

Aliens — fact or fiction?

SOMETHING STRANGE happened in the park on the night of September 27 in the Russian town of Voronezh, scientists agreed yesterday.

But after a week of sensational stories of aliens landing in a shining ball and a three-eyed monster with a magic pistol, that seemed to be about the only thing they could say for sure.

"A wave of rumours and fantasies has swept through Voronezh," *Pravda* reported as a week of near-panic drew to a close.

"People are afraid, but the local authorities seem to have

done nothing to calm these fears."

Children who claim to have seen the landing were due to appear yesterday before a local commission investigating abnormal phenomena.

The *Pravda* reporter warned, "Clear and well-argued answers are required immediately. Otherwise rumours of alien landings could suddenly spread all over the globe."

Soviet newspapers and even the official news agency Tass have printed lurid accounts of 10-foot-tall creatures with three eyes landing their luminous sphere in a town park.

One of the aliens was said to have strolled through the park before firing an unusually large gun at a 16-year-old boy, who temporarily vanished. He reappeared when the spacecraft left.

Other "humanoids" were reported from other country spots.

Pravda noted that air traffic monitors watching the area around Voronezh recorded nothing unusual, but one of the scientists yesterday said he was convinced the children had witnessed some unusual phenomenon and should be believed.

He said they found unbelievably high levels of magnetism and imprints of a heavy object.

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