

construct similar craft here, but that for various reasons all had been failures ... And he went on (and for the first time I detected a note of pride in his voice) ... "You must realize that that machine, the UFO, had not only all those tubes everywhere inside and outside, but also

two big holes ... and the technical experts have explained to me that, by expelling and compressing the air in the tubes, the UFO could move laterally and, sending the air out through the two big holes, the machine could go up or go down."

THE CASE AT THE "VILLA RADICCHIA"

*Pier Luigi Sani (Italian Centro Ufologico Nazionale — C.U.N.)
(Translation from Italian)*

We are much indebted to Dr Roberto Pinotti, Director of C.U.N., and FSR Consultant who has kindly sent us the Italian text of this report, which was published in the recent abstract, *Dossier: UFO Ai Confini Della Realtà*, issued by his Organization. EDITOR

Date of Sighting: Tuesday, October 9, 1984.

Time: About 3.30 a.m. (Solar Time).

Place: Country Villa "La Radicchia", No. 1, Via Tassaia, situated about 3 kms. from the village of Polcanto, in the Commune of Borgo S. Lorenzo. Polcanto lies at about 15 kms. to the NNE of Firenze (FIRENZE = FLORENCE).

Witness: Signor Isidoro Ferri, aged 46, married; two children; profession: caretaker of the Villa "La Radicchia" and agriculturalist. Education: elementary (1a middle school).

Meteorological Conditions: Sky clear, stars very visible, no wind. The Moon was almost full during the night from 8 to 9 October (Full Moon on October 10). According to details supplied by the Astrophysical Observatory at Arcetri, the Moon had risen at 5.27 p.m. on the 8th, reaching its highest point over the horizon at 11.27 that night, and it set at 4.32 a.m. on October 9.

The Phenomenon

On the evening of Monday, October 8, 1984, Signor Isidoro Ferri had retired to bed early at about 9.30 p.m., as was his custom. Lying beside him, as was the boy's occasional wont, on the left side of the bed, was his twelve-year-old son Luciano. His wife, Maria, was sleeping in another bedroom with their thirteen-year-old daughter Annamaria who had a slight touch of influenza.

The Ferris' bed is placed longitudinally in the room, with its foot towards the single window of the room, and the head towards the other wall. The bedroom is on the first floor, and on the north side of the house. The window (small) has two sections. The embrasure of the window is 83 cms. high and 70 cms.

wide. The sill is 96 cms. above the floor of the room. The height of the bed above the floor is 65 cms., which means that anyone sleeping in it has his head more or less at the same level as the window-sill, and would thus be able to see a part of the field on the other side of the road and opposite the house. There are no external shutters on the window, but it does have internal ones which, however, by long-established habit, Signor Ferri never closes at night, and it does have curtains.

The witness says he is a heavy sleeper, but on the night of October 8/9 something unusual woke him up. This happened about 3.30 a.m. (He deduces this from the fact that, immediately after his sighting, he glanced at his clock, and it was then 3.40.)

The cause of the interruption of his sleep was a beam of light that, coming in through the panes of the window, struck him right on the eyes. Still lying recumbent, he instinctively looked towards the window and beheld, on the top of the escarpment beyond the road (Via Tassaia) a dark human form from which was coming, approximately from the level of the forehead, a luminous beam (like the beam of an electric torch) directed straight at the window and on to his eyes. Ferri was unable to give any details regarding the "human shape", and simply recalls a black silhouette, erect, with arms down the sides, of a height that it is not possible to establish, and of a generally rather bulky frame. The only prominent feature of it was the "headlight" shining from the forehead area. Altogether, the vision lasted no longer than "a fraction of a second". He had in fact just managed to think to himself "*It must be a poacher*", and the human figure and the beam of light had vanished, and then, a little towards the right, there appeared a luminous phenomenon which he at first took to be a "fire".

"They're setting fire to my hut", he thought to himself. For the presumed "fire" was in fact right in the direction of the little wooden hut used for storing hay located ten or twenty metres beyond the place on the escarpment where the human figure had been. He quickly discarded the idea that it was a "fire" however, since no smoke or sparks were seen, and this "fire" had some strange features: it was 'stationary' (in the sense that no upward spiralling movement of flames was to be seen), and it had a 'pink' coloration, and it consisted of three luminous "squirts" or jets projected downwards towards the ground, and seemingly emanating from a sort of horizontal "dark line" above and to the right of which (from Ferri's position) he was unable to see anything else owing to the intervening leafy branches of trees. The three luminous "jets" resembled "cones of light" with sharp outlines and were broken, as though truncated, before striking the ground. The two side "jets" diverged outwards slightly with respect to the central one.

This second phase of the sighting was, according to Ferri, the longest: lasting several minutes. Still lying there in his bed, he was attempting vainly to find some rational explanation for what he was seeing.

And then suddenly the "fire" "went out", and immediately there began the most spectacular and most terrifying phase of the sighting: from the spot where the "fire" had first appeared to him to be, or maybe from the point where the three "columns of light" had originated (the dark horizontal line), there started to shoot forth a great, vivid, dazzling, intensely white light which, on a descending trajectory (the escarpment where the phenomenon occurred is higher than the villa) "*advanced*" (sic) inexorably towards the house illuminating as brightly as daylight (but, says Ferri, "*to say 'daylight' isn't enough!*") the highway, the trees, and the entire paddock. When the beam struck the front of the villa, it penetrated through the window-panes and flooded the whole room in turn. At that point, Ferri was frightened: he felt a lump in the throat and a flush of heat on the face (perhaps due to emotion). He has described the strange light as "intermittent", but has been unable to specify the precise meaning of this expression. Hypothetically, one may take it that the light might have moved to and fro laterally, or, alternatively, it might have pulsed flashes. Several times, says Ferri, he was obliged to turn his head away or cover his face in order to protect his eyes, which suggests precisely that the light struck him in intermittent waves.

Ferri decided to get up and go over to the window, but did not manage to get there; when he was about half a metre from the sill, he felt himself literally paralyzed, incapable either of moving or shouting. He has not found it possible to say whether this effect was due to the light or to fear, nor how long he remained there frozen: probably it was for a few seconds. Then the light began to "withdraw" (sic): he has described it

as being slowly "*sucked back*" (sic) towards the same point (on the escarpment beyond the highway) from which it had been emitted.

Only then did Ferri regain control of his movements, and he was able to approach the window. Bending forward slightly, his hands propped on the sill, he was able to watch, through the glass (he never opened the window), the final phase of the "*reabsorption*" of the light. No sooner had the whole of the light been "sucked back", vanishing like the light of a TV screen when it is switched off, than there appeared, at the same point on the escarpment, an "incandescent sphere" of a vivid red colour and perfectly smooth surface. Ferri was unable to say for sure how big it might have been, suggesting that it might have been some two to three metres wide.

The word "sphere" used by Ferri subsequently turned out to be incorrect: for when he made the sketch of what he had seen, he traced out a *lenticular* shape and not a spherical one. The term "sphere" was presumably suggested to him by the roundness of the upper part of the object that he was observing. Furthermore, there is no denying that the view from window to escarpment is partially obscured by the branches of the trees in the paddock and those on the escarpment; consequently the witness could only see the various phases of the phenomenon through small breaks in the foliage. Consequently it would be permissible for us to think that, when the "sphere" appeared, he was actually seeing a curved structure that was partially hidden by the branches of the trees.

He had trouble with his eyes from looking at the "sphere": its vivid red brightness was so intense as to be unbearable. The strange thing about it was that this brightness *did not spread out around*; in other words, it did not light up the surrounding area, but rather remained *imprisoned*, so to say, within the contours (extremely sharply defined) of the object.

The vision of the "sphere" lasted but a few instants: almost at once the machine rose and flew off on an oblique trajectory towards the WSW (roughly towards Vaglia), travelling up the escarpment of the hill opposite the villa, and finally vanishing beyond its crest. As it took off, Ferri had the impression that the leafy branches of the trees nearest to it shook as though from the effect of a powerful blast of wind. Sound: none whatsoever. On the contrary, he has mentioned a sensation of a *great, unwonted, silence* throughout the entire duration of the sighting. *Even his house guard-dog, an Alsatian shepherd-dog, had not barked once...*

Following upon the sighting, Ferri remained stupefied for a few moments and then he recovered somewhat. His first thought was to look at the clock: it was 3.40 a.m. It has not been possible to establish the exact duration of the phenomenon; it can however be estimated at about five minutes.

His son Luciano had gone on sleeping soundly, his head wrapped in the blankets. He had noticed

nothing. Ferri decided not to awaken him, nor to awaken his wife who was sleeping with the daughter in another part of the house, and who, consequently, also had been aware of nothing. Ferri is unable to explain the reason for such a decision on his part. He says he went back to bed, but had been unable to sleep any more.

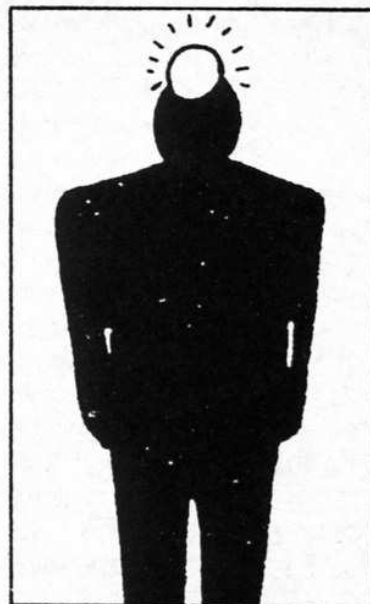
He got up next morning, soon after 6 o'clock, and only then did he tell his wife what he had seen during the night. Signora Maria Ferri, incredulous at first, finally perceived that her husband was not lying, and she was impressed. Ferri went out and up on to the escarpment where the phenomenon had occurred: but he noted nothing abnormal there. The wooden hut was intact, and nowhere even on the ground around about was there any trace of a fire. At about 7.30 p.m. he encountered a friend, a certain Benito Farcilli, a retired inspector of the civic police, now working as a gamekeeper to the "*La Radicchia*" Estate, who cultivates a kitchen-guardian in the vicinity. Ferri told him about what he had seen, and Farcilli advised him to report it to the Carabinieri (Gendarmerie).

So, shortly after 8.00 a.m. Ferri went indeed to Borgo S. Lorenzo and made his deposition at the local Carabinieri Station. At 12.45 p.m. Brigadier Gerardo Ferrentino of the Carabinieri, with a corporal, arrived for an initial inspection on the spot. At 3.00 p.m. the same Brigadier returned, this time accompanied by two uniformed policemen and a man in civilian clothes who acted as though he were their "chief". He it was who discovered the markings; three triangularly placed holes on a meadow on top of the escarpment, a few metres beyond the spot where Ferri had seen the human form. After completing their on-site investigations and enquiries, the police officers left, requesting Ferri to come to Borgo S. Lorenzo in the afternoon to sign his statement. This took place at 5.30 p.m., in the presence of Major of Carabinieri Sebastiano Anzà, of the Borgo S. Lorenzo Station.

The Marks

The marks — or presumed marks — were confirmed by a group of our C.U.N. investigators, Messrs Sani, Boncompagni, and Ricci, when we went there to have a look at the landing site on the afternoon of Thursday, October 11, that is to say, about 60 hours after the happening.

Up on the meadow, beyond the escarpment, at a distance of some 66 metres from the front of the villa, were to be seen three excavated imprints of hemispherical concavity (diameter about 10 cms., depth about 3 cms.), disposed at the points of a hypothetical right-angled triangle. Two of these marks, the most deeply impressed, were on an alignment facing the villa and formed one of the shorter sides of the triangle, being 1.86 m. apart. The third mark, less visible, lay further to the left (as seen when one is stand-



The entity at the "Villa Radicchia".

ing with back to the villa) and was 1.83 m. from its neighbour, thus giving us a "hypotenuse" of 2.60 m.

The inner surface (hemispherical) of each imprint appeared as though "polished smooth" by the effect of a powerful pressure exerted on the soil by a smooth, round body; inside of each of the imprints were to be noted blades of grass and pebbles so compressed at the bottom of the hole that they looked as though "stamped".

The grass of the meadow lying within the perimeter of the triangle (we refer still to the date of October 11) was slightly bent in comparison with the grass round about outside. Ferri said that two days earlier, when the Carabinieri arrived, this bending effect of the grass had been much more evident. This detail has been confirmed by the Carabinieri, who, on the other hand, did not pay much importance to this inasmuch as similar areas of bent grass were also to be seen at other spots in the meadow. It should be mentioned that it was raining (drizzle) on the afternoon of Thursday, October 11, and that it had also rained on the previous day.

On October 12 and 13 the site was visited by the Prato UFO Investigation Group, led by Siro Menicucci. They examined the landing-site marks with a Geiger counter and a magnetometer. The results of their instrumental tests were totally negative. No anomaly was discovered either as regards radioactivity or as regards magnetism.

One other item of importance: strangely enough, the least strongly imprinted of the holes was located slightly lower than where the other two were. For, logically, had an object been standing there, one would have expected the opposite to be the case, namely that that hole would have been the deepest.

Effects on the Eyewitness

On his own admission, Ferri remained psychologically perturbed from the experience he had undergone in the night of October 9, 1984, and all those who have been in contact with him and spoken to him during the days following the event have been in a position to verify this for themselves. Signor Farcilli, who met him for the first time on the morning of that same day, October 9, has stated (telephonic interview on November 13) that he found Ferri in an actual and veritable state, as he called it, of "confusedness" (sic.) The Carabinieri, who carried out the investigation on that same day, in their turn were able to confirm this. On the occasion of our own first on-site inspection (October 11) we ourselves noticed that the man was still overwhelmed by tremendous emotional tension. He got over the shock slowly: only when we visited the site for the last time (November 5) — that is to say almost a month since we had seen him first — did we find Ferri in a now normalized psychological state.

During the first three or four days after the occurrence, the witness had disturbance of his vision, in the form of irritation and reddening of the eyes. This trouble, which Ferri has always attributed to the effect of his having seen the "incandescent sphere", was especially troublesome throughout October 9, that is to say during the hours immediately following upon the sighting. Farcilli and the Carabinieri confirmed this. However, Ferri did not consider it necessary to have recourse to a doctor, and treated himself with an eye-lotion that he had in the house. On Thursday, October 11, we saw that his eyes were still slightly reddened, but, as he told us himself, it had almost gone by then. When we asked if he had suffered any other sort of trouble (gastro-intestinal disorders, nausea, etc.) he denied it emphatically.

Effects on the Dog

As already stated, the guard-dog at the villa never barked once during the sighting. It is emphasised that, at night, the animal sleeps in a kennel located in the middle of the paddock in front of the villa, and that the entrance of the kennel faces right towards the spot where the phenomenon took place. It is therefore impossible for the dog not to have seen it, and consequently strange that the dog did not react by barking. According to the affirmations of Ferri and his family, the dog in fact *always* barks at strangers, and refuses to let anyone whom he does not know stroke him. His behaviour on the night of the sighting and for a fortnight thereafter was anomalous: for he remained curled up in his kennel almost permanently, sad and subdued, no longer barking at anybody and — an even more singular fact — would let *anybody* stroke him without objection (we ourselves stroked him on the afternoon of October 11). And, finally, the dog

absolutely refused all food for several days following the date of the sighting.

Indirect Evidence

Signor Isidoro Ferri was the sole witness to the phenomenon that occurred at "La Radicchia", but in the first daylight hours of October 9, 1984, other people observed something unusual in the night sky, or in the region of Polcanto itself, or in places within a radius of not more than fifteen kilometres to the north of Firenze.

For example, at about 0.40 a.m. on October 9, Emanuele Peris, a young man of 21, was travelling on his motorscooter along the Via Pratese de Sesto Fiorentino, towards his home in Prato, with his friend Franco Marino on the pillion. As they arrived at Calenzano (about 6 kms. to the north-west of Firenze), he observed on his right-hand side (i.e. towards the N.W., in the direction of Monte Morello), at low height, above the roofs of the houses, a "roundish" luminous body of apparent dimensions roughly equal to those of the Full Moon. Astonished, he pointed it out to his friend, and pulled up and switched off his engine in order to have a good view of the phenomenon.

The object had a clear light-blue coloured border, and a nucleus the upper part of which was dark blue and the lower part "yellowish". After remaining stationary for an initial period, the object performed various movements, changing place, stopping again, and changing in shape several times, from the "full moon" appearance at the beginning, and four times, to the shape of a star. The sighting lasted about seven minutes. Finally the object vanished towards the south-east, in the direction of Firenze, from its latter position on the left-hand side of the highway. (When they caught sight of it first it had been on the right-hand side of the road, as stated above.)

At about 1.30 a.m. during the night, a "red flash" was seen at a place called Mulinaccio, on the Via Faentina at about one kilometre to the south of Polcanto. The observer was a lady who is the manageress of the local bar. Before shutting up the premises, she had gone outside to dispose of a bag of garbage. The "flash" appeared suddenly in the north-west, precisely in the direction of "La Radicchia" (which, as the crow flies, is about five kilometres from Mulinaccio). The lady paid no importance to it. She says she merely thought to herself of the proverb that runs "*Rosso de sera, buon tempo si spera*" ("*A red sky at night is the shepherd's delight*"), and that she quietly went back into the house at once.

The most important indirect evidence, however, (inasmuch as it tends to confirm Ferri's account *in a decisive fashion*) is that of a family named Wiechmann, who reside on the Via Tassaia highway, close to "La Radicchia", indeed just a few hundreds of metres from the same. Signor Vittorio Wiechmann, interviewed by

us by telephone, told us that, during the night of October 9, his wife and his mother were awakened by a powerful light shining in through the shutters of the window. The light was so bright that both ladies thought it was already the dawn. But it was in fact about 3.00 a.m. (in other words, says Signor Wiechmann, half an hour before the landing at "La Radichia"). The two ladies did not get out of bed and so did not go to the window to see where the light was coming from.

(Translation from Italian)

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE,
OFFICE OF THE MINISTER

Rome

Date: 21 (illegible on photostat) 1985

Ref. No.: 2/24419/14.1.29/85

SUBJECT: LANDING OF UNCONVENTIONAL
AIRCRAFT AT POLCANTO (F1) IN T.E. MILI-
TARY ZONE IN NIGHT OF OCTOBER 9, 1984.

TO: CENTRO UFOLOGICO NAZIONALE
Via Odorico da Pordenone, 36
50127, FIRENZE

With reference to your letter RP/001 of January 16, 1985, and the contents of the Report enclosed therein, it is our understanding that the enquiries which have been made of the Authorities concerned with Air Defence, Air Traffic Control, and Meteorology, have produced no elements of significance such as might be corroborative of the occurrence indicated in your letter.

With regard to the arguments formulated in the "Conclusions" of the above-mentioned Report, it is considered that they do not correspond with the reality of the assured facts as ascertained so far.

Accordingly, the statements that there have been persistent violations of the national territory by craft piloted by presumed military spies appear to be devoid of any serious foundation.

By Order of the Minister,

(Signed): Vice-Chief of Cabinet

COMMENT BY C.U.N.:— "Convenient scepticism".

UFO STUDY IN THE USSR

Jüri Lina (Norsborg, Sweden)

LITTLE is known in the West about the beginnings of Russian UFO research. The first sign of such an active interest was a lecture, delivered in Moscow in 1947, entitled "The Meaning of the Tunguska Meteorite", by the engineer and science-fiction writer Aleksandr Kazantsev and the assistant-professor (dot-sent) Dr Yuri Feliks Zigel'.

Discussing the well-known catastrophic explosion which wrought such havoc in the Siberian taiga on June 30, 1908, Kazantsev and Zigel' proposed the hypothesis that the cause of it was an accident aboard an extraterrestrial spacecraft. Systematic work and actual research on UFOs had to wait, however, a few more years, until 1952, when Dr Yuri Fomin, a senior professor of automation at the Moscow Institute of Technology, began to make a study of the foreign literature on the subject. Subsequently, in 1958, he started collecting case-reports from the Russian Federative Republic and other parts of the Soviet Union, and he became an exponent of the extraterrestrial hypothesis.

The First Russian Wave

It seems clear that the first Russian wave of UFO reports had already occurred in 1946, when numerous cigar-shaped objects were seen in the skies. There do not seem to have been many more detailed reports until 1954, when a significant "intermediary wave" was registered. This included the well-publicized incident which took place at 4.15 p.m. on November 27, 1954, when people on Red Square in Moscow observed a "cylindrical vehicle" flying at an estimated height of about 300 metres.

In 1959 Fomin was joined in his research by two engineers, B. Makarov and V. Gulikov. They began to give lectures on UFOs at the Moscow Planetarium — a difficult undertaking, seeing that the subject of UFOs was at that particular time coming in for very harsh criticism. A whole series of sceptical press articles appeared, and Yuri Fomin was expelled from the Moscow Political and Academic Propaganda Institute. A hiatus of several years now occurred in Russian UFO research.