

its flight about 60 feet away from him and then completely vanished.

Arthur Constance comments that he could easily fill a book with other and similar accounts of fireballs. The contemporary explanation offered for the mystery was "electrical phenomena", electricity then being an almost magical world to the layman who, no doubt like his modern counterpart, accepted anything issuing from a scientific source or an official authority. Dr. Menzel,

perhaps unconsciously, offers the fireball as a scientific explanation for the flying saucer without realising that he is leaving the mystery as deep as ever and the explanation as far to seek. In fact, in exploiting the fireball he is back to the "electrical phenomenon" explanation, though at one remove. And that explains nothing at all.

*See "The World of Dr. Menzel", article in FLYING SAUCER REVIEW, May-June, 1964 issue.

NICAP'S REPORT

The UFO evidence surveyed . . .

THE long awaited report,* compiled by the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena of Washington, D.C., was released on July 5. The reactions of American public opinion are hard to assess at the moment. In England, the television news service referred to the matter in more than one bulletin, but among the national newspapers only *The Times* and the *Daily Telegraph* gave it any serious attention: *The Times* devoted half a column of reasonable comment, but failed to mention the report in which criticisms of both the United States Air Force and the British Air Ministry had appeared.

The Purpose of the Report

Before making any specific comments on the report itself it is necessary to mention that the volume of evidence not unnaturally specialises, not wholly but largely, in those incidents occurring over America. The purpose behind the compilation was to alert the American public, via Congress and the newspapers, to the fact that the subject of UFOs was to be taken seriously and to expose the censorship that undoubtedly exists on both sides of the Atlantic. To the saucer student who is internationalist in approach and who reads the volume without realising its primary purpose it will appear much too limited in its range. This is not intended as a criticism—it would be manifestly unfair to mention the point except as a warning. While a small section is devoted to foreign reports (i.e. foreign to the United States), inevitably a general impression is conveyed that the phenomenon is in some way predominantly American. To this extent the report suffers from a handicap because, contrary to general American belief, the sightings over that country have not been unduly high nor in the context of happenings

elsewhere have they been particularly remarkable. England has had more than her fair share (based on geographical considerations) of sightings when compared with the U.S.A.: France, Brazil, Italy and the Argentine have each of them contributed more sensational and persistent evidence. In this context the report quotes from a statement made by Dr. J. Allen Hynek, Chief scientific consultant to the American Air Force on UFOs. He wrote in the April 1963 issue of the *Yale Scientific Magazine* as follows: "Although we tend to think of flying saucers as peculiarly American, they are international in scope. England has had more reported sightings, per square mile of territory, than has the United States. France has had its share, not only sporadically, but also in one apparently major wave in the fall of 1954. Brazil, Spain, Italy, Australia, Canada and even several Iron Curtain countries have also been the sources of reports." Dr. Hynek here betrays a considerable knowledge of the subject. That knowledge must perforce be shared with the United States Air Force.

Having said that, the NICAP report can be most warmly welcomed and it is hoped that its reception and its effect on Congress, and the United States Air Force and ultimately on world public opinion will justify the immense amount of work and care that has been devoted to its compilation. The report was issued at a propitious moment for flying saucers have been gaining in acceptability for some time now: the cat has been seen to be emerging from the bag for well over a year. Orthodoxy, however, yields by inches and while the impact of *The UFO Evidence* will always be recognised as a turning point in the struggle for the truth, we may have to go on fighting for quite a while yet before the final triumph. As one UFO

commentator has remarked: "We haven't won yet, but we know we cannot lose."

Although our next is a small point it is worth raising largely because, by a coincidence, notes on "spindle shapes" appear elsewhere in this issue. In the photographic section of the NICAP report on page 93 there appears the following account: "Joe Perry, Grand Blanc, Michigan. The *Detroit Times*, March 9 (1960?), reported the story of this photograph, stating that the FBI was investigating it. While pursuing his hobby of astronomical photography, Mr. Perry obtained a colour photograph (slide) reportedly showing a UFO which was 'disc-shaped with a dome and leaving a green trail.' (The image on the print examined by NICAP is similar to a black disc viewed edge-on, but not perfectly symmetrical, and the 'object' is surrounded by green colouration resembling a glow.) The FBI turned Mr. Perry's slide over to the Air Force for analysis. Later the Air Force stated their opinion 'that the blue spots (sic) on the slide are not images but result from damage to the emulsion during the developing process.' A colour print of Mr. Perry's photograph was analysed for NICAP by Max B. Miller, who reported September 18, 1960: The UFO quite probably a cinch mark . . . it could either be foreign matter which attached itself to the film during processing or undeveloped emulsion, and I'm inclined to say the latter . . ."

The accompanying sketch of the photograph appended to the report shows an exact counterpart of the spindle-shaped objects reproduced in this issue. The fact that the caption to the photograph reads: "Appearance of typical lens flare sometimes mistaken for UFOs; caused by bright light source reflecting from camera lens" illustrates the dangers of isolationism in dealing with the UFO mystery. When even this particular aspect is surveyed on an international scale, it will be seen that this particular shape appears, on occasion, when (a) there is no bright light source and (b) when there is no lens to flare. These comments also underline the warning repeatedly voiced in the *FLYING SAUCER REVIEW* that allegations of hoaxes, misinterpretations etc. need as careful investigation as do the apparently genuine flying saucer reports. A point has been given quite unnecessarily by NICAP to the sceptics and it is significant that had it noted the non-American evidence it would not have made this mistake. There is no need to claim the Perry photograph is a saucer, but the "shape" cannot universally be explained away as a trick of light.

In view of recent events, one of the most interesting sections in this report comes at the end. Section

XIII deals with Congress and the UFOs. On August 31, 1957, Senator Barry Goldwater wrote to NICAP: "I am an Air Force Reserve Officer and have been one for the last 27 years and, consequently, I am, indeed, interested in unidentified flying objects. I, frankly, feel that there is a great deal to this and I have discussed it often with many Air Force Officers . . ." In the May-June issue of the *FLYING SAUCER REVIEW* we quoted President Lyndon Johnson's interest in the subject, so it would appear that whoever wins in November, the UFOs will continue to have a friend at court. If an English review is permitted to make such a comment, it would seem that Barry Goldwater is the candidate more likely to order a general release, for he appears to an English audience as much more of a rebel than Lyndon Johnson. Time alone will tell.

From the English point of view, this NICAP report is of paramount importance in that no similar pressure can be applied to our own Ministry of Defence. While the United States Air Force does appear to investigate UFO incidents before issuing false conclusions, the British counterpart issues its nonsensical findings before and often without any investigation whatsoever. It would seem that it has been ordered to play the subject down and to leave the matter to the United States. The latest evidence available is that the Ministry of Defence shuns the subject until its hand is forced and only when it is obliged to speak does a committee decide on an explanation which UFO students know to be false but which is just acceptable to an ignorant and misinformed public.

If NICAP's pressure can open the American door to the truth, then the British will swing open too. And when it does, it is possible that the truth will be much more sensational than many UFO researchers at the moment believe. If flying saucers, UFOs, call them what you will, have been in truth visiting us for even the last seventeen years then they have been here for a purpose and it is hard to believe, on the inter-planetary hypothesis, that they have left their country and come to ours just for the change of air and scene. Have they all gone back? In view of the purpose of the report it is quite understandable that it excludes such considerations as these and concentrates on proving the existence of solid unidentified objects that obey an intelligent control.

**The UFO Evidence*. The National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP), 1536 Connecticut Avenue, N.W. Washington 36, D.C., U.S.A. To members of NICAP, 3.95. Non-members 4.95.

World round-up

*of news and comment
about recent sightings*

ENGLAND

Wakefield revisited

The following account is taken from the *Yorkshire Evening Post*, issue of May 28: "A strange object in the sky was seen once again over Wakefield last night, hovering with an orange glow to the north-west of the city before disappearing. During the past few days the mysterious UFO (unidentified flying object) has appeared in the same spot, observed by many people in the city. Similar reports have been received from Leeds and Barnsley.

"Mr John Bentham, aged 54, switchboard operator at the Wakefield 'A' Power Station has seen the object on three occasions. He saw it last night at 9.45 p.m.' It was elongated and had a reddish orange glow with light shining out at both ends,' he said. 'It seemed to hover over the city for nearly two hours and then slowly made off in the direction from which it came.'

"Mr. Bentham took his binoculars to work after he had seen the object for the first time on Saturday, and a compass to plot its course.

"'It was definitely not a star or a plane. It hovered before moving off towards the north-west,' he said.

Mr Alfred Booth (43), of Lupset Crescent, Wakefield, who was working at Wakefield Sewerage Works, Calder Vale Road, also saw the object. 'It was half-moon shaped with an orange glow in the middle,' he said.

Torquay incident

From the *Torquay Herald Express*, May 23:

"Just what was the strange object seen in the sky over Wakefield on Tuesday night by at least two different families? A satellite, a high-flying jet, or one of those strange UFOs (Unid-

entified Flying Objects) which most of us lump together under the generic name of 'Flying Saucer'? Both reports, which come from reasonable people not given to sensational flights of the imagination, seem to indicate that the UFO, whatever it was, acted in a way no known inhabitant of the sky normally acts. And one report at least tallied almost exactly with a report given to a scientist at Leeds University by a woman from Barnsley, who claimed to have seen an object acting in a similar manner two nights previously.

"We first heard of the incident from Mrs Mary Oldroyd, of 17 Malham Square, Eastmoor Estate, who with her husband Walter, teenaged daughter Ruth and their neighbour Mr. Roy Carter, watched a strange light in the sky from just after midnight on Tuesday (May 19) until it disappeared some 25 minutes later.

"'It looked like a bright star with a pinkish tinge, moving very slowly in a wide arc from south to north, and every now and then there was a clearly visible up and down movement,' said Mrs Oldroyd.

"Mr Oldroyd saw it first. A former R.A.F. man, he often looks at the night sky before going to bed and on this occasion saw the strange light, moving slowly over the roof-tops. 'It didn't seem to be moving fast enough for a high-flying jet, nor regularly enough for a satellite, so I called my wife and Ruth out to look at it. Then we called Mr Carter over' he said. So sure was Mrs Oldroyd that what they had seen was, for the moment, unexplainable, but real, that she rang Mr Brian Meek, a scientist at Leeds University who is interested in such phenomena.

"'He was most interested in what I had to report, and told me that he had received a similar report from a woman

in Barnsley only two nights previously, in which the same strange up and down movement was mentioned' said Mrs Oldroyd.

"Certainly the UFO didn't follow any of the rules normally associated with high-flying objects. Its trajectory was not straight enough for a satellite; it travelled far too slowly for a jet; and the light was too steady and unwinking to be classed as reflected light from a high-flying balloon.

"Over to the second report, which came from two children, Stephen Holton, aged 9, and his sister Julie, aged 7, and their grandmother, Mrs J. Knee, of 55 Mountbatten Crescent, Outwood. Just over two hours earlier on Tuesday night, at about 9.50 p.m., Stephen had seen a queer light in the sky and had called his grandmother and sister out to look at it.

"'It was very bright, and seemed to be moving very high up. Every now and then it went round in circles, then set off in a different direction until it went out of sight going toward the north,' said Mrs Knee.

"Whatever it was—and we should be interested to hear if anyone else saw anything strange late on Tuesday night—it has certainly aroused curiosity in many people, including Mr Meek, who has made a study of this subject of UFOs."

Sussex saucer

From the *Bognor Regis Observer* of May 15:

"A 'brilliantly coloured' unidentified object was spotted by three guests at a Bognor Regis hotel on Tuesday evening (May 12), hovering in clouds in the western sky.

"The three people were standing on the front lawn of Black Mill House,