

The Saga of Solar Wind

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In 1954, I had an opportunity to go to Dr. Simpson's group at the University of Chicago, USA. There, I met Dr. Biermann from Germany who had come to plead his case of the idea of solar corpuscular emissions hitting comet tails and deflecting these away from the Sun. Here, I describe the interesting conversation between Biermann and Simpson, who disagreed with the idea completely and a few years later, asked Eugene Parker to look onto it and refute Biermann's idea. What happened was something very different, with Eugene Parker formulating his solar wind theory in 1957, opposed by everybody including Simpson, but supported strongly by Thomas Gold. In spite of ferocious opposition, Parker and Gold refined the solar wind idea and finally triumphed when satellite data in early 1960s confirmed the existence of solar wind. It is an interesting story with lot of emotions and personal touch.