

# MAGONIA Supplement



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## DID LIFE MAGAZINE HELP SPAWN THE 1952 UFO WAVE?

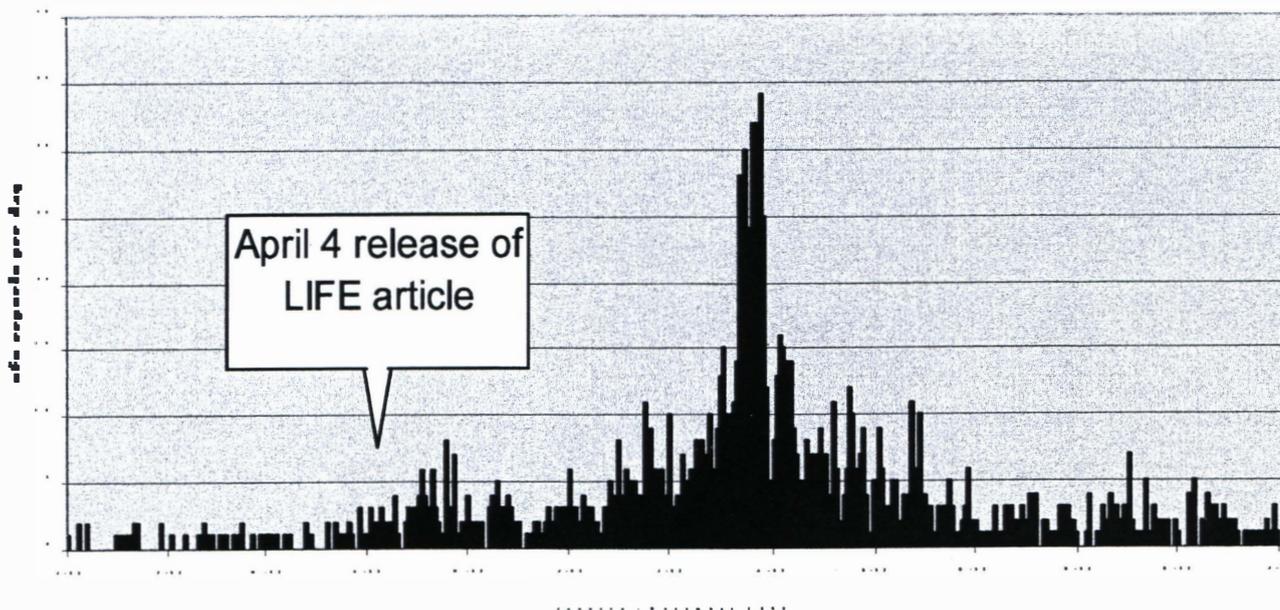
Martin S. Kottmeyer

DAVID DARLING'S *Extraterrestrial Encyclopedia* (2000) has in it a short entry titled "Life, article on UFOs (1952)" which brings attention to a claim made by a couple of researchers that the great UFO flap of 1952, the one that culminated in the Washington D.C. radar-visual classic, was caused in either small or large measure by *Life* magazine publishing an article that gave credence to the idea that flying saucers might be from outer space. The piece "Have We Visitors from Outer Space?" authored by H. B. Darrach, Jr. and Robert Ginna is described as "one of the most influential pieces of journalism in the

quoting a paragraph from *Watch the Skies!* (1995) that observes *Life's* article represented an opening up of Air Force policy, meaning that reports that originally would have been thrown away would now be sent to Blue Book. Peebles's thoughts about the *Life* article are more nuanced than Darling's entry. While noting the *Life* magazine piece was quoted in about 350 newspapers between 3 and 6 April and a flood of press interest continued into May, Peebles reports the puzzling fact that after a single day pulse of nine sightings on the day after the publication of the article, the rate fell back to normal the very next day. After a

in *UFOs Explained* (1974). Noting 1952 started quietly, Klass observes that when the *Life* article came out, the of UFO reports to the USAF "skyrocketed to more than five times the previous monthly average". He characterises May as also being "a bumper crop month". June sees the appearance of two feature articles on UFOs in *Look* and another one in *Life* and a total of 148 reports, which is "nearly ten times the previous monthly average" [his italics]. July's all-time peak of 536 reports is blamed on the Washington National incidents and the "considerable speculation in the news media stories that

### 1952 Wave & LIFE



early history of unidentified flying objects." Darling asserts, "The article in *Life*, together with scores of others it spawned in newspapers around the country, may have been an important factor behind the increased rate of reports at this time... Public interest in UFOs peaked later that year; following the Washington Invasion." (1)

He bases this opinion on Curtis Peebles,

few days, the rate picked up again and by the end of the month the Air Force had received 82 reports. But then, "The wave seemed to fade in May." Though Peebles clearly feels the newspaper articles "caused people to watch the skies". he is enough puzzled by this to term it "a very complex interrelationship". (2)

This is at least a backing away from the more breathless claims offered by Philip Klass,

extraterrestrial spaceships might be conducting reconnaissance of the nation's capital". This amounted to "a 3700 percent increase over the earlier monthly average" [again, his italics]. (2)

The "skyrocketing" adjective should probably have been saved for that July figure since the April total of 82 reports is fairly modest compared to the 536 peak. That five

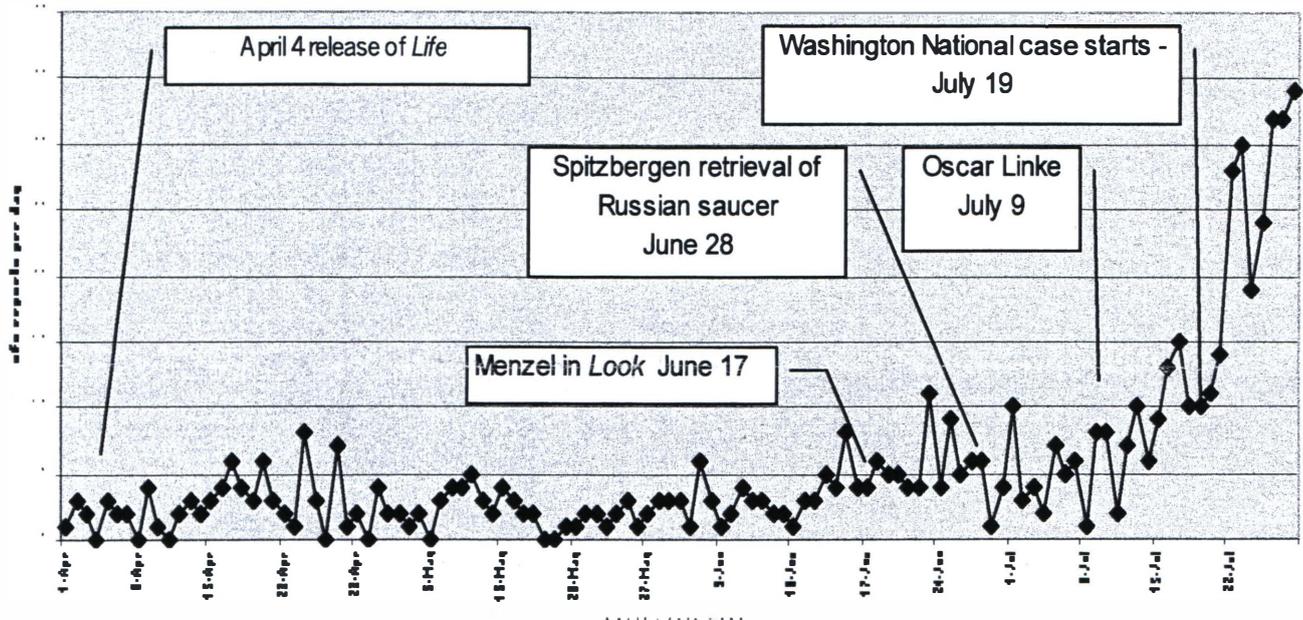
times figure is perhaps valid, but the choice to compare the April figure to the monthly average instead of simply the month before - March - is slightly curious. March had 23 reports. Do that maths and the skyrocket only reaches 3.5 times above the launch pad. Whether to consider the 79 reports of May a bumper crop is your business but as already quoted, Peebles saw it as a fading of the wave. Blaming the June ten-fold increase on articles in *Look* and *Life* is slightly perverse since Klass misses the fact that the June 17, 1952 *Look* article was a debunking piece by Donald Menzel who wrote off the phenomenon as a bunch of mirages. He had given a briefer version of this opinion to *Time* magazine on 9 June. If anything, such pieces should have

at the daily tallies and were not convinced there was a relationship. They observed the brief increase after the 4 April release of *Life*, but numbers seemed basically the same before as after. (4) The tally dropped to zero on the 8<sup>th</sup> and the bulk of the reports pop up two weeks after the article.

That two week lag between the release of the article and the peak of the late April flurry of activity recalls the two week time lag between press coverage of Kenneth Arnold's flying saucers and the peak of the July 1947 Wave. A causal relationship is here plausible and resembles the common phenomenon of the Nine-Day Wonder. The idea of a direct relationship between the early April press flap over the *Life* article and the late July peak of

whether the public actually was persuaded enough by the *Life* article to matter. Some of the better detailed cases of the 1952 flap give hints that reports were shaped by the idea that saucers were terrestrial in origin. In point of fact, during the leading edge of the main pulse of the flap there were two widely publicised stories that strongly indicated flying saucers were Soviet in origin. On 28 June there was a report that a saucer was found crashed near Spitzbergen that had Russian symbols on the instruments. On 9 July, another story appeared bringing forward the report of a refugee mayor named Oscar Linke who saw the landing of a saucer from the Soviet zone in Germany. It presented a mushroom shape on takeoff, and spurted rocket flames from its spinning rim.

### "A Complex Relationship"



decreased UFO reporting. The 9 June *Life* article was basically a selection of letters prompted by the April article and, unlike the April piece, generated no press interest. Indeed, in Peebles's account, general press interest was dying out by June and being replaced by news about upcoming political conventions, corruption, communist infiltration, and an impending H-bomb test that some took to threaten human extinction. [This refers to the 1 November 1952 Eniwetok test. Between 1 April and 5 June there was a series of eight A-bomb tests at the Nevada Test Site, but none between 5 June and 1 November. This suggests no direct relationship between the '52 wave and saucers either due to nuclear dread or surveillance of nuclear tests by aliens.] (3)

This interest in the *Life* article as a generator of UFO reports is a curious matter. Years earlier, Blue Book investigators looked

the wave, however, is far less plausible. Three months is a bit too long and the way the graph curves down in May subverts the idea of a steadily building wave of excitement within the population.

One other thing should be considered. The *Life* article was not introducing a new idea. Keyhoe's article for *True* magazine at the close of 1949 had advanced the idea of extraterrestrials causing the flying saucer phenomenon before and it was one of the most widely discussed articles of the era. It generated more substantial press comment in the form of major radio newscasters playing it up. Curiously there was no UFO report flap following this publicity event at all. *Life*, at most, only notched up the respectability of the idea by indicating certain figures in the military were taking UFOs more seriously than before.

It is also an interesting question on

This was heralded as one of the most credible cases of the period and led to the mayor being interviewed in a brief Telenews documentary that was shown in theatres after the flap. These Soviet saucer rumours fit better the two-week incubation period suggested by the 1947 Wave. Though it is generally overlooked these days, a fair portion of the Air Force's press conference about the Washington National radar-visual UFOs was given over to a discussion of why the objects did not match what was known about guided missiles. (5) While newsmen did bring up the idea of extraterrestrial origin there, there were indications they didn't really take the idea seriously.

It should be emphasised that the Spitzbergen and Linke cases constituted the best evidence of the era to point convincingly toward a Soviet origin of the saucer problem. It is not that they were convincingly true that

mattered; it was that the Soviets, unlike extraterrestrials, were unambiguously real and a nuclear power. Then, a few days later, strange radar blips are seen near the nation's head of government. Though the Air Force offers defusing statements that they don't seem like guided missiles, this only confirms what is percolating in people's minds. Could this be a scouting flight for something deadly like a first strike to cut down the leadership of the U.S? By this notion, the flap could be interpreted as a straightforward manifestation of Cold War paranoia. Suddenly concerned that Soviet missiles might be aimed at Washington, people reported objects they otherwise would have ignored.

The big doubt against this notion of Soviet rumours creating the 1952 flap, as already pointed out in the critique of Bearden's theory (6), is that theories invoking Cold War triggers have problems when you try to draw a consistent relationship between all UFO flaps and all anxieties associated with the Soviet threat. My main point is that if you are looking for a media trigger of the 1952 flap, the Soviet rumours make more sense than the *Life* article.

#### References

1. [www.angelfire.com/on2/daviddarling/Lifearticle.htm](http://www.angelfire.com/on2/daviddarling/Lifearticle.htm)
2. Philip J. Klass, *UFOs Explained*, Vintage, 1974, pp. 322-3.
3. Peebles, chapter 5.
4. David Jacobs, *The UFO Controversy in America* Signet, 1975, p. 62.
5. Loren Gross *UFOs: A History: 1952: July 21<sup>st</sup> to July 31<sup>st</sup>*; p. 49.
6. *Magonia Supplement* No. 47, 16 June 2003.

## MAGONIA Readers' Meetings

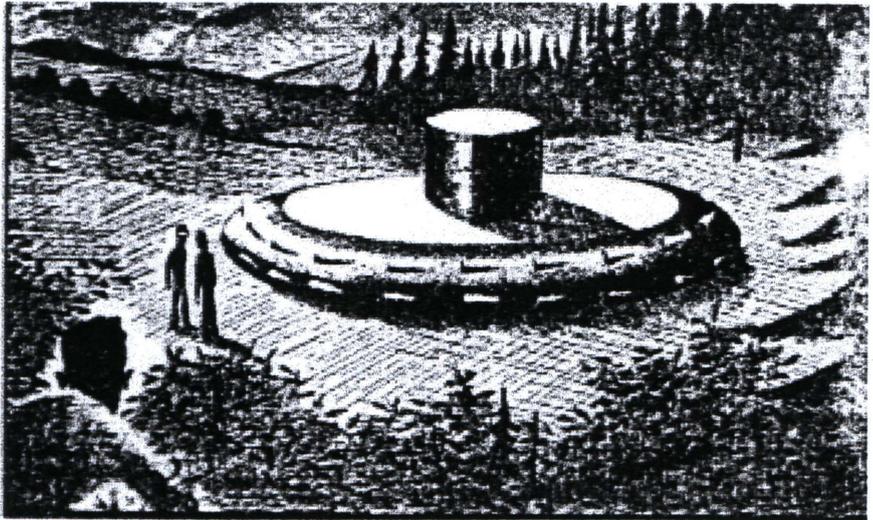


Just drop in . . .

First Sunday of each month,  
1915-2230, at the Railway,  
Putney, opposite Putney  
station

# MISSING LINKE

Martin S. Kottmeyer



"THE MOST AMAZING Flying Saucer Story of All Time" was how the news dispatch introduced the case. Considering the date was 9 July 1952 this wasn't quite the hyperbole we would automatically assume it to be nowadays. The saucer mystery had only just celebrated its fifth birthday and landings by flying saucers were virtually unheard of. There had been stories of crashed saucers with dead bodies, and one or two telepathic contacts, but they were easily dismissed. The story of Oscar Linke and his daughter was different. It would nowadays be categorised as a close encounter of the third kind. In hindsight, it was a landmark case.

It was, for one thing, the earliest dated case in the Project Blue Book files to involve a landing and visible crew. It was also the first CE3K with wide media distribution. Linke and his daughter are the only close encounter witnesses to appear in 'The Flying Saucer Mystery', a brief film documentary by Telenews that was produced after the big saucer flap of 1952. It is the earliest known UFO documentary (available from Sinister Cinema).

The voiceover leads into the case by saying, "The first eyewitness report of a supposed Soviet guided missile tells of a saucer-shaped object." Describing Linke as a refugee mayor, they tout his account as "the most credible received". We are shown drawings of the saucer made by the mayor and his daughter - the two passengers outside it, and the surrounding scene. We are told how they stumbled upon this sight, how the girl's screaming startled the two figures, and how they climbed into the saucer and took off.

"The disc rose with a humming noise until the thing was standing on the cylinder like a big mushroom." It was jet-propelled with red and green flames spurting out of the hull's innards along the spinning rim. After gaining some altitude, it moved off parallel to the ground. "It moved faster than any fighter plane he has seen and it made a terrible roaring sound."

Newspaper accounts offered more details. They described Oscar Linke as a 48-year-old ex-Mayor of Gleimerschausen who had escaped from the Russian Zone with his wife and 6 children. Linke swore out a formal affidavit before a judge in the company of West German officials.

He had been riding home with Gabriel on a motorcycle, but a tyre blew out leaving them to walk to the next town of Hasselbach. Gabriel pointed out what they first took to be young deer, but as they got within 50 yards it resolved itself into "two apparently human figures". They were clothed in a shimmering metallic substance and were bent down studying something on the ground. One had a flashing light on his chest. Thirty feet away from them was a 40 to 50 feet diameter object "like a huge oval warming pan". Along the rim were two rows of holes a foot in diameter and spaced a foot and a half apart. Out of the centre rose a black cylindrical conning tower ten feet high.

Gabriel called to her father during his study of the scene and this prompted the figure to rush to the object, clamber up the side, and disappear inside. The holes started to glow and the rim began to spin. The tower retracted down through the centre of the disc, raising the rim. "From the swirling effect of the glowing

**TABLE - Some cases of human-non-oids**

W.D. Secrest; 6 July 1947	pilot-like figures
Webster, Mass; 7 July 1947	a slender figure inside, dressed in what appeared to be a navy uniform
Bruno Facchini, 24 April 1950	humans in dark grey diving suits and oxygen masks
Claude Blondeau; 23 July 1950	men of normal height dressed in dark clothes speaking slow, perfect French
Beaverden, Virginia; 1950	man with unusual goggles or headpieces
Schenectady, NY; July 1952	"a bunch of Navy officers in Navy white hats", all wearing huge dark glasses
William Squyres; 25 August 1952	the head and shoulders of a man sitting motionless in a craft rimmed with propellers
Suzanne Knight; August 1952	a helmeted man looking straight ahead
Carlo Rossi; 26 September 1952	man wearing an aviator cap with goggles in a craft with a system of propellers
Nello Ferrari; 18 November 1952	three occupants who seemed perfectly human, wore rubber coveralls, and transparent face masks
Vitorino Lorencio Monteiro; 21 September 1954	entirely human 5'10" blond-haired pilot who "belted up" before taking off
Zaragoza, Spain; 9 December 1954	two tall, normal people, possibly German, "blonde as angels", who are in a craft with two propellers
Rev. Pitt-Kethly; 18 October 1955	thirty immobile helmeted figures with human faces, dressed in khaki uniforms
Francis Sticler; May 1957	an average-sized man with deep-set eyes, a tanned face, and wearing a light-grey, loose-fitting suit and helmet
Reinhold Schmidt; 1957	middle-aged man and women with German accents wearing ordinary clothing
Allen Park, Michigan; October 1957	two figures dressed in what looked like naval uniforms
Father Gill; 27 June 1959	4 figures - "no doubt they are human" - waving their arms on deck of "a strange new device of you Americans"
Bamey Hill	"He looks like a German Nazi" and wears a black scarf
Socorro; April 1964	two people in white coveralls
Rio Ceballos, Argentina; 5 June 1964	humans in grey suits and one says "I'm a terrestrial."

exhaust I got the impression the whole thing was spinning like a top," said Linke. Once airborne the cylinder retracted again to reappear on the upper half of the object. It made a whistling sound like a falling bomb, but not so loud. The object flew away in the direction of Stockheim, which was southwest of their location.

Others came forward to say they also saw the object. A shepherd named Georg Derbost, who was a mile a mile and a half away, "thought a comet had bounced off the earth". A sawmill worker, unnamed, described it as a "low-flying comet". Linke examined the landing site and found a freshly made depression where earth had been driven down by the conning tower.

"I never heard the words 'flying saucer'

until I escaped to West Berlin. When I saw the thing, first I thought it was a new Russian war machine. I was terrified, for the Soviets do not like one to know about their goings-on, and people are shut up for years in East Germany for knowing too much." was the tag line quote by Linke.

More details emerged years later when ufologists got hold of the initial foreign language accounts and made contact with Linke. They learned the encounter occurred roughly two years before the American press published it. Linke backdated it to 17 June 1950. He had been mayor at the time of the incident. In a new clipping from *Nacht-Depesche*, Linke had said of the two figures, "they were dressed in heavy garments, like people wear in polar regions." Those garments

were made of a shimmering, metallic substance. Asked by ufologist Leon Davidson in 1958 if the figures were human or humanoid, Linke opened up the possibility they could have been another type of creature since their manner of locomotion "was a glide similar to that of bears". Besides the depression made by the conning tower, we learn that the cold airstream from the object flattened the grain in a neighbouring field. Linke confirmed all the pertinent points of earlier accounts and there was no confession it was a hoax.

When Ted Bloecher wrote up the case file for the November 1980 issue of *MUFON UFO Journal*, his assessment was that the witness was credible, the story was internally consistent and the detailing, though

unprecedented, was persuasively authentic. The information argued favourably for the reality of the experience. In the absence of new information to throw doubt on the case, Bloecher concluded, "this sighting should be included among the list of unexplained UFO reports."

Curiously, it isn't. It is rarely mentioned in the UFO literature and is routinely absent in works that aspire to comprehensiveness. It's not in David Jacobs' *The UFO Controversy in America* or Curtis Peebles' *Watch the Skies!* It's not in evidence in catalogues like the Lorenzens' *Flying Saucer Occupants* or Richard Hall's *Uninvited Guests* or Jenny Randles's *Alien Contacts and Abductions*. It's not even in Jerry Clark's *Strange* review of "Close Encounters of the Third, Kind 1901-1959", though it includes some of the most obscure cases around. UFO encyclopedias never mention it. Probably the only readily accessible account is the one in the *Hynek UFO Report* (1977, pp. 203-6) and it amounts to a reprint of the Blue Book file with no analysis or comment.

Bloecher stands alone in his advocacy and interest for the Linke case. Yet, in an important sense, it warrants far more attention. If you look at the case simply from the standpoint of a ranking of its evidential features, it has to be one of the ten strongest close encounters of all time. We have here two primary witnesses, one of them a mayor and thus possessing a measure of status. There are several people corroborating the fact that something happened from a distance, one named. We have claims of extensive physical traces. A follow-up six years later has him sticking to his story. This easily outranks 99% of the entity cases on record as they are generally singly witnessed, without bystanders, and with no or trivial physical traces. On the surface it looks better than such notorious faves as *The Interrupted Journey*, *Pascagoula*, *The Andreasson Affair*, and *Communion*.

Those who argue that subtle congruencies across cases entail authenticity will also find the Linke case an impressively evidential one. J. Allen Hynek used to point to a trait called "escalation of hypothesis" which he felt was common in authentic cases. Linke and his daughter's initial mistake in thinking they were looking at deer and the subsequent shift is just such as example of escalation of strangeness. The detail about the entities gliding mentioned to Davidson in 1958 is especially surprising. Raymond Fowler points to exactly this trait of gliding as a detail arguing for the authenticity of Betty Andreasson's story. It is a subtle feature he found in several cases. Indeed there are a string of them: Charles Moody, 1975; *Pascagoula*, 1973; C.A.V.; Ririe, Idaho - 1967; Brands Flat, Virginia - 1965; Reinhold Schmidt, 1957. Linke's revelation has to be greeted as more striking if only because Andreasson had the benefit of potential

exposure to highly visible cases like *Pascagoula*. Living overseas, Linke's borrowing from the Schmidt case seems less probable than Andreasson's borrowing from the UFO literature.

This should be ranked among the classics, but it never will. It won't because it proves the wrong theory about UFOs. As the Telenews documentary put it, it was meant to be proof of a Soviet guided missile. Newspapers thought so too: "It is hoped to answer the big question: Are Flying Saucers a secret new Russian invention?" The place of discovery, the Soviet zone, implicitly answered the question with a Yes. The heavy polar garments worn by the crew obviously suggest the northern climes of Russia. Loren Gross, in his privately published, *UFOs: A History*, adds the observation that the description of Linke's craft was close to the description of the object in the 28 June 1952 Spitzbergen crash/retrieval story. It, too, involved a stationary centre cabin and a rotating rim with 46 jets on it. This craft was thought to be Russian since the chronometers and interior instrumentation had Russian symbols on them. Nobody suggested Linke's saucer came from outer space and, given the fact that it flew parallel to the earth instead of on a vertical trajectory, there was no reason to think otherwise.

Trying to fit this case into the extraterrestrial hypothesis presents a series of problems. First, there are no reports of 'greys' wearing polar garments. Second, contemporary alien craft don't display jet propulsion, don't shoot flames from a rotating rim, and don't make roaring or falling bomb sounds. Third, current cases never display retracting conning towers or show a mushroom aspect on take-off. Lastly, current alien craft have fewer straight lines and right angles than Linke's drawings show. Simply, it doesn't fit in with our current portrait.

To argue Linke's saucer was alien would be silly, but the Soviet interpretation is flatly impossible. The Soviet secret weapon theory probably hasn't had a defender in the past two decades, but if there were any stragglers the absence of relevant revelations out of Russia since the fall of the Berlin Wall should have sealed all hopes. And there lies the delightful paradox of the Linke case. It can't be real, but the methods of UFO study say it must be.

What this case proves more than anything else is how the UFO phenomenon has evolved and adapted to varying cultural environments. We tend to forget that the ETH was not always the favourite theory about flying saucers. Back in the forties and early fifties, the ETH wasn't even on the map. The Gallup polls of 1947 and 1950 didn't even bother to tally any supporters of the idea. Among those few who didn't view saucers as a joke, a hoax, or some form of mistake, the favoured idea was that they involved either American weapons under test (1947 - 15%; 1950 - 23%) or a Russian

weapon (1947 - 1%; 1950 - 3%)

Sift through the reports of 1947 and there is nothing to disprove these notions and often much to support them; things like propellers, rocket exhaust, contrails, radio antennae, fins, and aerobatic stunts. When Keyhoe started pushing the ETH in 1950, he had to spend time discussing the pros and cons of the involvement of Soviets, Nazis, and possible secret projects by the military or industrialists in America. He was not instantly successful in converting people, and no solid consensus against secret weapon projects existed for two decades.

Linke's human crew was not unique among early close encounters. It is fairly easy to draw up a collection of reports that involved humans in saucers rather than alien creatures.

I selected these mainly from the sense they seemed clearly apart from both contactee accounts in their initial aspect and from creatures and dwarves encounters. They could be thought supportive of the secret projects idea, though admittedly ufologists often did not think that way.

The jet propulsion and remarkable speed is typical for the era. The profile of the Linke saucer with its straight lines seems faintly primitive and looks a bit like it was sawed out of the top of a submarine. This was true of other saucer drawings as well. They lack the sleek convexities that shaped later craft. The saucer in the 1949 movie serial *Bruce Gentry* shares this primitiveness. The Gentry saucer also has a stationary centre section like Spitzbergen and Linke. The retracting conning tower seems novel and it is conceivable Linke's case inspired the mushroom-like landing profile of the Harryhausen saucers for *Earth vs. the Flying Saucers*.

Linke's case seems well-adapted for its time - probably too well-adapted. By borrowing the jet-propelled rim from the Spitzbergen crash/retrieval, it probably hoped to be credible. What Linke could not foresee was that the Spitzbergen case was doomed to fall apart. Investigators have built up considerable evidence that the Spitzbergen case was a hoax. (see Braenne, Ole Jonny "Legend of the Spitzbergen Crash, *International UFO Reporter*, November/December 1992, pp. 14-20).

By corroborating details of Spitzbergen, it has undermined itself with the taint of plagiarism and sealed the case for it being a cultural construct. Taken altogether, it is too much a phenomenon of its age, embodying its beliefs, preconceptions, and errors. A case identical to Linke would be literally unimaginable in the 1990s. The look, the idea is out of fashion - mythically incorrect.

(A shorter version was first published in a 1996 zine by Kevin McClure named *Promises and Disappointments*, issue No. 3/4.)



## LETTERS

In his article 'Looking for hoaxes' Gareth J. Medway says he has had no response to his challenge for proof that MJ-12 is a hoax.

The likely reason is that the majority of *Magonia* readers are bored to death by MJ-12 and consider it a dead issue (as it should be). However, at the risk of boring readers further I will take up the challenge.

There is probably no foolproof way of showing the MJ-12 papers (i.e. the 3 principal ones released in June 1987 - there has been a further batch since then) are forgeries, and certainly no way to convince a determined MJ-12 and Roswell zealot such as Stanton Friedman. If someone has a mindset to believe in conspiracies of this nature, anything a rational thinker says will be rejected as 'noisy negativism' and 'armchair research', phrases Stan Friedman frequently utters about sceptics.

The examples Gareth gives of 'some definite anachronism' that would demonstrate positive proof of fakery cannot, alas, be produced in the case of MJ-12. But there are abundant indicators in the papers pointing to fakery. And to counter Stan Friedman's point that nobody could have had the knowledge to forge the papers at the time, I refer Gareth to my review of Friedman's book *Top Secret/Majic* in *Magonia* 59 (April 1997). Any, yes any, keen ufologist sufficiently motivated to do the necessary archival research in the early 1980s could, and did, produce the said MJ-12 documents. The start was made in the National Archives files of Dr Vannevar Bush (the reason Bush was chosen is another story). It is therefore Friedman's

assertion, not Gareth Medway's, that is 'total rubbish'.

The anomalies in the papers, namely the highly unconventional way of writing a date (for the period in question), Hillenkoetter's use of his Christian name (not found in any of his other papers - he only used his initials), him quoting his wrong naval rank, the Truman signature (a very obvious transplant from an earlier genuine Truman memo), the repeat phraseology used in the Cutler-Twining memo (again lifted from an earlier genuine document), the equally obvious lifting of the header date in the Truman memo, the fact that Hillenkoetter hardly knew Menzel at all (as evidenced by a letter he wrote in 1963) and the 10-point rebuttal given by the National Archives in a July 1987 memo (ignored by Friedman) showing that the Cutler memo was a forgery. Even the fact that Cutler was out of the country when his memo was supposedly written does not defeat Friedman; he counters this with an ingenious but most implausible argument.

Friedman's 1985 research was prompted by Bill Moore giving him the names of the infamous twelve over the phone shortly after receiving the film anonymously in December 1984. Stan then did some original research on Dr Donald Menzel and discovered a lot of previously unknown, but in fact irrelevant, information about the astronomer and famed UFO debunker. Stan considers his discoveries to be proof positive that no forger could possibly have put Menzel's name on the MJ-12 papers; but as I show in my book review, nearly all these Menzel facts are redundant. They are only significant if you already are of a 'conspiracist' mentality, which is of course exactly what the MJ-12 papers pander to. Examples of Stan's findings: Menzel had a continuous association with the NSA for 30 years. He also was an expert cryptanalyst. He also had a Top Secret Ultra clearance. *So what!* The forger put Menzel's name on the MJ-12 list partly as a trap for the unwary. And how he succeeded!

I could go on and on but won't. Perhaps the best way of 'proving' the said documents a forgery is for us to state simply, and with total confidence, that the events described therein never took place. Anyone who disagrees must demonstrate to the scientific world that the said events *did* take place. So far, despite all the 'noisy' Roswell proponents, nobody has. Nor is anyone ever likely to.

I agree that the above is not the sort of proof that Gareth Medway requires. However, I rest my case.

**Christopher Allan**, Alsager, Stoke-on-Trent

## EDITORIAL

Graham Birdsall was surely the most active and energetic of British ufologists, so his unexpected death last month came as a great shock, not only to his colleagues on *UFO Magazine*, but also to those who admired his hard work and enthusiasm but disagreed with his approach to the subject. Graham was obviously aware of the very wide range of opinions and, as Andy Roberts noted on *UFO UpDates*: "In the past few years I think he realised that scepticism was an important part of the ufological mix and graciously published many articles by myself and Dave Clarke in *UFO Magazine*."

It is to be hoped that his family and friends will take comfort from the many tributes and condolences sent to them or published on the Internet.

The mail just delivered one of my favourite publications, *Magonia Supplement*, and naturally I looked first for the inevitable dig at me, without whom, I have come to suspect, there could be no *Magonia* issue. I find it in your column "Literary Criticism" (from, of course, my notorious remark on what your brand of ufology amounts to), and I note the reference to an ancient --1967 -- FSR article of mine. You and Gordon Creighton characterize it as "deeply paranoid." It is hard to imagine that there could be anything else on which the three of us agree, but this it. The article is as silly as anything one could expect from a naive 19-year-old. Score one for us all.

Still, where deep paranoia is concerned, Creighton can't cop the plea of youthful naivete, sad to say, for his continuing chronic fright.

**Jerome Clark**, Canby, Minnesota

*(This letter was written before the recent death of Gordon Creighton, at the age of 95 - Ed.)*

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