

REMARKABLE ENCOUNTER AT DRAGUIGNAN

J. Chasseigne

The old town of Draguignan has been the scene of several UFO reports in recent years. We are indebted to the Editor of the excellent journal *Lumières dans la Nuit** for permission to reproduce this most interesting report, which is taken from LDLN issue No. 132 (February 1974). Translation from the French by Gordon Creighton.

IF this case is not some supremely well-mounted hoax — and I certainly do not think it is — then it must certainly be, so far as I know, one of the most sensational of recent years. Here are the broad facts of the affair:

PHASE I

At about 8.30 p.m. on Friday, October 19, 1973, a young Draguignan man, Gabriel Demogue, and his girl friend, were travelling on his motor-bicycle on a road leading up to the top of a small mountain known as le Malmont, which lies a few kilometres to the north of Draguignan. The height of the peak is 507 metres, and one has a remarkable view up there as far as the Mediterranean, and towards St.-Raphael as well as towards les Maures du Sud, the mountains lying behind, to the north, and the Canjuers Plateau. Thanks to the gentle *mistral* wind blowing down from the North-East, the sky is clear, and the young lovers propose to continue their sentimental outing as far as the panorama-table standing at the lookout-point near the summit and indicating the positions and directions of the various scenic features round about.

Suddenly, away towards her left, the girl sees an extremely vivid orange-yellow ball, surrounded by a lighter-coloured halo, travelling on the same course as their own motor-bicycle. The halo is not homogeneous in colouring, and seems to be revolving around the orange ball. The young couple are at this stage still more than a kilometre from the summit. They stop and watch the object, which is now slowly moving from West to East at no great height and seemingly not very far from them, perhaps some 500 or 600 metres, as they estimate. The apparent size of the central ball is comparable to the size of a melon. It appears to be flying above the southern face of the Malmont and then vanishes beyond the crest, leaving behind it a red glow which is visible through the trees. The girl is loth to go on, and Gabriel takes her back to her home in Draguignan. Then he meets a friend, to whom he tells his story. This second boy, whom I have not yet managed to interview, is a member of a small group of young people who are interested in UFOs. He contacts his comrades, and they all decide to go and make an investigation on the spot.

PHASE II

They set forth in two cars, the first an R8 driven by Alain Leca, his passenger being the second

boy whom I have not yet met. The other car, a Fiat 128 driven by Georges Macret, has Christian Bensa as the passenger. They reach the panorama-table via the very narrow road leading up to it, and before they alighted they turn both cars round so as to be ready for the descent, and switch off their lights. Then they gather near the panorama-table, where there are a couple of benches for visitors.

As soon as their eyes have grown accustomed to the darkness, they notice first of all a diffuse white glow on the top of the Malmont, some 80 metres or so from where they are standing at the panorama-table. Then their ears detect strange sounds which seem to be coming from that glow. We have been unsuccessful in finding a satisfactory way in which to describe these sounds, but let us say that the nearest thing to the reality would be to compare them with the noise of radio interference. Not one of those who heard that strange concert has managed to give a very exact description of it.

At that same moment Georges Macret, who is stooped over the panorama-table, feels the table suddenly grow hot and feels as it were a wave of heat passing through him. His companions likewise detect an almost instantaneous rise in the temperature of the surrounding air.

Then they see a red light below the white glow at the summit. This red light begins to descend the stony track leading down from the summit to the panorama-table, and as it does so they hear, quite distinctly, the sound of pebbles being displaced, as though someone very heavy is coming down the track.

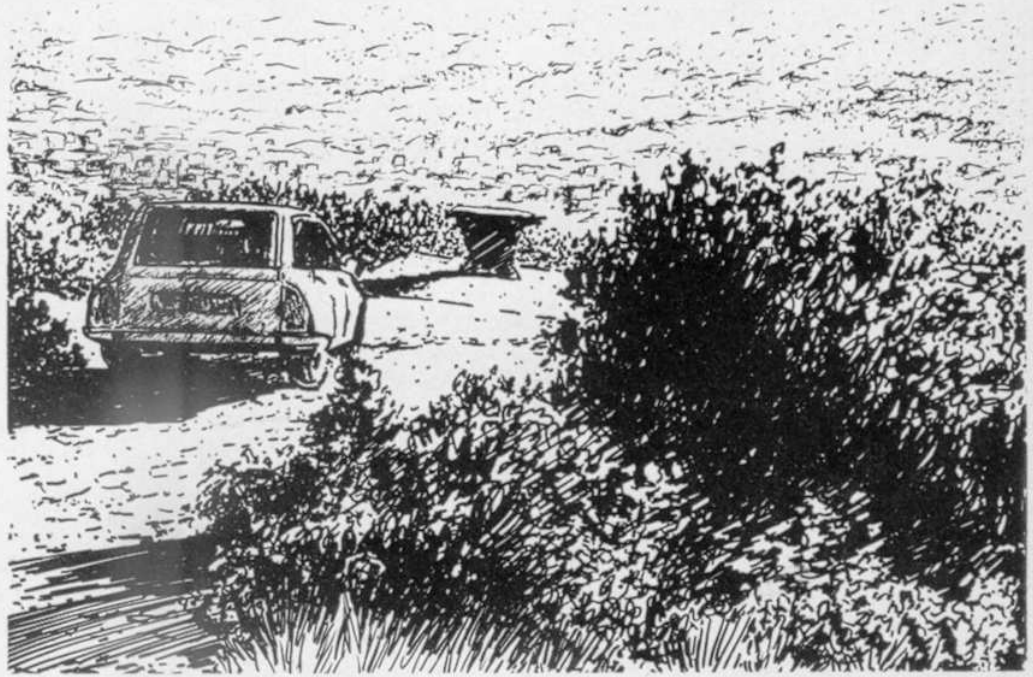
The four friends start to feel ill at ease. Georges Macret, Christian Bensa, and the third youth take cover behind a low wall downhill from the panorama-table, and Alain Leca lies down at full length on one of the benches set around the table.

From these positions they watch the red light come down the path, and they notice that it is moving in unison with a dark silhouette which they estimate to be 3 metres high. Let us say, at any rate, that this shadowy figure of human appearance was over 2 metres in height. During all this time, the modulated whistle heard by them at the outset still continues.

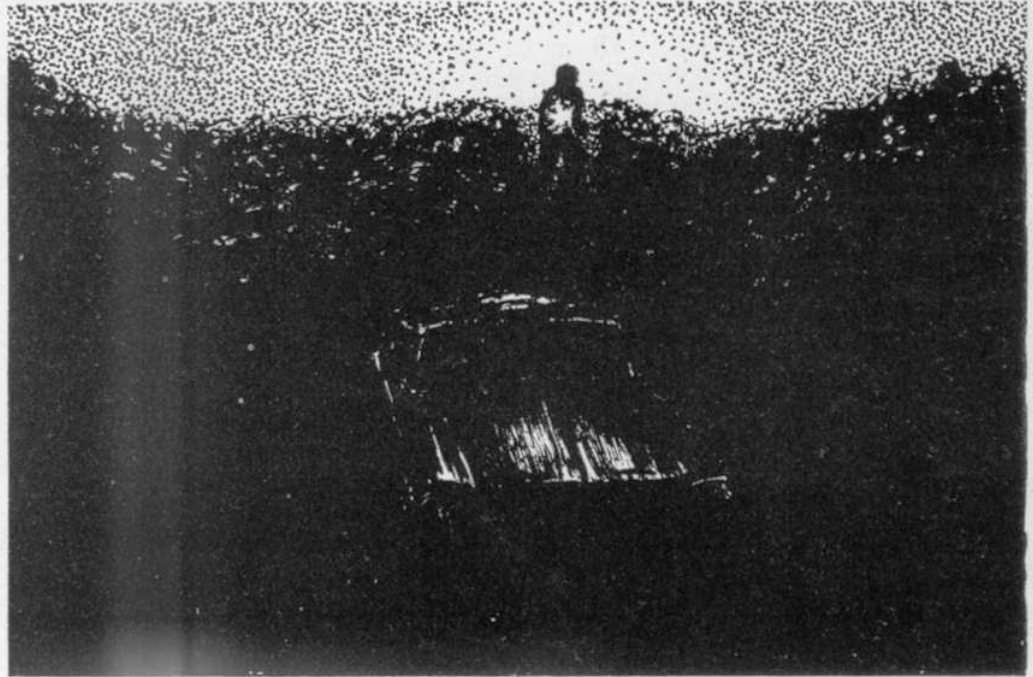
Slowly pursuing its way, the silhouette reaches a

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Drawing of the observation site, near the orientation table, showing the position of the R8 before departure



The first appearance of the being. Behind the being is the white glow



point about 25 metres from the witnesses and less than 20 metres from Alain Leca's R8. Then the figure stops, as though picking something up. Thirty seconds later, it straightens up again, the red light carried by the figure at waist-level is extinguished, and the whistling ceases. Now there is nothing but darkness and silence.

A few instants later, they heard the sound of branches being broken near the R8, and then the car itself is shaken vigorously several times. After that — it is panic. Alain Leca, who for the past few minutes has been holding his companions in check, now gives the signal for flight. Georges Macret and Christian Bensa dash to the Fiat 128, having agreed together beforehand that if the engine refuses to start up they will hide behind the bushes down in the ravine.

Leca's companion makes a run for the R8, and is just about to open the door of it when a powerful beam of blinding white light comes from the hilltop and is shone on to them. They hurl themselves flat on the ground till all is dark again a few moments later. Then they get into the car, but it won't start. However, as it is parked facing downhill, a push suffices to get it going, and the engine starts up. As for Georges Macret and Bensa, they have already left, the engine of their Fiat starting up normally.

But let us turn our attention to the occupants of the R8. For Alain Leca is to display a degree of presence of mind and cool self-control that are far beyond the ordinary.

Alain Leca is driving the R8. As soon as he has got it going, he stops after travelling only a few

metres, and looks back. At first he sees, at about five or six metres from his car, a silhouette identical with the one they had seen coming down the track. Then he notices a second one, and finally a third. The three beings are all very tall, over 2 metres. Alain Leca starts the car again, and then stops once more, some ten or fifteen metres further on. He now has the impression that the three beings have halted. Then he goes into reverse and backs up towards them, pulling up when about five metres from the nearest of them.

Now the beings start moving forward again with the same jerky steps. Alain Leca opens the car door and half steps out, putting one foot on the road and, turning back towards them, he shouts to them three times: "Are you good, or are you bad?"+

The entity nearest to the car now turns round to the next one on the left, behind him, and a strange colloquium seems to begin among the three beings (at any rate such is the impression of the witness) — a colloquium consisting of those weird sorts of modulated whistles that are so difficult to describe. Then the beings continue their advance, possibly a little more rapidly than before, so it seems to Leca. He gets back into the car, and drives off.

But then he stops again about 50 metres further on, in order to look again and see whether they are following. Finding that they are not, he avails himself of a small level area to do an about-turn, waits for a few moments, and then starts off up

once more in top gear towards the panorama-table, with his headlights full on, and his windows up. He has recovered his nerve, and has now decided to make contact. Throughout the whole of this phase his companion, crazed with fear, has been clutching frantically at Leca's jacket, and he had to shake himself free from him in order to step halfway out of the car during the episode just described.

So Leca drives up to the panorama-table again, but sees nothing. There are no entities, no red lights, nothing at all remains except the white glow at the summit which they had seen at the outset.

But now Alain Leca is suddenly scared; scared above all at no longer seeing anything. He visualizes the entities as hiding somewhere close by, ready to pounce upon him if he gets out of the car. Reaching the panorama-table, he handles the car slowly, headlights full on, brings it around, and then, to the vast relief of his companion, starts off again, and this time departs.

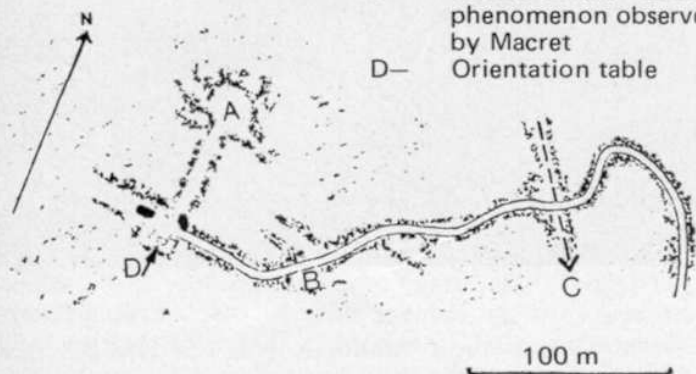
An hour or two later, he comes up again from Draguignan, unaccompanied. This time he sees nothing, and the white glow too has vanished. A curious smell of burnt insulation tape varnish hangs in the air.

I return now to one of the phases during the last episode, namely to the moment when Leca reverses suddenly towards the three entities. The fact of

+ See translator's comment on page 17

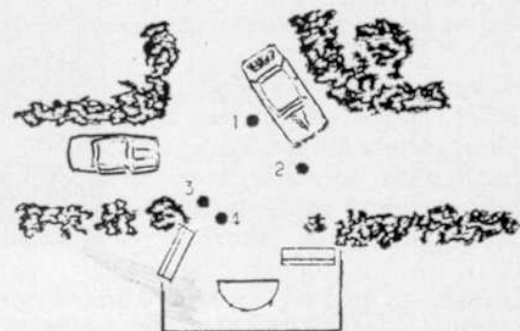
Observation Site

- A— Presumed situation of the glow
- B— Platform for reversing
- C— Course of the "red-legs" phenomenon observed by Macret
- D— Orientation table



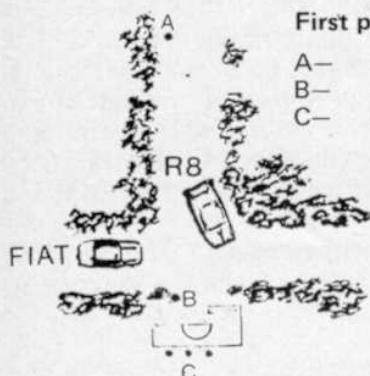
Position of the witnesses at the moment of flight

- 1— Andre
- 2— Alain L.
- 3— Georges M.
- 4— Christian B.

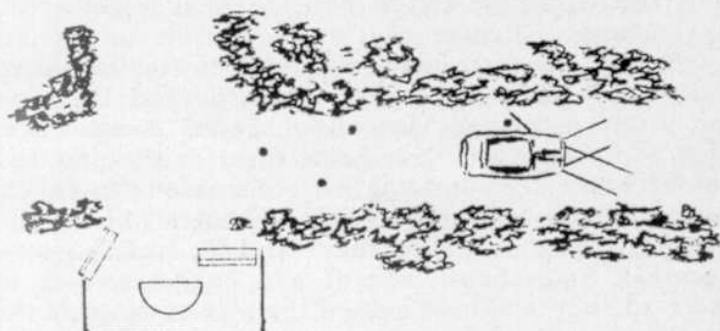


First phase of the observation

- A— Silhouette
- B— Alain Leca
- C— Other witnesses



Position of the beings behind the R8



The driver of the car
cried out:
"Are you good, or
are you bad?"



his putting the R8 into reverse causes his reversing lights to come on at the rear, and this enables him to see his pursuers in much better detail. Here is his description of them:

Height in excess of 2 metres. Red one-piece suit, non-phosphorescent.

There is a ventral light inside the suit, and in Leca's opinion it is this light which gives the suit its red colour. The head, or helmet, is square, with one or two luminous, rectangular apertures at the level of the eyes (See sketch 5). The gait is slow, as though mechanical. One of the entities had no helmet, but seemed to be wearing a mask of the gas-mask type and something mobile, perhaps a veil, in front of the face.

These descriptions may seem a trifle summary, but one must bear in mind the dramatic aspect of the situation. Alain Leca is not a mere observer on the side-lines, but is himself a participant in the events. He tells us nothing of which he is not absolutely sure. Later we will re-enact the scene with the witnesses, at the original scene and at the same hour of the night, in order to try to bring other details to the surface.

We must now concern ourselves with the first car.

PHASE III

It will be recalled that this car was driven by Georges Macret, with Christian Bensa in the passenger-seat on his right. They did not wait for the rest of the party, and left as rapidly as possible, and did not return. But lo and behold, when they have driven about 100 metres or so, and just a few metres before negotiating a narrow turn in the road, they come upon a weird scene. For a fraction of a second, they see two "red legs", seemingly phosphorescent, which cross the road in two strides, just a few metres ahead of their car. Simultaneously

both their headlights go out, as well as the dashboard light. They take the sharp, tight road turn in the darkness and narrowly avoid a crash. A brief moment later the headlamps and dashboard-light come on again, one after the other, just as though a rheostat is involved.

Georges Macret tells us that the engine carried on running normally throughout this episode, but in my view this is not at all certain. The road at the spot in question is very narrow (about 2.5 metres) and the gradient very steep. The driver admits that he braked at the moment when the phenomenon of the "red legs" occurred and just as the headlamps went out, so that the Fiat's engine may very well have cut out momentarily, together with the lights, without Macret's having realized it, and then have returned to normal just as he accelerated again.

Be that as it may, they did not stop but carried right on towards the valley, and Christian Bensa was so scared that he was slumped down below the dashboard.

Some 150 metres or so further down the road there is a level parking area, and Georges Macret stopped there in order to wait for Leca, thinking the latter was following. Macret freely admits that when he began to realize that something must have happened to Leca, he had not the courage to drive back up the hill or indeed to wait for them more than a mere ten seconds or so. On the verge of panic, with a companion who, to put it at its mildest, was of no help to him, Macret started off again and carried on as though demented towards Draguignan.

One kilometre further along the road he saw the two "red legs" again. This time they were coming from the right-hand side and were rapidly descending a very steep shrub-covered slope towards the road. The Fiat was past before the two legs reached the road. Only Georges Macret has described this

phase of the affair, Christian Bensa being still slumped below the dashboard.

* * * * *

At this juncture it is perhaps advisable to place these two incidents of the "red legs" in their correct settings. In the first case, the road at the spot is very narrow and fringed with thickets of holm oak. The terrain is extremely hilly, and it is a certainty that the attention of the two men in the car will have been totally concentrated on the road. There is consequently nothing surprising in the fact that they should have seen nothing but the legs of one of the entities, which were in any case pretty tall beings!

In the second sighting of the legs, the situation is however different. This time the apparition was at some distance from the car, and outside of the beam of the headlights. The explanation we have given for the first case cannot be made to work for the second case. The descriptions as regards the speed of the car in the second case also show a discrepancy.

* * * * *

But the fantastic episode of the Fiat is not yet finished. For, half-way between the Malmont and Draguignan, they ran into another incident. Suddenly, totally independently of any act or volition of the driver, the car was thrown off sideways, at right-angles to the road. And then, by itself, as it were, again without any participation by the driver, the car once more came back on to the road. Just as though some enormous force had moved it and then brought it back into its original position. The Fiat was doing between 60 and 70 km. per hour at the time. The road at that spot is straight, and there is no gravel on it there.

What can we say about this? The two occupants felt the same sensations, and in their separately rendered accounts they have given entirely similar descriptions of the experience. Their adventure finally ended on the outskirts of Draguignan, where they waited some 15-20 minutes, or perhaps a little less, for the other car.

Then Alain Leca and his companion arrive, and go off to tell a friend about their experience. This friend sees the expression on their faces as they come in — deathly pale — and it is thanks to this friend that we have been notified of this case.

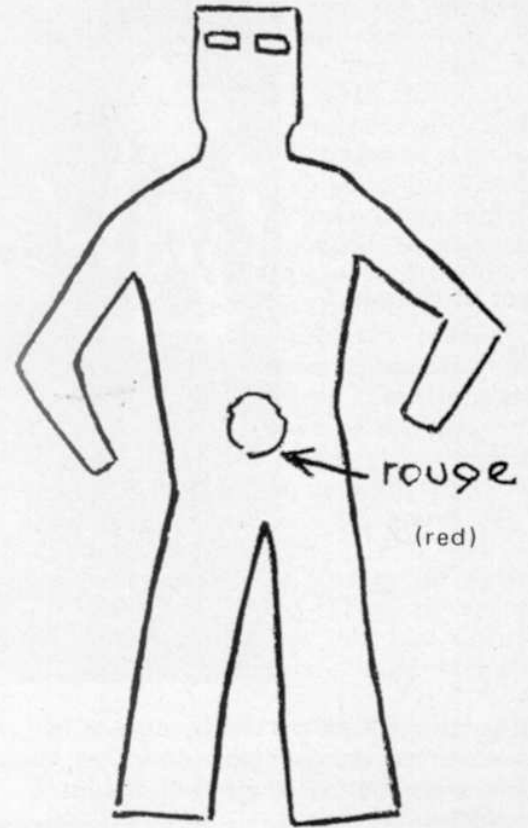
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Well, there it is.

But are they telling the truth?

Possibility No. 1: it is a phoney tale, cooked up by friends of the four young men.

Let us take note of the importance of the preparation and the setting of the scene, and of the various factors that it would have been necessary to bring into play. Moreover, in such a case, the hoaxers would have had to be certain that their intended



The appearance of one of the beings — according to Alain Lecat

victims were going to visit the scene in question. But the four young men only went up the Malmont because of the story told by Gabriel Desmogue. So Gabriel Desmogue must have been a party to the hoax too. But his only part in the affair seems to be that he had a sighting which is not at all out of the ordinary, and which seems to have been entirely genuine.

And then, if it was all a hoax, what a lot of details would have had to be worked out and arranged in order to account for all that was seen! There is the white glow at the top of the hill; the approaching figures with the red lights; the three figures seen behind the R8; the whistling noises; the wave of heat; the "two legs"; the failure of the headlights and of the dashboard light; and the hurling of the Fiat off the road at an angle of 90°.

No, I do not think the theory of hoax by others will hold water.

Possibility No. 2: A story concocted by the four young men themselves. But, then, to what purpose? Everybody knows how our fellow-men react to stories of this kind.

And then there is the matter of the allocation of the roles to be played by the four: the hero; the coward; the quitter; and the fourth one (whom I have not seen), the victim of panic...four roles. And three of them not so very creditable. Such roles are difficult to maintain. No, frankly, I do not believe in the theory that the story was invented by them. The account contains too strong a note of sincerity, gives too strong an impression of truth.

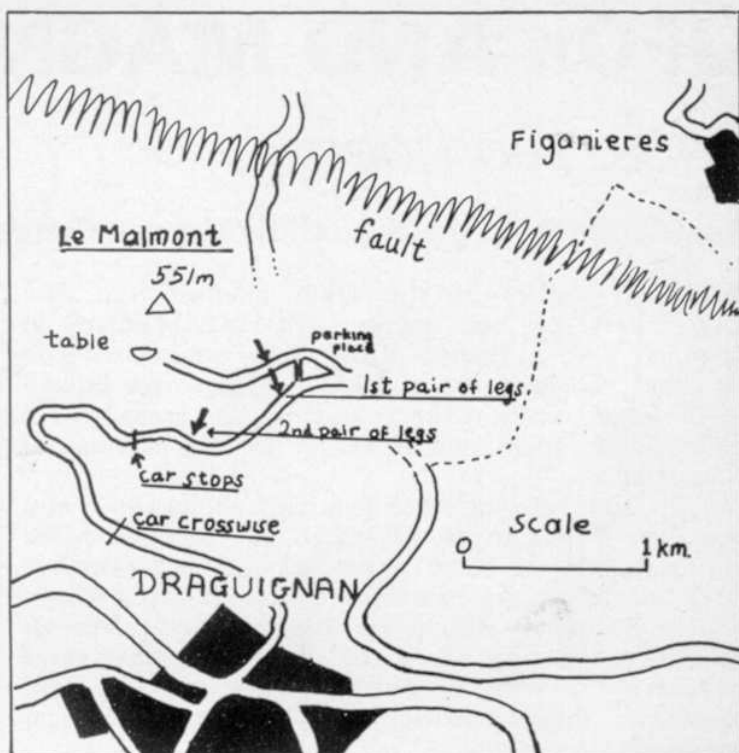
Map of the Draguignan area showing the locations of the phenomena experienced by the occupants of the Fiat car

One might rather say that in fact each one of the four young men reacted in accordance with his own true temperament. Each of them revealed himself that night.

At any rate, should one of these two theories be correct, it would not be long before we knew about it. For, in a story so complex as this one is, it would be quite impossible for one of the participants not to give himself away before long.

Finally, a word regarding our own examination of the spot.

We found no marks there. We did find numerous stones and pebbles that might possibly have been splintered recently. But we found no residual magnetism. And we photographed the site in infrared.



Comment by Translator

The French word *mal* means *evil*. Have our French colleagues reflected sufficiently upon the possible connotation of the name of this little mountain, *le Malmont* (the evil mountain), and is there not maybe some ancient local legend which might be found to throw significant light on this affair? In other words, is the peak reputed to be *haunted*? As we have shown already in FSR, there seems to be a rich accretion of monster-legend associated with the very name of the nearby "UFO repeater town," Draguignan, the old Roman *Dracoenum*, "the town of the dragon." (See my notes to *The Investigations at Draguignan*, by Jean Chasseigne and Francois Moll, in FSR CASE HISTORIES, Supplement 14 (April 1973), and also F.W. Holiday's articles (*Dragons and UFOs at Loch Ness*, in FSR, January/February 1973; *The Monster of the A85*, in FSR, March/April 1973; and *Exorcism and UFO Landing at Loch Ness*, in FSR, September/October 1973. Likewise see Charles Bowen's review, *Was this Man's Oldest Religion?*, dealing with Holiday's book, *The Dragon & The Disc*. (See FSR for May/June 1973.)

(Footnote by Editor of *Lumières dans la Nuit*)

Could it be — and I trust that Monsieur Chasseigne will forgive this interpolation on my part — that the phenomenon involved in these cases of the "two legs" is not the same as that seen by Alain Leca?

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UFOs AND MAGNETISM

Sebastian Robiou

Translation from the Spanish by Gordon Creighton

IN our studies of the UFO Phenomenon, the members of our group, CEOVNI (Centro de Estudios OVNI, Puerto Rico) have established the fact that the majority of UFO sightings over Puerto Rico occur, as in other countries, in areas where there is a local abnormality in the terrestrial magnetism.

Our study covers cases recorded since 1967, and examines 25 of them. Of these 25, 22 took place during the Puerto Rico "Wave" of August-November 1972. Naturally the 25 cases we have chosen are only a distillation at which we have arrived after an exhaustive scrutiny of all the dozens of other cases known to have occurred. In this way we can guarantee the scientific basis of our statistical operation.

Although the primary cause of terrestrial magnetism is still a mystery to the scientists, it has been established that everything terrestrial possesses certain measurable magnetic characteristics, which vary according to the particular geological body to which it belongs. In other words, natural magnetism is not the same everywhere, and can display sudden, sharp variations.

In 1961 various Federal agencies compiled a map of the natural aero-radioactivity (gamma) of Puerto Rico. In order to do this, they fitted out an aircraft with modern magnetic detection apparatus and the machine then flew around all over the Island accumulating a mass of data. From this it was possible to establish that the magnetic readings varied from 50 cps. (counts per second) to 800 cps., but that the average reading for more than three-quarters of the Island was about 300 cps. It was established furthermore that there are four areas where the magnetism is higher than average, and another area where the reading is very much lower than the average. The results of this study were published in 1965 by the U.S. Geological Survey in its map GP-525.

The first thing we did was to transfer on to an ordinary map of Puerto Rico the "lakes" of magnetic anomaly. The map we used for this was the *Puerto Rico e Islas Limitrofes*, published by the U.S. Geological Survey in 1951, with polyconic projection and scale of 1:120,000.

The anomaly areas were transferred on to the map with extreme care by means of a method of established coordinates. Then the 25 cases which we had filtered out were marked on the map also, at the precise spot where each incident in question had occurred.

It was at once clear that the bulk of the UFO cases had occurred in the western, south-western, north-western, and central areas of the Island. That is to say, all around the magnetic anomalies. We

also endeavoured, however, to establish more precisely the maximum distances at which cases were occurring from the magnetic "lakes." With this in view, we determined, by geometry, the centre of each "lake." And it was found that only the cases (3) at San Juan were as much as some 40 kilometres from a magnetic "lake", whereas the rest of the cases were at no more than 30 kilometres from any point of magnetic anomaly.

On the attached map, which is purely schematic, the five magnetic anomaly "lakes" are denoted by the letters A (500-800 cps), B (650-700 cps), C (50-100 cps), D (450-650 cps), and E (650 cps). The UFO cases are represented by dots, with numbers beside them to indicate the number of cases in excess of one at that particular locality.

As can be seen, the cases are clustered around the areas of magnetic anomaly. Thus the eastern end of Puerto Rico, which has no magnetic anomaly "lake," also shows no known UFO case.

The areas with the highest number of recorded UFO cases are as follows: Aguadilla, Isabela, and Arecibo are all at no more than 30 kms. from point A. Yauco (where there occurred in August 1972 several cases that have not been made known publicly) lies right beside point C. Mayagüez is at about 30 kms. from the same point. Adjuntas, where there were probably several dozens of sightings during the 1972 Wave, of which only four have been taken into consideration in the present survey, lies at only 10 kms. or so from point D, and at the same time has all the other "lakes" around it, being almost exactly at the physical centre of them all.

Moreover the curious fact will be observed that not a single known UFO case actually occurs *inside* one of the magnetic anomaly "lakes" but only in circular areas around them with an average of not more than 30 kilometres.

Although CEOVNI have not yet made an analysis of the probabilities, it would not appear that this distribution of UFO cases round about magnetic anomaly "lakes" can be due to chance or to fortuitous causes. Everything seems to indicate that the UFOs are in fact intimately related to magnetic or electromagnetic forces. Naturally the task of explaining the *raison d'être* for this apparent correlation lies for the time being outside the limits of CEOVNI's objectives.

However, other studies made along these lines in the USA, France, and Spain, corroborate the findings of CEOVNI in Puerto Rico. John A. Keel, a celebrated American investigator, says in his book *UFOs: Operation Trojan Horse* that the UFO phenomenon occurs in radiuses of not more than 200 miles (about 320 kms.) from magnetic "lakes." On the other hand, in an article by the French invest-