

# SCIENCE WAS WRONG

## INTRODUCTION

**By Stanton T. Friedman and Kathleen Marden**

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The history of aerospace technology is loaded with well connected scientists who resisted change. There were prominent “experts” who thought flight was not to be. The great Lord Kelvin (1824-1907) (President of the British Royal Society) in 1896 proclaimed “I have not the smallest molecule of faith in aerial navigation other than ballooning or of expectation of good results from any of the trials we hear of”. Of course, the following year he also called Wilhelm Roentgen’s X-rays an elaborate hoax. As it happens, Roentgen won the first Nobel prize in physics in 1901 for his X-ray discovery. The British Astronomer Royal Richard van der Riet Wooley proclaimed when asked about space travel in January 1956: “It’s utter bilge. I don’t think anybody will ever put up enough money to do such a thing. What good would it do us? It is all rather rot”. Could World War II have been ended sooner if jet engines had been implemented earlier in England where a patent had been granted in 1930? How many lives would have been saved if space travel had been followed up sooner providing better advance information about natural disasters such as tornadoes and hurricanes and early warning of attacks from enemies?

Communication techniques didn’t start changing until less than 200 years ago. The telegraph, telephone, television, the internet, cell phones were all targets for the impossibilists. Sometimes it required true persistence to overcome the inertia of the traditionalists. Why would one want to sit in front of a box watching pictures? Of what use is a telephone since there is nobody to call? How about the benefits of rapid long distance communication in medical situations or when ships at sea run into serious problems? Can we allow societal regulations to be established in response to pressures from people with a vested interest in continuing the status quo as opposed to recognition of the truth of the dangers?

Germ theory was first advanced in ancient Sanskrit texts and later proposed in 36 BC. But despite observational and experimental data, it was not widely accepted until late in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when Louis Pasteur discovered that microorganisms, not miasmas, the poisonous atmosphere arising from swamps and putrid matter, cause disease. But his discovery was not immediately accepted. Many influential opponents from the scientific establishment clung to their archaic beliefs and were not quick to acknowledge that his germ theory of disease was valid. Attempts by his predecessors to impart evidence of the transmission of microscopic organisms as a cause of disease were largely unsuccessful. Careers were ruined. Many people died because of a failure to implement new treatments and new understanding of various diseases. Experts often dismissed the dangers of new treatments long after the data was available. How many contracted HIV/AIDS because of the failure of governments to take

appropriate measures? Innovative scientists had a long history of facing harsh rebukes by the medical establishment.

Highly regarded but politically influenced scientists have promoted ideas that have led to human suffering. For example, Social Darwinism fueled the Eugenics movements in America and Germany and led to sterilization and extermination programs. The dark underbelly of corruption has reared its head in environmental science and thousands have died or been maimed due to methylmercury poisoning. Lakes and streams across the world are contaminated. Those who consume the dangerous neurotoxin that bio-accumulates up the food chain face health problems such as learning disabilities, deformities and neurological disorders. Additionally, we are faced with environmental concerns over global warming. Should hundreds of billions of dollars be spent to attack evil carbon dioxide or is this another example of vested interests triumphing over the real needs of society?

Lastly Marden and Friedman explore the frontiers of science, such as and psychic phenomena and extraterrestrial visitation. A small group of vocal arch skeptics claims one hundred years of research has failed to produce convincing evidence for psi phenomena. Parapsychologists disagree, arguing that hundreds of scientific studies have produced evidence that some psi phenomena is real. Each group accuses the other of confirmation bias. But what is the truth? Do parapsychologists selectively report evidence that supports psi phenomena? Or do arch skeptics automatically reject statistically significant experimental replications?

For more than 60 years there have been strong attacks made on all aspects of the UFO question. Impossibilists have claimed that travel from other stars was impossible, that there is no evidence for flying saucer reality, that aliens could not possibly look humanoid, governments could not cover-up the truth, aliens wouldn't behave the way they are supposedly observed to behave, eyewitness testimony is not part of the scientific method, there is no reason to abduct Earthlings, etc. These claims are not derived from a serious review of the evidence, but rather are created by armchair theorizing without relation to the vast amount of evidence available for those who seek it out. False attempts have been made to show that Occam's razor supposedly rules out saucer reality and that scientists, in general, and astronomers in particular, do not observe UFOs. It turns out that the primary attacks on UFO reality by supposedly professional attackers can generally be described as pseudoscientific. The attackers have inordinate confidence in themselves plus an almost religious faith that their feelings, intuition and hunches. They simply don't need to investigate because they know the answers. This is not science, but pseudoscience.

Over the past 200 years there has been an enormous outburst of new techniques for use in aviation, space, communications, medicine and warfare. The stories of individuals who claimed something was impossible are fascinating, but they also help us to recognize how many lives have been lost and new benefits delayed by the impossibilists. All too often, pronouncements of impossibility were made from positions of ignorance rather than knowledge, but were listened to because of the exalted status of the speaker rather than the evidence, if any, put forth in support of a position. Throughout history it has been difficult, if not impossible, to promote the acceptance of new discoveries. The reasons are multifaceted, but often involve arrogance and mountainous egos, politics and greed, and resistance to change. One can only wonder how many groundbreaking discoveries have been suppressed. There are many lessons to be learned by studying the various situations described in *Science Was Wrong*.