

A LANDING IN FRANCE IN 1790

IN Alberto Fengolio's article *Ancient Visitors from the Sky* in CLYPEUS, Anno III, No. 3, page 13 (given also in a French translation in GEPA's *Phénomènes Spatiaux** No. 10, December 1966—p. 32), we read a most interesting account. It seems that . . . "Near Alençon in France, in 1790, there occurred so strange a happening that a police inspector named Liabeuf was sent from Paris to investigate. His report is as follows:

'At 5 a.m. on June 12, some peasants observed an enormous globe which seemed to be surrounded by flames. At first they thought it might be a Montgolfier balloon on fire, but its great speed and a whistling sound coming from it puzzled them. The globe slowed down, made a rocking motion, and then dashed on to the top of a hill, uprooting the vegetation growing on the slope. The heat which emanated from the object was so great that the grass and shrubs caught alight shortly afterwards.

'The peasants managed to isolate the fire which might otherwise have spread over the whole area. By evening the globe was still warm, and there occurred an extraordinary—indeed not to say unbelievable—thing.

'The eyewitnesses of this event were two mayors, a physician, and three other local authorities who confirm my report, not to mention the dozens of peasants who were present.

'The sphere, which was large enough to have contained a carriage, was intact after all this flying about. It had aroused such curiosity that people came running from all directions to see it.

'Then, suddenly, a sort of door opened, and (here is the interesting part—G. C.) *there came out a person*, just like us, but dressed in a strange manner, in clothes adhering completely to the body, and, seeing this crowd of people, this person murmured something incomprehensible and ran into the wood.

'The peasants backed away instinctively, in fear, and

this saved them, for, shortly afterwards, the sphere silently exploded throwing pieces in all directions, which pieces were consumed until reduced to powder.

'Searches were undertaken to find the mysterious man, but he seemed to have dissolved in thin air, for up till now not the tiniest trace of him has been discovered. Unless he has vanished from our plane of existence so as to leave behind no trace of himself.

'Was this a being who had come from another world in this strange means of conveyance? I am no savant; but such is the idea that has suddenly come into my mind . . .'

"This report subsequently reached the French Academy of Sciences and was greeted with the sarcasms of the eminent savants who denied in the most absolute fashion the possibility that a living being could arrive in this way on the earth. They considered the report to be the product of an imaginative mind fed by the fanciful talk of peasants who had seen something though without knowing exactly what. These learned personages of the Academy were not even willing to put themselves out to the extent of proceeding to the spot and seeing for themselves the hole made in the ground by the sphere, and yet this hole remained visible for years."

It is a pity that Signor Fenoglio has apparently not indicated the precise source of this extraordinary story, which now strikes us as presenting a number of features that are familiar, although it could not possibly have been taken seriously by anybody in 1790.

Who, at the time of the French Revolution, had ever heard of tightly-fitting space suits?

I will try to ascertain the source, which, as one may well believe, might be the Transactions of the French Academy itself.

G.C.

* Edited by René Fouéré, 69 Rue de la Tombe Issoire, Paris 14e, France.

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