

THERE WERE ABDUCTION CASES AND UFO LANDINGS IN THE USSR! (LETTER TO THE EDITOR)

[One of the interesting overseas groups with whom we link up is the RIAP (Research Institute on Anomalous Phenomena) in the Ukrainian Republic, represented by their Editor Dr. Vladimir V. Rubtsov, who is also a Consultant to FSR.

We have pleasure in reprinting this extremely interesting report by V.K. Zhuravlev from their Volume 7, No. 2/3 (Apr-Sept 2001).

There were abduction cases and UFO landings in the USSR! So far as I can see this is the most definite and most important official statement yet obtained from the former USSR. -G.C.]

Sir, -Publication of the paper *History of State-Directed UFO Research in the USSR* by Yuliy Platov and Boris Sokolov is a really significant stage in the history of scientific ufology. It appeared almost simultaneously in RIAP Bulletin (1999, Vol. 5, No. 3-4) and in the highly authoritative Russian academic periodical-the *Herald of the Russian Academy of Sciences* (2000, Vol. 70, No. 6).

This is quite an event, if for no other reason than that it breaks the secrecy that surrounded the Soviet program of UFO studies in the years 1978-1991, when it was being conducted by academic and military research bodies. Even formally open parts of the program were painstakingly disguised. Now they have become known to the whole reading community.

Future historians of scientific ufology will certainly regard the survey by Platov and Sokolov as a very important document. It could probably be expanded into a book on the same subject matter. Why not also publish concrete scientific results of this program -in particular, those from the fields of atmospheric optics and environmental studies? One day in the future it can certainly become possible.

The present author took part in fulfillment of the *Setka AN* and *Galaktika* UFO study programs as a rank-and-file researcher -working with literature, writing scientific reports, processing photographs and travelling to "hot ufological spots" in the Novosibirsk Region and Altai Mountains. I have also participated in some conferences in Novosibirsk and Moscow, where preliminary results of the program phases were summed up.

Therefore, my impressions of the survey by Platov and Sokolov are not very typical: being rather well aware of many sides of this work "from inside", I cannot perceive it as an outsider. It would be more interesting to learn what impressions are produced by the paper on the readers who are inexperienced in the history of the UFO problem and are still seriously asking themselves: "Do UFOs really exist?"

For me it seems rather strange that Dr. Felix Zigel - the founder of scientific ufology in the USSR, Associate Professor at Moscow Aviation Institute and an expert in astronomy, was presented in the paper as merely another lecturer entertaining his audiences with bizarre

hypotheses.

The list of references lacks *UFO Sightings in the USSR* that was published in Moscow in 1993 (five years after Dr. Zigel's death), and also there is no mention of such researchers as V. S. Troitsky, M. A. Zheltukhin, A. N. Dmitriev, B. A. Shurinov... But the sequence of events that led to establishing the official program of UFO studies in the USSR is described in the survey quite impartially.

The authors do not try to conceal the fact that the program was set up under pressure of circumstances. The Academy of Sciences of the USSR, as well as established research institutions of other leading world powers, was never enthusiastic about organizing such studies-even though the UFO problem itself dates as far back as 1947.

Peculiar as it is, this field of knowledge has been "privatized" by a kind of bipolar structure having almost no connections with official science. Nobody ever tried to build this structure, it arose spontaneously in a number of countries, according to the same scheme everywhere:

One pole included informal groups of voluntary enthusiasts of flying saucers, and the other the state intelligence agencies. Relations between these poles were far from cloudless -which has been clearly demonstrated in publications of western ufologists.

According to a logic of events, the Soviet Union could not be an exception to this rule. And suddenly in 1978 there appeared a "third force" -the Academy of Sciences of the USSR! What came of it, one can learn from the survey by Platov and Sokolov.

To put it briefly, spheres of influence have been separated between various departments. Effects accompanying launchings of space and military rockets were studied as something extraordinary due to the regime of secrecy.

For the "authors" of these launchings they were no mysteries at all, appearing as anomalies only to uninitiated Soviet citizens and academic scientists having to solve riddles with a known (to the "initiated" persons) solution.

The main efforts during the 13-year work were wasted by investigating secret illuminations in the night sky. These were not mysteries of nature that are, as a rule, to be studied by the Academy of Sciences, but mysteries of the military-industrial complex.

At the same time, there were recorded very intriguing natural phenomena as well. Some of them are known to science -being, in particular, well described in the classical work *Light and Color in Nature* by M. Minnaert. (There is in this book even a short section dealing with flying saucers.)

It proved, however, evident that not all strange natural phenomena fall into known categories: some of them are indeed new to science. They are rather numerous and various in their origin, being not studied by meteorologists, geophysicists, or oceanographers due to their relative rarity and lack of practicability at the present time.

Information about such phenomena does however circulate among ordinary people who work under the open sky. The present author has satisfied himself that even short visits to the Novosibirsk, Tomsk, and Kemerovo regions, as well as to the Altai Mountains, give an unexpectedly high yield of reliable reports about strange events that are difficult-to-explain.

More often than not, they are simply ignored by "serious people". Any research work conducted in the field (geological, geophysical, etc.) is aimed at practically useful results. As for the tradition of disinterested scientific studies, not connected with applied tasks, it has been as good as lost. This conclusion also stems from the results of the fulfillment of the Soviet UFO program, being certainly worthy of attention.

Platov and Sokolov avoid in their paper touching the set of data gathered in the course of the project. They do not cite results obtained in the framework of the *Setka AN* and *Galaktika* programs by scientists from Nizhniy Novgorod who worked under the guidance of Dr. V. S. Troitsky, a Corresponding Member of the USSR Academy of Sciences.

Neither do they pay any attention to the expeditions to the Altai and Sayan Mountains headed by Dr. A. N. Dmitriev, or to the materials that were examined (and sent to Moscow) in Novosibirsk by Dr. N. A. Zheltukhin, also a Corresponding Member of the Academy of Sciences.

When the first stage of the *Setka AN* program was under completion, the present author wrote a report analyzing the existing (and, certainly, very inhomogeneous) body of publications on the UFO problem.

In it I noted that in the process of this work one should expect gradual accumulation of a limited but inevitable set of data that could not be explained by the effects accompanying aerospace tests, neither by unknown phenomena of nature.

These are eyewitnesses' reports about strange craft whose flight characteristics are far ahead of terrestrial airplanes and rockets, or whose motion is incompatible with known laws of physics. Since there exists no method to scientifically investigate such objects or forecast when and where they will appear next time, they can come into the view of researchers only by chance.

By the end of the fulfillment of the *Galaktika* program I met more than once with this viewpoint in other reports as well. It does seem to have been practically validated. This is, however, difficult for scientists to agree with such "unpleasant" facts as the existence of objects that cannot be scientifically studied or do not obey the elementary laws of physics.

In such cases it seems to be simpler to say with a lofty tone that these facts are unreliable and not worthy of attention on the part of serious specialists. Only in this context can I explain Platov's and Sokolov's assertion that, in the course of the project's work, there was not recorded even a single report of a UFO landing, or a contact with UFO pilots, or an abduction case.

Yuliy Platov published such statements in Soviet newspapers in the 1980's more than once. When the

same was said in 1989 in the journal *Vokrug Sveta*, it already looked rather strange. By that time the "rules of game" in the Soviet state had changed due to *perestroika*, which resulted in a real wave of reports in the mass media about humanoids and UFO landings.

Encounters with UFOs and "aliens" in Georgia, the Perm Region, Voronezh and other parts of the USSR became a favorite topic in Soviet newspapers.

Moreover, journalists wondered: why had physicists and chemists from the Academy of Sciences not rushed to question witnesses, collect samples, examine supposed landing traces? Is this not interesting or important at all? And Platov had to explain in irritation to a correspondent of the *Komsomolskaya Pravda* newspaper (his reply was published): "We cannot run about the whole country trying to verify what was said or written by someone somewhere..."

Probably not -but what must science do instead? As noted above, there exists no method to study rare unpredictable phenomena. As a result, these reports were investigated by representatives of the "first force" (amateur ufologists). Agents of the "second force", the secret services, were probably also investigating, but of course nothing is known of their conclusions.

In the fall of 1989 there was held a ufological conference in Petrozavodsk, where methodology and results of these investigations were discussed. Its participants included scientists, engineers, cosmonauts, and journalists from Moscow, Leningrad, Perm, and other cities and regions of the Soviet Union.

But certainly, this meeting was not in accordance with the State program of UFO studies, and the conference recommendations remained unknown to its heads. Several conferences and seminars of this kind have been held in Tomsk.

Dr. E. A. Ermilov from Gorki (now Nizhniy Novgorod) University, who worked together with Dr. V. S. Troitsky, several times invited Yuliy Platov to visit places of supposed UFO landings in the Moscow Region and to examine these sites. However, all these invitations were rejected -the pundits of the State program knew *a priori* that the eyewitnesses were lying.

Of course, one cannot but agree that properly authorized letters, certified with official seals, would have been much preferable to stories told by chance observers. But as luck would have it, this obvious theoretical thesis is not devoid of practical shortcomings.

In particular, the additional workload of conducting observations of anomalous phenomena (certainly, absolutely gratis) was performed at many meteorological stations very unwillingly -mainly for the sake of appearance. The present author knows this at first hand.

One can hardly consider as a merit of the program the fact that it was, according to the authors of the survey, "one of the cheapest, if not just *the* cheapest, among scientific research works in defense fields".

Nobody pondered over the fact that such an "economy" of state resources finally led only to false conclusions and self-deception by the Program's heads. The latter were in fact well aware of such facts as, for example, recurrent meetings of two young girls from an Altai village with

UFO crews described in reports by A. N. Dmitriev (which have by now been declassified - see his book *Cosmo-Terrestrial Connections and the UFOs*, Novosibirsk, 1996).

Organizers of the *Galaktika* program were also informed about a short-term abduction of two workers in the environs of Orsk (Orenburg Region, Russia). Since the Novosibirsk participants of the *Galaktika* program had no funds to travel to Orsk either, N. A. Zheltukhin proposed communicating with the eyewitnesses of this event by phone.

A long talk with the authors of a detailed letter about this strange incident provided reason enough to believe that the latter was not a joke, neither a misinformation. If abduction cases had been considered as a serious matter, this story would have deserved a deep scientific investigation.

But given the complete lack of financing, participants of the program could feel only a moral responsibility for its results at best. It was therefore much more simple and safe to decide that nothing of this sort had ever happened.

...Whence it followed that "there came not a single report of abduction".

Well, as the Russian proverb has it, when baking pancakes you invariably spoil the first one. After the current economical crisis in Russia is overcome, a Second State Program of UFO Studies will not be long in coming. And new generations of researchers, having severely criticized their forerunners for treating the UFO problem in a not-too-scientific way, as well as for the ineffective over-frugality, will take new steps towards the truth.

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It was already clear from the last weeks of 1995 that Puerto Rico was about to have another UFO wave, and this is now in full swing.

At 7.30 p.m. on November 18, 1995, in the municipal region of Barranquitas, a flying saucer of considerable size came down and hovered over the transmission mast of RADIO PROCER and caused a sensation.

The electrical engineer and news-controller of the station, Sr. José Arriaga, heard someone shouting, apparently from a house near by, and then suddenly the entire area was flooded by a vivid white light. Said Arriaga to me: "Simultaneously all the electronic equipment went crazy. Needles jumped about like mad, from one extreme to the other, and the music became distorted.

One old and obsolete instrument that we have had since 1957 caught fire by itself, and it wasn't even plugged in, and its needle also started leaping about! It was unbelievable! I went outside and there was the UFO, up by the mast, an oval-shaped big, grey, metallic thing, emitting powerful light. All round it was a great window, divided up into sections. These windows were square, and darkened - like smoked glass, and showing a dark brownish light. It hung there for a further minute or so and then rose and vanished like a brilliant star."

The people at the nearby Villa Universitaria (University Hostel?) also saw it. But most important of all is the fact that, just prior to this sighting, a number of local residents - adults and children - saw strange creatures moving around about the place - *and the strange creatures*



Fig. 1 "Chupacabra" type of creature.

looked like the CHUPACABRAS!

Two boys, Edwin Valdés and Gumersindo Alicea, were playing ball at about 7.20pm and the ball fell into some bushes. They went to look for it, and found themselves face to face with one of these creatures. They said it was about 4ft high and just as described by dozens of other witnesses (Fig. 1). The boys felt no fear and say the