

BOOKS

Are they watching? Are we being told?

ABOVE TOP SECRET: The Worldwide UFO Cover-up. By Timothy Good. Sidgwick and Jackson. 590pp. \$39.95.

Reviewer:
BRIAN JEFFREY.

HERE, to all appearances, is a treatise on the evidence for the existence of unidentified flying objects. It has all the trappings one would expect to find in a scholarly work, including a clear, logical marshalling by the author of his evidence and arguments, and an impressive array of endpapers, not the least of which is an extensive appendix reproducing relevant official documents.

Of course, for all that, it won't do a thing for determined non-believers; however it will surely intrigue the open-minded reader and might even shake the occasional sceptic.

A former British Chief of Defence Staff, Lord Hill-Norton, weighs in early in support of the author. "I have read two or three dozen respectable books," he writes in a foreword, "and I have listened to addresses by a dozen or more

to addresses by a dozen or more enthusiastic speakers, in which a very large number of sightings have been vouched for by persons whose credentials seem to me unimpeachable. It is striking that so many have been trained observers, such as police officers and airline or military pilots ... Tim Good gives chapter and verse for many telling examples ... and some disquieting evidence from witnesses of sightings ... who claim to have been silenced by unidentified 'Government' officials. It is difficult to credit that they have all been either lying or hallucinating."

He goes on to mention something which will become evident to

anyone reading deeper into the book: the remarkable and unmistakable similarity in the descriptions given of the phenomena known generically as "flying saucers", whether the observers be illiterate peasants or highly educated professionals.

In a chapter devoted to Australian cases, Good says official investigations into unidentified flying objects go back as far as 1920, when strange, unexplained lights were seen at the entrance to Bass Strait shortly before a ship and, later, a search plane disappeared without trace. Pilot Frederick Valentich was to disappear in the same general area in 1978 after reporting a UFO sighting.

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When, in 1952, officers of the Department of Civil Aviation sought to establish a special bureau to collate facts about UFOs, says Good, the Cabinet instructed that the subject was "more properly a matter for the Security Services to investigate". Although relevant files were classified secret, a spokesperson for the CSIRO later confirmed that that organisation was working with investigators on UFO reports.

Other Australian sightings detailed by Good include one at Maralinga in 1957 following nuclear testing there, and another at North West Cape in 1973 while the facility was communicating a full nuclear alert at the time of the Yom Kippur War.

In 1963 the then Minister for Air

refused a parliamentarian's request that the Federal Government make public its dossier on UFOs. The Minister asserted that only about 3 or 4 per cent of sightings could not be explained in terms of balloons, aircraft and astronomical objects.

But Harry Messel, Professor of Physics at Sydney University, for one, was convinced that a cover-up was in operation. In 1965 he said: "The facts about saucers . . . have long been known in top secret defence circles of more countries than one. Whatever the truth, it might be regarded as inadvisable to give people at large no clue about the true nature of these things"

... nature of these things".

The perception that there is a world-wide cover-up of the facts regarding UFOs is, it appears from Good's evidence, not only widely held, but also reinforced by the release of hitherto highly classified documents. There is evidence to suggest that certain authorities, notably those concerned with the business of intelligence-gathering, consider that official confirmation of the existence of UFOs would have devastating social and political effects on the populations of all

countries.

Even more intriguing are the persistent reports that flying saucers have crashed on Earth and their wreckage and the remains of their crews have been recovered. One case documented by Good is that of a crash site near Aztec, New Mexico, from which 16 humanoid bodies were reported to have been recovered in 1948.

Good is not convincing when trying to explain why flying saucers haven't revealed themselves more publicly, like landing in London's Hyde Park or on the lawns of the White House. His flippant remark that they would find themselves in a heap of trouble from agencies which regulate air travel, immigration, customs and the like hardly does his case justice, yet, apart from explaining that extraterrestrials

explaining that extraterrestrials have no *need* to make their purpose widely known, it appears to be the best argument he can muster.

Above Top Secret is a weighty, tightly-packed book which, despite its subject, may well prove somewhat dry for the casual reader. There are, however, numerous passages which will attract the browser, with their intriguing allegations and first-hand reports of mysterious spacecraft and alien life-forms. The committed reader, on the other hand, will find Good's immaculately documented work indispensable as a reference, and a milestone in the literature on this fascinating subject.





Richard Huot, left, and Jacques Lavoie with photographs of an oval-shaped object they photographed while camping in the woods north of Montreal in 1978.