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Radio Transcript: Declassified Russian UFO Documents

From: Stig_Agermose@online.pol.dk (Stig Agermose)

Date: Sat, 25 Oct 1997 11:05:04 -0800

The following is a transcript of part of the feature "Science And Engineering In The Commonwealth", which was subjoined to Voice Of Russia's news broadcast October 23 at 0900 UTC. You can hear it in Real Audio at

<http://audio.wrn.org/audio/1700.ram>

from the WRN (World Radio Network) Internet Audio Services (audio@wrn.org). The main site of which is at

<http://www.wrn.org/index1.html>

Boris Blitsky is Voice Of Russia's science correspondent.

Interviewer: ...But just now we have to turn to another subject, and we keep getting letters about unidentified flying objects, yes UFOs. The latest questions on this subject come from Ban Hong Hue (?) in Burma and from Paul Brown in (unintelligible), England. So tell us first of all, Boris, when the first UFOs were spotted over Russia!

Well, we all know that in the United States the first reports of flying saucers, as they were dubbed on that occasion, came in 1947, and that was when a group of rapidly moving, glistening objects were observed in the daytime near Mount Rainier, Washington. Now, what about Russia? Are UFOs a relatively new phenomenon here?

Boris Blitsky: Oh, no! This is evident from recently declassified documents of the Russian Ministry of The Interior which inherited documents of the Russian Imperial Ministry of The Interior dating back to the beginning of the past century. Now, among those documents there is a very unusual report to the Tsar from his Third Department of The Chancellery, as the government's secret police was known in those days.

I: And what is unusual about this report, Boris?

B: It describes certain extraordinary light effects observed in the sky by the inhabitants, the police and military in the city of Orenburg on

the night of December 26, 1830. The observations amount to what today we would call a typical UFO sighting.

(Orenburg is a large town (519,000 inhabitants) in Bashkiria in the south-eastern part of European Russia - on the right bank of the Ural river - and a center of the trade with Central Asia.)

I: But surely this wasn't the only report of this kind in the archive of the Tsar's secret police, was it, Boris?

B: No, it wasn't. There were others, too. A similar sighting was reported from the city of Ushtug (?) in Central Russia on January 30, 1844, and still other reports are dated 1846 and 1847. In short UFOs appear to have been sighted over Russia as far back as the first half of the past century.

I: Boris, excuse me for interrupting, but this isn't a case of the Russian trend to be first in yet another area, which was so common in the recent past?

B (laughing): Oh, no! Russian ufologists readily accept that UFOs were sighted long, long before that. A Russian history of UFO sightings refers to sightings in Norway in the ninth century, in Ireland in the tenth century, and in England in the twelfth century. Not to mention a large number of later sightings in the fourteenth century, the fifteenth and the sixteenth.

I: Boris, to return to more recent times. Now, the UFO craze in our country, as we said, began soon after the Second World War with a sighting near Mount Rainier in the United States. What was the reaction of official Moscow, though, to that report?

B: Well, of course you have to remember that the cold war had already begun, in fact it was well under way, and the Soviet reaction was therefore quite predictable. A Radio Moscow broadcast at the time dismissed the American report by declaring: "The American imperialists have invented some silly nonsense with a view to further their warmongering aims, intimidating taxpayers and the Congress, so as to quickly secure approval for an exorbitant military budget".

I (laughing loudly): Tell us! Were there other similar reactions in other Soviet media?

B: For a number of years there was total silence on the subject. It was completely taboo. Then in 1961 on January 8th came a salvo from the Communist party's biggest caliber guns, the newspaper Pravda echoed by the newspaper Komsomolska Pravda. Pravda printed a definitive article on the subject under the heading "The Myth Of Flying Saucers". The article was an interview with the prominent Soviet physicist Lev Archimovitch. The physicist pooh-pooed the whole idea of UFOs as optical illusions, and condemned their exploitation by unscrupulous individuals.

I: Has he been supported by investigations since then?

B: To a very large extent, yes. The vast majority of so-called UFO sightings has been identified as either effects caused by space launchings or unconventional aircraft, or aircraft under uncommon weather conditions, or aircraft with unusual light patterns, or meteorological and other high altitude balloons, or flocks of birds, or reflections of searchlights off clouds, or similar optical illusions. Some sightings have also been attributed to psychological factors.

I: Psychological factors - now, what do you mean by psychological factors quite frankly, Boris?

B: Well, it seems that in some cases flying saucers serve to replace gods whom science has deposed. With their distant and exotic origins and their pseudo-scientific associations UFOs appear welcome to some people who reject traditional religious frameworks and yet need some article of faith.

I: Boris, you said that the vast majority of UFO sightings have been identified as being due to natural causes. What about the remaining minority, though?

B: It's true. There is a small minority of sightings that so far defy such explanation. But that of course is not proof of their extraterrestrial origin. It's merely an argument in support of further studies of this at times baffling subject.

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