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in Page Titles

Location: [Mothership](#) -> [UFO](#) -> [Updates](#) -> [1996](#) -> [Dec](#) -> 'Flying Saucerology' - Europe Vs. The USA

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'Flying Saucerology' - Europe Vs. The USA

From: egs@netcom.com (Edward G. Stewart)
Date: Fri, 20 Dec 1996 14:33:16 -0800 (PST)
Fwd Date: Sat, 21 Dec 1996 04:53:41 -0500
Subject: 'Flying Saucerology' - Europe Vs. The USA

From: FS@platillos.net (Mario Belmondo)
Newsgroups: alt.alien.research,alt.ufo.reports,
alt.alien.research,alt.paranet.ufo
Subject: FLYING-SAUCEROLOGY :Europe vs the USA
Date: Wed, 18 Dec 1996 06:48:41 GMT
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--FLYING-SAUCEROLOGY IN EUROPE is different from Flying-Saucerology in the USA...

Does a European Flying-saucerology exist? National differences, languages and specificities often make one think it does not. But if considered against the Unitedstatian Flying-saucerology("ufology") as a background, a common European=20 framework does appear.=20

Both Flying Saucers as a modern phenomenon and Flying-saucerology were born in the USA in the late '40s, and imported to Europe around 1950. Unitedstatian and European Flying-saucerology have followed similar patterns for years, the USA usually leading towards a scientific Flying-saucerology. Now this pattern has apparently BROKEN down, as Unitedstadians seem to follow new media FASHIONS which look very much like typical themes of the Fifties (contactees, photo repeater cases, Flying Saucers crashes, cover-ups) and which have NO ANALOGY here in Europe, where flying-saucerologists=20 got more and more involved in a revisionist approach centered on the IFO problem and HUMAN SCIENCES.

Cultural and historical reasons demonstrate that the two Atlantic sides have been moving along EXCEEDINGLYdifferent lines.

Where are we,flying-saucerologists?

Does a European FSology really exist? Will a flying-saucerological Europe soon exist? If you look at what is published in Flying-Saucers journals and bulletins around the Continent, you may easily answer "No!": differences and specificities are quite consistent. CULTURAL DIFFERENCES and The "language barrier" are

a main reason: out of 18 West-European countries, as many as 14 different languages are spoken, and often local FSologists are not able to understand other languages than their own one. Also historical differences may be easily found: some national flying-saucerologies have had a leading role, often because their languages were widely spoken all around the world (just think of France and Great Britain) and more intense exchanges helped them to keep an international-wide view fo the Flying-Saucer problem and research. Others remained more closed upon themselves, either as of input or as of output, and their contribute has been very small (or at least very little known abroad). Specific national areas of interest may be found for given periods of time: for example sky-watching was well-diffused in the UK in the '60s, in France and Italy in the '70s, in Scandinavia in the '80s; the "Ummo" issue is rarely affecting non-Spanish FSologists; humanistic FSology was peculiar of small British groups in the early '70s, while a heavily revisionist wave hit France in the late '70s. The earthlight debate has barely passed British boundaries. Even specific UFO/IFO types may be found: the lighted toy-balloons are said to cause as many as 31% of German sightings in the last twelve years (and very few Flying Saucer landings are reported from that country...how come? ETI do not like Germans??), while an epidemics of "laser-beams" has been produced all over Italy in the last few years; French contactees look very different from the Italian ones, and if only you consider "UFO abductions"around Europe yo will find very different situations as of both quantity and quality of reports...This seems to be,essentially,a CULTURAL US PHENOMENON AND NOT A REALITY. Our purpose here is to show that, aside from all above-mentioned (and other) differences and specificities, European national ufologies do already have something in common; something quite consistent and as essential as a methodological approach may be. In order to understand it, we will take the liberty of single it out by contrast, and the trick will be looking at European vs.Unitedstatian Flying-saucerology, which are TOTALLY different.=20

The modern F.S phenomenon was born in the USA, in 1947, and only later was it "imported" to Europe, where the first real MOC(Flying-Saucers) sightings wave was that of 1950. Some Italian flying-saucerologists even (jokingly) say that flying saucers arrived to Europe as part of the "Marshall plan",as well as chewing gums, rock'n'roll music and all the US invasion we were FLOODED since we became a province of the Empire...

Flyingsaucerology itself was undisputably born in the USA: any history of Flying-Saucers can but include as classic names as Arnold, Mantell, Keyhoe, Lorenzen, Ruppelt, APRO, NICAP and so on.

However,The road towards a scientific flying-saucerology was shown through Jacques Vall=E9e,a French! And afterwards by Hynek,a Unitedstatian of Slavic origin.

In Europe,Jacques Vall=E9e,Pierre Gu=E9rin and Aim=E9 Michel started Flying-saucerology.

So Flying Saucers arrived in the USA in 1947, the "contactees" in the early '50s, the "soft" and psychical CE's in the late '60s, and the extraordinarily grotesque "abductees" epidemics in the mid-'70s.

.Do you remember, the 1958-1964 period is often called the "Dark Age" because of the lull in USA F.S sightings, even if great waves occurred at the same time in Europe and South America. In a word, North-America was the reference mark and a sort of ideal country for flying-saucerologists(and psychiatrists alike!!!) all around the world.

It is perhaps in USSia(the USA)that you find the biggest concentration

of psychiatric cases by square centimetres!!

If something had to happen, it was there:the Great Empire of Mass Media Indoctrinment.

We could easily speak of a "mythical role" of the classic USA flying-saucerology, up to at least the mid-'70s.

WHAT ABOUT EUROPE ? At that point, something began to change. It may have been on the "scientific FSology" side (since 1977 it was France who lead the way, thanks to the civilian scientific study of F.S by the GEPAN); but we believe it may be better traced in the different consequences of "paraphysical" FSology. While John Keel and Jacques Vall=E9e looked like unheard voices in North-America, (where the predominance of ETH has never been seriously questioned by Flying-saucerologists students), they obtained, on the other hand, a GREAT success among the European FS intellectuals, expecially in France and Great-Britain.

The French and the British went, hand in hand, for once, as nations of the Intellect vs the USsian children guarding dirty cows, instead of using the brain!

It was only small groups, at first, but slowly they grew and heavily influenced the whole national scene. For example, the English "MUF0B" (now "Magonia") team did not remain a voice calling in the desert:

the "humanistic turn" they gave to what was then called the "new ufology" was later amplified by popular authors like Jenny Randles, which on turn gradually influenced a whole generation of British Flying-saucerologists, to a point that now it's RARE to find "true believers" in foreign spaceships among the best known and most active FS investigators in the UK.=20

As another example, Vall=E9e's influence (expecially "The Invisible College") pushed French Flyingsaucerology , in the mid-'70s towards, parapsychological overtones (just think of Pierre Vi=E9roudy, Jean-Jacques Jaillat, Jean Giraud) and this on turn had a major effect upon the sudden "change of mind" of Michel Monnerie and the other "nouveaux soucoupologues" which in the late '70s turned abruptly to skepticism. They passed over, but the effect was that a new generation of French "soucoupologists" is no longer committed to "believing" but maintain an "open- mind" position which helped VERY MUCH in approaching the scientific milieu. Well, the revisionism was a "tendence" in or around 1980, and you may find examples in the USA, too: Allan Hendry, Richard Haines and Alvin Lawson, or even the "MUFON UFO Journal" publishing skeptical articles by CSICOP members like James Oberg. But it was a different "revisionism", less "ideological" and more "pragmatical" (think of Monnerie vs. Hendry on the IFO issue), and we will see that it's important.

Indeed, some differences between the two sides of Atlantic were quite visible as early as 1980.

You'll have surely read or heard the "American Empire" (as a cultural concept) is in a crisis of decadence (extreme violence, mass ignorance, media brainwashing, etc). The Unitedstatian model is no longer a model of civilisation but, on the contrary, a model of what you SHOULD NOT do in a civilised society. USsia became an Oligarchy with a few enlightened people at top posts and a hord of Barbarians (raised by the media and the movies) being manipulated cleverly by the Oligarchy... and ENCOURAGED to stay as damned idiots as possible in order not to contest the governing Oligarchy!

Because we do not have yet such an Oligarchy and hords or uncivilised ignorants, Europe LEFT by the tangent while the USA started, again, a regressing hysterical merry-go-round.

Let's explain that. USsian FSology now Strieber's "Communion", Hopkins' alien abductors, Gary Kinder's book about the Swiss contactee Eduard Meier, the "cosmic cover- up" of MJ-12, the Gulf Breeze photo repeater case: don't we Europeans stand bewildered and astonished at the US FSology seemingly getting back to what it was in the Glorious Fifties? Here are AGAIN those noisy contactees (now "abductees"!!); a new kind

of George Adamski nurturing endless controversy about his wonderful yet UNBELIEVABLE "scout-ship" pictures; Flyingsaucerologists crying for "government cover-up"; and all that SHIT!=20

As seen from Europe, USA fsologists seem to have entered a time machine and got 30 years back. Moreover, they are presently debating about things (which are the central issues there) we have no parallel with, here: in Europe you're bound to find no saucer crashes, very few abductions (except perhaps in the UK), smaller Government cover-ups (would you imagine the Italian government successfully trying to conceal anything?). In that sense, we said: it looks like the circle has closed down and it's back to square one.

Well, it's not exactly repeating the past, of course, it's on a "different level": as of cover-ups, they've got a powerful instrument as FOIA, and it's no longer question of the Air Force debunking the Flying-Saucer reality but the President himself establishing a Majestic-12 group who exactly knew they were space foreigners and even got their corpses!!!!!! it's no longer simply examining Adamski's photos through the magnifying lens, now we have sophisticated photo analysis techniques confirming Meier's or Gulf Breeze pictures; contactees' evidence is no longer an ETI pancake but odd body scars and ghost pregnancies. Times have changed of course and it all is up-to-date in the '80s, so let's say that such more than a circular pattern it is somewhat a helicoid path: the "first generation" ETH was good for accounting Daylight Discs in the '50s.

Now that there are no more FS reports you don't even need a trigger-sighting, not even a time-lapse: you need nothing more than a VAGUE paranoid and hysterical fear for rightfully suspecting a suppressed ETI abduction memory!=20

At the same time, European FSologists seem to follow very different lines of search, as you may read in most Old Continent's Flyinf-Saucers journals. As of Europe, the real big difference between the '50s and the '80s is, we believe, that then FSologists "knew" the truth and what the saucers were, while we presently think we don't know any longer.=20

Early FSologists were not so much researchers as they were public educators trying to persuade people of the ETI spacecrafts' reality. How many investigation reports dating back from the '50s can be found in your files? Most "classic" cases are to be found only in books, but hardly do they include those data which are presently required from the average investigator. (And yet, if you have to judge from some recent pieces of investigative work, some USsian colleagues have forgotten all what Hendry and Haines and Fowler did teach and preach as of field investigation methodology.) Another major feature of the "new" European ufology is that we no longer consider IFOs as "false FS". Indeed IFOs have become a conceptual reality in Europe and are presently acknowledged as a part of the problem, whereas our overseas colleagues still regard them as little more than products for the dust-bin: identify and eliminate them. A widely diffused concept here is that the same proportion of 9 to 1 points to their importance and they're as interesting and instructive, too. HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN THAT? So it seems as if we have sort of two Flyin-saucerologies, as Jenny Randles recently put it: a "Gringo"one, concentrating almost exclusively on grotesque abduction reports, FS "crashes" and Government "cover-ups"; and an European one, more concerned with IFOs and PSYCHOLOGY. How could it happen? In this we cannot blame the language barrier! It's true, most American ufologists cannot read other languages,(but this is THEIR fault!)but they can always read the

British authors.

And anyway we can read them and still can follow them, but we didn't ANY LONGER because they are hysterical and paranoid, a reflection of the past PURITANS on their boats...

So we took our own road. Some socio-flyingsaucerologist may say the European "son" reached maturity (at 40 years old it's nearly time!) and now wants to kill the Yanqui "father", but it would be ludicrous (though the afore-mentioned self-styled Italian sociologist did say something to that effect in order to explain some recent local polemics). Indeed basic attitudes of USsian and European FSologists towards each other do not differ much from the average man's attitudes: The average USsian, created by the USsian Oligarchy, tend to think Europeans are much too complicated in their abstract reasoning, in "behind-ology" and with their noses up to the sky instead of being pragmatical in their approach to reality. And Europeans tend to think of USsians as GULLIBLE, NAIVE, SUPERFICIAL, HYSTERICAL, ARROGANT, PARANOID and fascist people, unable to see farther than the end of their nose and to detach themselves from the face value of things.

Of course such stereotyped images are rough and inadequate, but they nonetheless contain a grain of truth. The practical (pragmatical) culture of Americans as opposed to the more theoretical, civilised, European one is reflected by the difference between some "revisionist" authors like Richard Haines and Allan Hendry, there, and Jenny Randles or the French "new wave", here. That is well illustrated by some recent Budd Hopkins' reasonings, on the line "we don't need abductions theoreticians, but abduction investigators: come and do the hard work instead of philosophising from your comfortable armchairs". It's true: it would be good for some FS philosophers to get involved in field investigations and "touch" the phenomenon. On the other hand, it would actually be NAIVE to go interviewing witnesses without a CAREFUL background training, unless you just want to get easy confirmation for YOUR OWN beliefs. Ironically, abduction researchers, who refute any psychological implication for "their" percipients, seem to be unaware that they're involving themselves (and their percipients, alas) in that same socio-psychological GARBAGE they claim European colleagues are getting muddled into. The different part played by the mass media in the U.S.A. and in Europe is also HIGHLY relevant. Media attitude towards people and people's attitude towards media seem to be very different, if you look at newspapers and TV. Just as an example, we are told USsians are fond of finding their names in the local newspaper, while in Italy, for example they're AFRAID of that and usually DO NOT want their names to be published. And the media treatment was probably the cause of the great success of Whitley Strieber's "Communion" in America, while at the same time it received a very COLD reception in Europe (in Italy but ALSO in Great Britain!). We also think that it's significative that USsia claims to be in a lull of sightings since 1973 or so. That would explain why you have to resort to: - alleged crashes which took place back forty years ago; - "invisible (INDEED) epidemics" of hilarious and naive abduction=20 cases without any conscious UFO sighting; - bedroom visitors once kept outside any UFO report catalogue or file (do you remember Bloecher-Webb's CE-III class E: no UFO seen in correlation with entity!!! Pure delusion...); - tons of reports (and photos) from a

single "repeater" witness (Mr "Ed" or Billi Meier, that's basically the same). Abductions seem to mark the FINAL separation, in that they are to become the American ufology. They undoubtedly constitute the highest grotesque report. Are we sure that a solution to the UFO enigma may come from the study of such imaginary ETI kidnappings. What are we to do of such intrinsecally un-studiable things as Hopkins' intruders: there is no proof or direct evidence, the intruders keep a constant control of the situation, it's substantially a transcendent reality. At this point we can only either: - wait for the "contact"(VERY UNLIKELY), or - arm ourselves and watch the skies for shooting down the "ETI", or - conclude that "we're property" or already "colonised" and retire ourselves from FSology =E0 la Aim=E9 Michel. If you want to call it "-ology"... Will we arrive at having no contact point at all between the Atlantic? In at least two fields it may well be the case: - the social level: a different public has got different interests (remember: Strieber) and a different way to see the phenomenon and its students; - the ufologists themselves; think of Hopkins: doesn't he, too, look for a "different" UFO experience: hypnosis-INVENTED instead of investigated. (We always wonder: perhaps we too would, if we tried; but would that still be ufology or something else?). WHO IS RIGHT ? On the other side, our USsian friends might well ask us what we are talking about and conclude that indeed we are no longer FSologists; and they may be right, since we no longer study what most of them mean by "UFO". (But can they correctly say they study Flying-Saucers, when they actually are on the trail of ETI spacecrafts they "modestly" hide behind the more scientific-sounding "UFO" label?) Somebody here arrived to claim that perhaps we should say we study "unusual aerial phenomena" (not "anomalous", since some are not intrinsecally exotic). But at this point, perhaps we do have different objects of study. In a certain sense, there are also similarities between present USsian and European avant-garde ufologists: UFO sightings are just the proverbial tip of the iceberg both for for American abduction researchers and for the European socio-psychological "new FSologists". But those are different icebergs: the first is a massive genetic test campaign by ETI intruders, the second is just one facet of a multifaceted "modern FOLKLORE" phenomenon. Thus, in the least, what we see emerging are two different models of ufology, two concepts of reality, each of them possibly being the correct one (if one is to be). Well - you could say - where's the problem? It's you who said each national UFO community has its own "concept of ufology", so what? What we want to emphasize is a danger: that we Europeans and them USsians are beginning to go in opposite directions, and (what is worst) they seem to go down a dangerous way even they can't imagine where it will lead them. As a first result, it has rehabilitated the lies of contactees, though in a new form, so that they are now accepted (and promoted) by FSologists, who even believe they act in a scientific manner (how can you oppose Philip Klass when he notes that Budd Hopkins' concept of "skepticism" is so broad that he feels he cannot refute anything?). We are told by linguists that US English and English as languages are getting slowly apart and that in the next 100 years they won't be able to understand each other anyway. It looks as if such a process has already gone up to a good distance, since we seem NOT to talk about the same things. What we fear is

that we arrive at a complete BREAK, at having incommensurable FS realities. And we are near to that. Indeed, while we express our astonishment at the recent US developments, our overseas friends don't seem able to cope up with our criticism and only try to DEMONISE us as "debunkers of a new kind", (and that's the way some Italian old-styled FS-buff described us). But that's wrong: we are not "negative believers" of the CSICOP kind, and Michel Monnerie was writing ten years ago, and a very different approach has developed since. It seems difficult to explain to USSians that European Flying-Saucer research has EVOLVED to a point where it's no longer similar to a black-and-white battlecamp between the goodies (us believers) and the bad guys (them debunkers): more and more often you may find ufologists holding very different ideological positions living and working together without just trying to bite each other. Indeed, it's only tolerance for different opinions, and none of us should feel entitled to possess "the Truth": we're all searching for answers, and we've not yet got them. And here lies the hopeful solution: a greater tolerance for each others' opinions. Are we prepared to understand that FSology itself may be influenced by SOCIOLOGICAL differences and so it is legitimate that each one has its own kind of ufology? THE WAY AHEAD Even if in reality such extreme opposition as we have painted may not exist, but its representation has served us to get aware of ourselves: a conclusion we feel entitled to reach is that a European FSology already exists de facto, because of a common substratum of "modus operandi" and style of reasoning, as opposed to the USSian one. A different course of history in the last fifteen years left its mark, and european FSologists are now ideologically nearer to each other and more distant from the USSian way. It looks as if we can no longer expect the USSia to show us the way, and we no longer have that importing channel at work across the Atlantic. Indeed we are already walking on our own legs, even if nobody tells it as it is, and we all still speak of "ufology" as if it was one and only, while at the moment we do have two ufologies. We only need better contacts and exchange, and here it's up to us to define what and how to do to improve it. But since our affinities are more "ideological" (or better: methodological), we feel that the common ground for a European Flyingsaucerology has to be searched in these issues, rather than in some sort of "federation". Personally, from our own experience in organising Italian ufologists, as well as participating in some previous attempts to build international structures, we don't believe international federations may succeed. But we are ready to take part in such a scheme, if it can be useful, and we're prepared to share our experiences with others. Those same structural differences in national scenes probably render a European federation too big and complex a thing to handle. The very different national organisations render it difficult: some countries have one national centre, others do not even have a national federation but only local groups and researchers; if you choose to have organisations represented (as in PICUR), you may find rivalries within each country; if you choose single individuals (as in Hynek's World UFO Association) they may not grant local adoption of common strategies or methodologies. Moreover, just think of travel difficulties (how many times

a country was represented abroad by a now inactive individual without any following, whose only merit was to be there!). A more flexible approach is to be adopted if we want to get to an international cooperation going beyond an exchange of publications and information, by establishing common standards (as PICUR tried, but perhaps it was too early), while at the same time respecting each other's specific interests or local situations. In that, we at Centro Italiano Studi Ufologici have got an uncommon experience of putting together all and any (serious) attitude: total skeptics akin to Robert Sheaffer, doubters =E0 la Lawson, agnostics like Haines, true believers in ETI visitors, supporters of hallucinatory theories, all them have come to live together within CISU; as well as pure researchers and public educators, field investigators and sky- watchers all found their place within a common framework where we only agreed on a "minimum common denominator" of what all of us engaged to do. A closer relationship and interfacing between private UFO researchers is not only useful, it's needed if we want to get on towards a solution for the UFO problem. Europe as a whole has got a great potential of men, of ideas, of data and of experiences. Let's try and put it all together.

All the best.

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Ed Stewart - egs@netcom.com - | So Man, who here seems principal alone,
"Here is                       | Perhaps acts second to some sphere unknown.
Something Going On!" ,>'?'<, | Touches some wheel, or verges to some goal,
-Salvador Freixedo- ( 0 0 ) | 'Tis but a part we see, and not a whole.
-----oo00-(_)o0o0----- Alexander Pope, Essay on Man -----
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