

## THE BONOBO EXPERIMENTS - 10

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### CHAPTER 10

#### (Revisiting Chapter 9)

[The Commander] could no longer resist asking what in hell was going on. "I wish I didn't have a clue...not one clue," his #2 responded. "In truth, sir, I don't 'know' much, but I am getting some ideas. I'm calling him 'Sergei'. He may be a true Russian hero. Unfortunately, he may not have developed human speech. Give me a few more hours with him, and I may be able to tell you more." Gently, the Commander smiled at the boy and stroked his shining black hair. In a move so fast that his eyes could barely follow it, Sergei grasped his hand, inserted a finger into his mouth, and sucked on it suggestively. Jiri sighed as his lover bent down and tenderly kissed the lad's forehead - before turning and kissing him with a love that needed no words.

#### (Continuing Our Story: Over the Urals into Asia)

As the Graf sailed eastwards over the worn and relatively low "saddle" of the Ural Mountains, the Lieutenant Commander reported to the dirigible captain on his conversation with Lieutenant Ryzhy. "We've surely run into some difficulties in communicating with the stowaway, sir," he said, "but my Marine is certain that our questions will be answered." "Very well, Mr. Patterson," Büchner replied, "but stay with it. I can't help but feel that something like a time bomb has been introduced onto

our ship." "Yes, sir," the Lieutenant Commander snapped in reply. "I do wish, sir, that we were making this transit in the daylight. The idea of leaving Europe and entering Asia strikes me as something like crossing the equator!" "Yes, I can understand that," murmured the Captain of the great airship that was now less than two hours from the large Siberian city of Yekaterinburg, the city viewed by the Russians as 'the capital of the Urals'. I had wanted you to see it in daylight, but the delay in Moscow... Look at it this way, my young American. Gathering our information on this dark and rainy night may prove to be easier than we had imagined.

"Do you know your Siberian geography?" the genial German naval officer inquired. "Not really sir, I am embarrassed to say," Patterson answered. "I guess the topic received about a paragraph in my Annapolis 'strategic geography' textbook. If I may inquire, what should I know?" "Very well, my student," the Captain laughed. Humorously paraphrasing Caesar's *Commentary on the Gallic Wars*, he began his lesson by chanting, "All Siberia is divided into three parts: Western, Central, and Eastern."

Essentially, the **Western** section is a great bog with near unbelievable resources of timber, oil, natural gas, and many scarce minerals. Oh, yes," he chortled, "Add 'prisoners', for this was - and is - one of the most important areas for gulags or labor camps. Why a great bog? Several major rivers, among the longest in the world, flow *northward* from the mountains of Central Asia into the Arctic Ocean. They are frozen for up to nine months. Hence, the water can not be drained and works its way into the ground. Great bogs, innumerable lakes, and spring flooding are the result. Such high mountains as exist, are found in the extreme southeast. Some people say it's part of the Urals Region; some say it's part of Siberia. The **Central** section, roughly the area drained by the Yenisei and Lena rivers, chiefly consists of the Central Siberian Plateau. High mountains and Lake Baikal, the deepest lake in the world, are found in the south. The **Eastern** section consists of the area between the Lena River and the Pacific. One finds several broad river valleys separated by relatively low mountains. Higher mountain peaks and volcanoes are found on the Kamchatka Peninsula. Some say it's part of the Russian Far East; some say it's part of Siberia.

### Yekaterinburg

In what seemed to be a very short time, the Captain murmured, "Off to the starboard, Lieutenant Commander. Those lights through the fog are Yekaterinburg. One million seven hundred thousand people; always something of a grimy industrial town. It's the capital of the Urals Federal District which, to some extent, represents Russia's efforts to associate it more with European Russia than with Siberia. Nasty history... For example, in 1917 Tsar Nicholas II, his wife, and their children, exiled to Yekaterinburg by the Bolsheviks, were executed by order of the local Soviet. Stalin had begun building a large industrial center in the 1920s, though the time of its greatest industrialization was during World War II when the Nazi juggernaut was pressing eastwards. Greatest tank city in history... Many Russians stayed after the war to

create a major military, industrial, research, and transportation center. Today it's served by numerous airlines and the Trans Siberian Railway.

As Captain Büchner had surmised, between the fog, the occasional rain, and the diversion occasioned by the "Siberian crisis," Jiri had no difficulty in slipping away from the airship, contacting two locals on his list, and returning without incident.

## Omsk

Slowly descending over the Irtysh River as it flowed towards its junction with the great Ob, the Graf beheld Omsk, the second largest city in Siberia. The area appeared to be a beehive! Boats were everywhere, transferring products from the coal and mineral-mining towns of Muhammadstan - as well as oil, natural gas, and lumber from northern Siberia - to the Trans Siberian railway. Unlike Yekaterinburg, the city's welcome was warm and most hospitable. In the late 21st Century, Omsk remains an oil town. (The oil refining complex along the Irtysh is the largest in Russia and the third-largest in Europe.) The liberty parties were firmly convinced that it lay on the edges of hell itself! The day was viciously hot, far more like Central Asia than the mental pictures we commonly form of Siberia. The boys were more than grateful for the bottled water and cold soft drinks that were kindly thrust at them from every side as they saw a bit of the city.

Leaving the Graf in oil-workers' garb as night fell, Dima had no trouble reaching his contact in the city. On returning to the airship, however, he did appear disturbed by an off-hand remark of his Siberian-activist contact. It seems that he was sure he had seen two young men at the refinery during the month past who strongly resembled Dima! Neither Randy nor his redheaded #2 was quite sure how to precede. Each youngster knew little other than he had not known of his twins' existence, had grown up among young bonobos and humans, and that at puberty had been incorporated in a bonobo nuclear family. In each case, the unique sexual practices of this branch of the Great Apes were conditioned and developed in ways appropriate to their maturity. Later, he also acquired a part-time human family. The boys were far from ignorant. They had surely figured out that they were the product of the insemination of a human female. (Unfortunately, artificially inseminating bonobo females had never produced a Humanzee, or hybrid creature, at least as far as they knew. Thus, the plan had been developed to raise the two closely related species together, creating situations where, sooner or later, insemination would occur naturally.)

Apparently, the four twins felt that they been the fruit of their human mother's insemination...but what if there had been others? How could that have resulted? And what of Stalin's search for a hybrid? Private conversations between Randy and the boys had confirmed that *each* of them had sexual relations with bonobo females when they needed "relief". (In some cases, it appeared as if there were a mutual attraction.) While they could not confirm a pregnancy, several females had been removed from their "families" and, in some cases, replaced. (The boy were always assured that the

missing females had not been harmed. Rather, they were involved in "secret work for the State".)

Under the circumstance, Randy didn't feel he had enough data (or, even, questions) to discuss the matter further. For the time being, they would wait and observe...carefully.

### Novosibirsk

Whatever else it is - or isn't - Novosibirsk was a large city, the third largest in Russia behind Moscow and St. Petersburg. Long an important commercial center, Stalin contributed to its importance by moving the capital of the Siberian Federal District from Omsk and making it one of the largest industrial, technology, and research centers in the entire country. Evgeni much enjoyed greeting his contact whom he had met previously when they were both stationed at a Naval Air Station in the Arctic. Evidently, he man's advice about Siberian intentions - and resources for resistance - was not only detailed, but of great use. When leaving the Graf, Evgeni actually physically ran into a policeman. The officer gave no sign whatsoever of interest in him, or the airship. It appeared that the "Siberian Crisis" was forcing every other topic off the "front page" in both European and Asiatic Russia - and the further east they traveled, the less interest was shown by the citizenry...or the officials. Evgeni rejoined the Graf without incident.

### Irkutsk

Perhaps the officers and men of the Graf had hoped for more when they set out on their exploration of attitudes about the so-called Siberian Crisis. Perhaps the major reason for their slight despondency was that the "more" hadn't materialized. Yes, thus far the desired intelligence data were mounting nicely, but any hope for an "adventure" or even for the chance to see a part of the world less known had fallen somewhat flat. The weather in Yekaterinburg had been vile; the city government in Novosibirsk had been as disinterested in their visit as had the citizenry. Only in Omsk had there been any true warmth - and they could have done with a few degrees lower temperature for all of that! Further, "oil towns" have their limitations when it comes to tourism! Thus, all hands looked forward to Irkutsk - 900 miles east of Novosibirsk and 3,200 east of Moscow - with considerable anticipation. It was not to be disappointed.

Part of their pleasure was defined as they came in over Lake Baikal. Clearly, they were back into the land of rolling hills, mountains, and the thick conifer forests of the taiga. (All had tired of the hot, flat, open steppes - or the bogs - of western Siberia. On landing, a representative from the Oblast's Office of Tourism accepted the Captain's invitation to come on board. **(Author's Note:** An "oblast" is one type of Russian administrative subdivision, in some ways akin to a U.S. "state".) She described how for nearly two centuries, Irkutsk had been a city for government exiles. In the end, however, this defeated much of their purpose. There were so many important exiles that they had a marked effect on the cultural level of the region. The arts, education, architecture, and science prospered, and have continued to prosper to this day. (Old,

highly carved wooden homes, the influence on the faces of the people of nearby Mongolia, friendly people of all ages were enjoyed by all.) Thanks to the city's Tourism Office, the officers and men of both the Graf's watches were able (separately) to spend a night camping out in the forests along Lake Baikal. Certified as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1996, Baikal is a continental rift lake. At 25 million years old, it is the oldest lake in the world as well as the deepest. Eighty percent of the life forms in the area are not found anywhere else in the world! One of the lads did have a run-in with a large bear and her cubs, but that's a story for another time!

Igor knew his contact personally, for they had gone to secondary school together. Meeting at a bar after the "City Day" parade, they walked the streets of the picturesque city of some three quarters of a million inhabitants. Again, Igor was struck anew by the signs that they were very close to Central Asia, in this case to Mongolia only a few miles to the south. He gave Russia a few good marks for supporting the diversity of its people, though he knew well that the Great Russians had blood on their hands from years past. (In truth, most peoples worldwide who have won their races for dominance share that backhanded compliment!) He had a good meeting with his former buddy - and received an earful of comment and examples.

#### Vladivostok

Baikal had been large...very large, but as they came in over Golden Horn Bay, it was evident that the lads hadn't seen a body of water like this since crossing the Atlantic. They had flown six thousand four hundred seventy miles - and they weren't done yet! After the Graf had accepted an invitation to land at a Russian naval base, the men were given liberty to see a bit of their last stop in Russia. The Naval Base provided two young officers as guides - or so those on board the Graf were told. Everyone seemed to enjoy the main City Square which was right down on the water. The crew were able to buy a few mementos of their trip...small pins, pictures, and the like. Several smaller ships of the Russian Pacific Fleet were anchored. Randy told later how he had been amused by a couple of German boys from Hamburg who said that there was no question about its being a port town. According to them, "they all smell that way!" Inasmuch as our guides told us that the city's main industries were shipping, commercial fishing, and the naval base, they may just have been correct! Unfortunately, centuries of uncontrolled use of marine products had led to the claim that two-thirds of the city's suburbs were so polluted that living in them was classified as a health hazard! Hoping to leave a good impression, our guides insisted that we stop by a small museum. Therein we saw one of the most spellbinding sights of our lives: A huge black bear and an immense Siberian tiger stood on their hind legs locked in a dance of death. The taxidermist had to have been a genius! We could almost smell their fetid breath. Fortunately, there was a small bar next door where we found everything necessary to remove traces of anything but good will!

**(Mr. Woo)**

As he had done before, Jiri slipped away from the "tour group" in order to meet his contact. This was an elderly Chinese man, a Russian citizen, whom he (Jiri) had known for as long as he had lived in Vladivostok. The friend has prepared extensive data for him, backed up by articles, photos, and copies of electronic correspondence. As they sat over a glass of tea, Mr. Woo warned Jiri that he must not be seen in the area for the town was crawling with armored units, plus a full brigade of Naval Infantry. Further, friends had told that several destroyers in the harbor remained at full alert. As the redhead tried to thank him, the old man hesitated before saying, "You know, my boy, I grow older every day. I miss your visits. Why did you not at least send me a message when you were in town last week? Several associates saw you in the company of others. They told me that you might have been ill."

Jiri abruptly straightened up in the chair in which he been sitting slumped in deep thought. "I fear trouble, sir. I also realize the I am putting you in great danger. Might I impose on you for one more great favor before I leave?" Woo nodded his head, murmuring that anything he had was his for the asking. "Would you conceivably contact an associate who might remember where he had last seen the man who looked so much like me?" The old man simply looked at him before reaching into his sleeve and pulling out a small envelope. He said softly, "The address of the building is on the folded piece of paper, my son. The small amount of cash may help you to secure what you need. Everything must be bought in Vladivostok these days...even honor. It is not like the old days."

Jiri went down on his knees before the wizened figure, momentarily resting his head on his bony knees. Slowly removing his clothing, piece by piece, he again danced in his accustomed spot before the Master. As in the past, colored strobes - chiefly red, but also blue, yellow, and green - swirled over his magnificent body. He whirled and undulated in ways that even today convinced the old man's body that it was young again. Dropping to his stomach for the last time before the great man, he finally reached out for both his hands, kissed them, and murmured something inaudible. Rising, he gracefully resumed his clothing, turned and silently left the house. There were tears in the eyes of both men.

(To Be Continued)