

Deep Underground

In Search of Dark Realms

by Scott Corrales

Underground city of Kaymakli, Turkey.

Having written previously on the subject of subterranean societies (e.g., “Underground Empires: Fact or Fiction?” *FATE*, January 2000), I find it remarkable that information continues to emerge on strange activities involving an inordinate interest in the bowels of our world, not for the traditional activities of mining and oil drilling, but an active search for something that may prove of interest to those living above.

Are the world’s surface powers actively

searching for a subterranean society that may have existed undetected for millennia? Is there any connection to the alleged underground “UFO bases” that filled newspaper and magazine headlines in the 1990s? Are we witnessing a new crop of Aghartha searchers in the tradition of those who went looking for this improbable realm in the early decades of the 20th century?

Trapped Underground?

The news item could not have been timelier. In March 2004, a team of six

British explorers—archaeologists by some accounts, prospectors and military men in others—was trapped in the stygian gloom of the 20-mile-long Al Pazat cavern system in the Mexican village of Cuezatlán (state of Puebla). The explorers had been surprised by the sudden flooding of one of the cavern chambers and had managed to survive by climbing onto a giant underground boulder that kept them high and dry.

Communicating with the surface world through a satellite phone, the six men called for help and the British embassy in Mexico City arranged to have a team of Royal Navy divers dispatched to the cave to find the stranded explorers. There would be nothing straightforward about this rescue effort—the divers would have to plunge into icy cold water and swim to a depth of 200 feet to emerge into what speleologists were referring to as an air bubble. The rescue effort would also involve bringing the six men back through the frigid depths to the surface.

In spite of these dramatic details, the most curious fact remained that no one was quite sure about the identity of the party trapped underground. The British embassy characterized them as “speleologists” while the BBC described them as “soldiers.” Villagers who had spoken to them before they ventured underground had described them as “veterans of the Gulf War.” Journalists settled on the notion that they were uranium prospectors who had employed satellite imagery to identify the cavern system as a suitable location for finding fissionable materials.

Jesus Gonzalez Galicia, mayor of Cuezatlán, noted that the small size of his village allowed people to take a good look at their visitors from overseas. The group had stopped at a bar for drinks, and locals soon learned that their number included spelunkers, engineers, and several Gulf War veterans, although the mixed group had never really clarified the reason for its visit to the caves.

Subsequently, British intelligence officials would confirm that the team’s objectives were clearly military, prompting the Mexican press to describe the operation as “a foreign military incursion” in Mexican territory, something not seen since the early 20th century. Even as concerned messages crossed the Atlantic between the Mexican state department and the British Foreign Office, villagers stated that these visits had been going on for more than a decade, involving not only British personnel but Americans as well.

Upon learning of the military identity of the persons trapped in the Cuezatlán cave system, Puebla governor Melquiades Morales observed that they had already committed a serious violation by conducting any type of activity other than sightseeing, which is all that a tourist visa allows. When rescued, the parties involved would be deported and declared *persona non grata*.

Experts argued as to what the “real” reasons for the British military team’s visit could be. Many insisted on the highly rational answer offered by the search for uranium and other radioactive materials, even

as Jose Antonio Montaña, president of the Union Mexicana de Agrupaciones Espeleológicas (Mexican Speleological Association), insisted that fissionables couldn't possibly be found in Cuzatlán, since the cave system's interior is completely made of calcium carbonate, formed over hundreds of millions of years by unicellular organisms and coral.

What then were these specialists doing in the depths of Mexico? Speculation has run the gamut from a search for hidden alien bases to lost Aztec treasure that escaped the rapacity of the Conquistadors, but an increasing number of researchers believe that the marooned British expedition—whose rescue was accomplished a week later amid international controversy—was looking for the legendary tunnel or tunnels linking the Americas and built by an antediluvian civilization.

The Tunnels of Light

Controversy has raged since the 1970s regarding the infamous Ecuadorian tunnels described by Erich von Däniken in *The Gold of the Gods*—supposedly lined with sheets of gold that recounted the hidden history of the human race—and more levelheaded reports on such artificial structures presented in specialized journals such as *Pursuit*. We needn't go as far south as Ecuador to find a belief in similar underground structures. Mexico allegedly boasts as intricate a network of artificial tunnels as anyone could wish, running from the American Southwest down into Central

America, and crafted by an unknown civilization whose recollection has survived purely in the form of oral traditions.

One such tradition can be found in the lands surrounding the urban sprawl of Mexico City and has to do with the unearthly landscape of the Teotihuacán pyramid complex northeast of the city. This "City of the Gods," which was old when the first Aztec wanderers entered the region known as Anáhuac, supposedly contains an entrance to a city that can be reached through a series of tunnels—a city known only as the "dwelling place of the white god." Caves have indeed been found under the massive Pyramid of the Sun, and they are believed to have housed a form of worship different from that held above (a more matriarchal, Earth-goddess worship opposed to the Sun-god revered at the pyramid's summit). But no traces of the alleged city entrance have been found.

In the western state of Jalisco one finds a similar belief in underground tunnels that can lead the seeker to the temple of the "Emperor of the World."

The indefatigable Andreas Faber Kaiser wrote about a tribe of light-skinned Indians dwelling on the border between Mexico and Guatemala who spoke openly of the belief in an "extensive tunnel network" under the area occupied by the Lacandon tribe. This legend, which dovetails interestingly with that of the Tayu Wari tunnels of Ecuador, tells of golden tablets recording the history of the human race. But as with all such stories, the locals are

Teotihuacán.

vague about the details.

In 1689 the Spanish monk Francisco Antonio Fuentes wrote in glowing terms about magnificent artificial structures, "the marvelous tunnels of Puchuta" (in what is now Guatemala), which run underground from the aforementioned town to the community of Tecpan, some 25 miles away. Was this a spur or connection to the "main network" of tunnels linking the continent? Other traditions described Indian raiders making use of the tunnels to harass the early Spanish settlers. Contrary to what one might believe, the underworld was apparently "filled with light" of some sort. One of these subterranean arteries, accessible from an unspecified building in Santa Cruz del Quiché, would allow a traveler to enter Mexico in about an hour—a journey of at least two days using the twist-

ing and turning mountain paths of the surface world.

Atlantis and Hollow Mars

Belief in underground cities remains a fundamental tenet of contemporary contactee beliefs, as exemplified by an April 2004 news item discussing the theories posited by Argentinean ufologist-turned-contactee Pedro Romaniuk, 82, a former airline pilot who authored over 20 books on UFOs and went on to become one of his country's best-known contactees.

Romaniuk firmly believes that under the bedrock of the Andean Range and especially near the city of Cachi, there lies an inner-earth empire populated by beings of Atlantean descent, in which can be found all manner of animals ranging from exotic prehistoric survivals to mu-

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tants produced by the arcane science of the inner-earth.

Nor are his theories restricted exclusively to planet Earth: NASA, believes Romaniuk, will never find life on Mars despite its best efforts and keen scientific know-how, because the Red Planet “is hollow and contains a great civilization in possession of ten million interstellar spacecraft ready for takeoff”—a notion that conjures up images of harried Martian space traffic controllers trying to clear all these vehicles for launch at the same time.

“The Andean cordillera,” Romaniuk told reporters from Salta’s *El Tribuno* newspaper, “is hollow. And it is specifically here that one can find an intraterrestrial realm inhabited and controlled by the descendants of ancient Atlantis, who are in possession of a superior technology. Many of the creatures that people claim having seen, such as the improperly termed Chupacabras, are the result of the genetic experimentation of the subterranean scientists.” Romaniuk tentatively extended this explanation to account for the bizarre hairy hominid of Rosario de la Frontera, although he also allowed for the possibility that “an act of natural serendipity” could have created the Argentinean Bigfoot.

Almost a year earlier, Romaniuk had commissioned two scientists from his “Fundación Instituto Biofísico de Investigaciones” (FICI) to conduct a survey that would prove the existence of the underground post-Atlantean civilization to a disbelieving world. In May 2003, Omar Hesse

and Jorge Millstein conducted a survey of the general region surrounding the city of Cachi. After concluding operations, they announced that uncommon radioactive signatures and microwaves had been detected from a source beneath the surface. Somewhere under the massive peak known as Nevado de Cachi, the scientists concluded, was something that generated alternating electrical waves—possibly the advanced machinery of Romaniuk’s putative intraterrestrials. “The oscillations clearly indicate that there is activity kilometers beneath the surface,” Hesse told the *El Tribuno* newspaper, “which means a power source. This could mean engines.”

Millstein cautioned that it would be necessary to return to this area with something he termed “depth rods” to get more precise readings, reminding journalists that the area tested happened to be “one of the hottest” as regards UFO activity.

City in the Cave

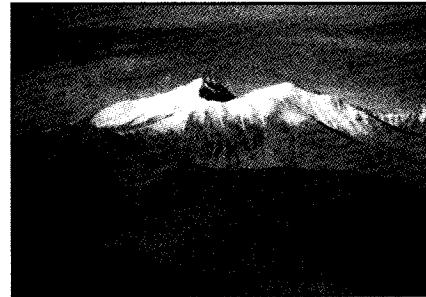
A report provided by Argentina’s Grupo CATENT and entitled “El Rosario, The Subterranean City of La Rioja”) states that on September 23, 1970, a shepherd from the Pre-Cordilleran region near Cerro del Rosario sought to shelter his sheep from torrential rains in a nearby cave. As he ventured deeper into its recesses while the downpour continued outside, the shepherd claimed to have found a flight of steps leading downward, and counted 360 of them as they led him deeper into the bowels of the earth. Upon

reaching the bottom of the steps, he was stunned to find himself in an underground city filled with eldritch metallic buildings capped with domes, transparent sidewalks, and strange, silent vehicles that hovered only a few feet off the surface. He suddenly found himself being stared at by strange humanlike beings standing in excess of seven feet in height, some wearing black tunics and others white ones.

Like the protagonist of *Etidorhpa*, the shepherd walked trance-like along a given street, taking in the odd landscape, until he came to another staircase identical to the one that led him downward. He ascended the steps and found himself in the surface world (no mention is made of whether the shepherd was able to find his flock again in the original cave). Excited, he ventured down to a nearby town and contacted a local priest and a physician, who listened to his account. When officials of the government of La Rioja visited the site, all they could find was “an unbreachable stone wall” at the end of the cave.

While these cases, despite their intriguing nature, have an undeniable element of fancy attached to them, there are documented discoveries of tunnels in the Andes, notably in Perú. Spain's EFE news agency ran a story on March 9, 2003, announcing the discovery of a series of underground vestibules, rooms, waterworks, and ancient tombs under the city of Cuzco, the capital of the Inca Empire.

A Spanish archaeologist, Anselmo Pi,



Nevado de Cachi—does it hide a subterranean city?

as part of the Wiracocha Project that kicked off in August 2000, discovered a two-kilometer-long tunnel joining the enigmatic, cyclopean-walled Sacsahuamán fortress outside of Cuzco with the Koricancha temple in the city.

The radar imaging obtained by the Wiracocha Project suggests that the tunnel links directly not only to the Koricancha or “Temple of the Sun,” but to other structures as well, including such temple structures as the Colcampata and the Huamanmarca.

The Wiracocha Project's efforts at confirming and mapping the legendary underground galleries would help to substantiate the accounts of Spanish chroniclers like Pedro Cieza de León, who wrote of the existence of a citadel under Cuzco.

Scott Corrales is a frequent contributor to FATE. He is the editor of Inexplicata: The Journal of Hispanic Ufology.

