase would allow him.

Following "Pavlov's" gaze, Carla caught a fleeting glimpse of the man she wanted to interview just as he disappeared in the direction of Place Ferdinand. Then she remembered that her car was conveniently parked only a few yards away. Pushing her way clear of the growing crowd, she ran quickly toward the Volvo.