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Historical Organizations: CSI (LA)

From: jan@cyberzone.net (Jan Aldrich)
 Date: Tue, 09 Sep 1997 13:03:58 -0700
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 Subject: Historical Organizations: CSI (LA)

CIVILIAN SAUCER INVESTIGATIONS (LOS ANGELES)

Civilian Saucer Investigations (Los Angeles), Civilian Saucer Investigations (New Zealand), and Civilian Saucer Intelligence (New York), were three unrelated UFO organizations, established in the 1950s by serious individuals. The science editor of the New York Herald-Tribune had advised that such organizations should be formed to collect and study UFO. In light of the government's apathy in 1950 and 1951 a number of such groups with grandiose goals were formed.

CSI (LA): In late 1951 several scientists, aviation engineers, and others in California formed a UFO study group. Edward J. Sullivan, a North American Aviation employee, was the sparkplug of the organization. Walther Riedel, a German rocket scientist was prominent member.

A sensational--for its time--article in LIFE magazine "Have We Visitors from Space?" in 1952 briefly mentioned the CSI (LA) group. They received huge amounts of mail and hundreds of UFO reports from all over the world. CSI shared a number of these reports with Captain Ruppelt at ATIC. While I have not looked at all the 1952 documents, I have not found if the Air Force took any copies. The Air Force also received an avalanche of mail as a result of the LIFE magazine article which is preserved on two microfilm rolls. LIFE magazine also acknowledged that they received a huge response. Again, the Air Force looked at some of the reports received by LIFE magazine. Again, it does not look like copies were made. The LIFE magazine material has remained unavailable to researchers

With this large database handed to them on a silver platter, CSI had an instant archives of UFO reports going back the late 19th Century. However, as every serious part time UFO organization would find out correspondence, newsletter publication, and administrative duties eat up the majority of time. Soon the goals of the organization were buried under a mountainous pile of paperwork having nothing to do with research. CSI (LA) was one of the first to encounter this problem. By 1954 after producing only 4 newsletters CSI (LA) ceased operations. The CSI (NY) publication would later call CSI (LA), the best UFO organization. Any praise form Alexander Mebane, Isabel Davis, and Ted Bloecher of CSI (NY) is great praise indeed.

The CSI (LA) files containing almost 1000 first hand sightings reports were transferred through several hands and ended up at NICAP. When CUFOS received the NICAP files, the majority of the CSI (LA) sighting files were intact. Some items were

missing, probably taken out and not refiled later. Copies of some of this missing material has been found in others' files. So actual missing material is probably small.

CSI(LA) had a panel that met to evaluate cases. This was an interesting, but time consuming task. By 1954, they were looking for some other organization or individual to take on this task. Pioneers do not often receive their due. Many CSI (LA) reports were used in the UFO EVIDENCE, Volume 1, and thereby contributed to serious consideration of the UFO problem.

To think that conspiracy freaks and UFO jerks who make unsupported outrageous charges exist only in today's ufology would be incorrect. Sullivan was subjected to a scurrilous attack in the American Mercury magazine by an early CSI (LA) member who accused Sullivan of starting a "religio-scientific cult" as a "get rich quick scheme." Everything but the kitchen sink was thrown at Sullivan who had reached into his own pocket to support the organization. (The more things change the more they remain the same.)

(See: Jerome Clark's THE UFO ENCYCLOPEDIA Vol 2, page 84.)

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