

# NEW TALES FROM THE VIENNA WOODS

*Ernst Berger*

ON August 3, 1972, UFO sightings occurred southwest of the Austrian capital over the Vienna Woods, a sandstone mountain chain, and the Vienna Basin. In my field investigations I found two pairs of reliable witnesses of the phenomenon. The high quality of their reports enabled me to do some additional computations usually impossible in a "fly-over" case. Although I had no success in my search for corroborative witnesses (officials at Vienna had not troubled to take notes of the numerous telephone calls that night) the following reports provide us with enough data to disprove the explanations forthcoming later and to construct the object's shape and trajectory.\*

## The Hering sighting

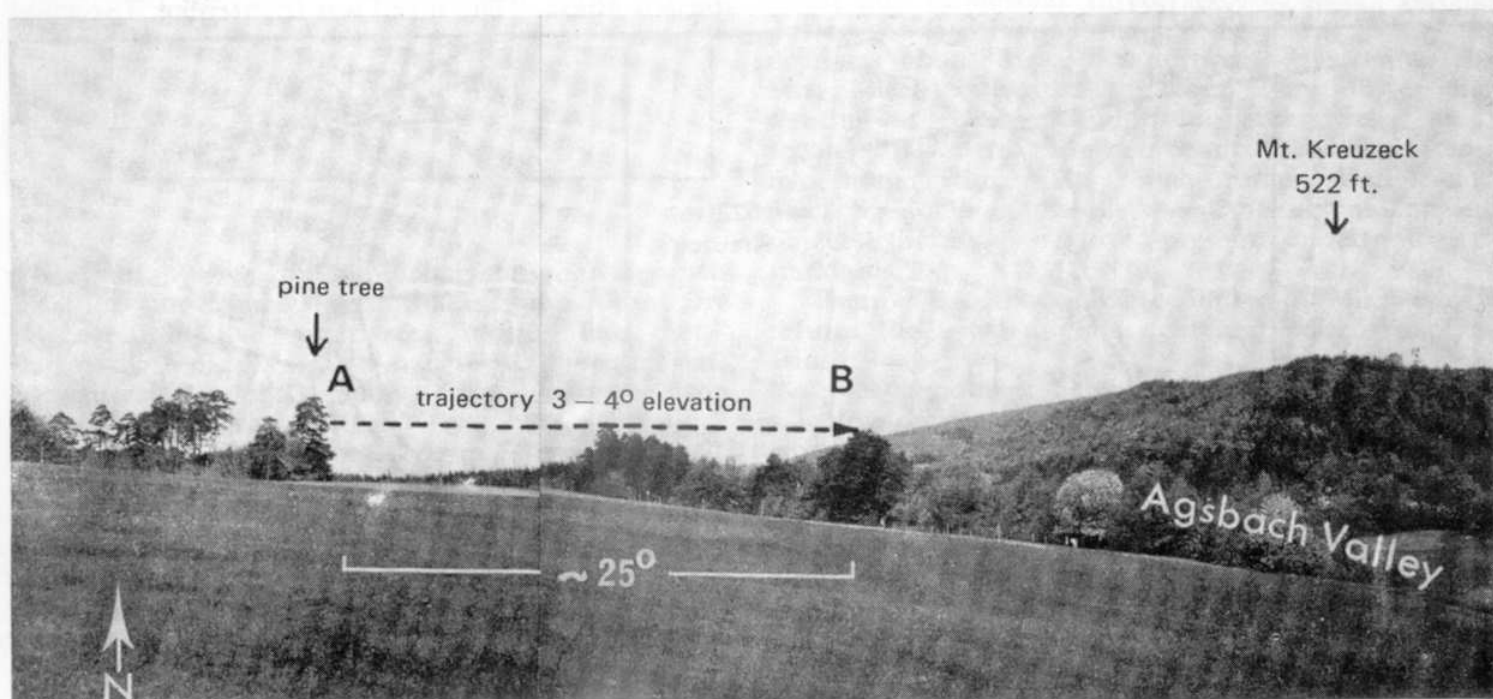
Reinhold Hering, a head forester in his thirties, from Klausen-Leopoldsdorf in the Vienna Woods, and sportswoman Erika Graef had left Hering's *Volkswagen* car and were walking along a track over a grassy hill at Mitterriegel in Agsbach Valley towards a stand to carry away a roebuck shot by Mrs. Graef. Both had field-glasses 10 x 50 and Hering's two sporting dogs were following. Sunset had been at 7.29 p.m. CET (Central European Time) and a thunderstorm in the afternoon had cleared the air over Vienna.

At 8.45 p.m., Mr. Hering spotted a brilliant

light behind a wooded hillock to his right. He called Mrs. Graef's attention to it and they watched it through binoculars as it came out from behind a pine tree, much too slowly for an aircraft. Hering was dazzled by the powerful light, which was too intense to look at through the field glasses. "If you turn your binoculars into a halogen fog-headlight at night, it will give you the same impression," he told me.

Mrs. Graef said, "With the naked eye you could clearly see the disc which gave off a brilliant light." The thick body was somewhat tilted towards the two witnesses. It had a dark surface with three lights. Hering explained, "There were two red-orange lights and an extremely brilliant one to the right, all calm and steady. The brilliant one seemed to come from a groove, like some kind of all-round headlight. The red lights were not really lights, but red surfaces. It was the brilliance that caught my attention, otherwise I would never have looked at it. No aircraft would give that effect." Klausen-Leopoldsdorf is directly below the flightpath of all planes approaching Schwechat (Vienna airport) from the west, so Mr. Hering is familiar with airliners.

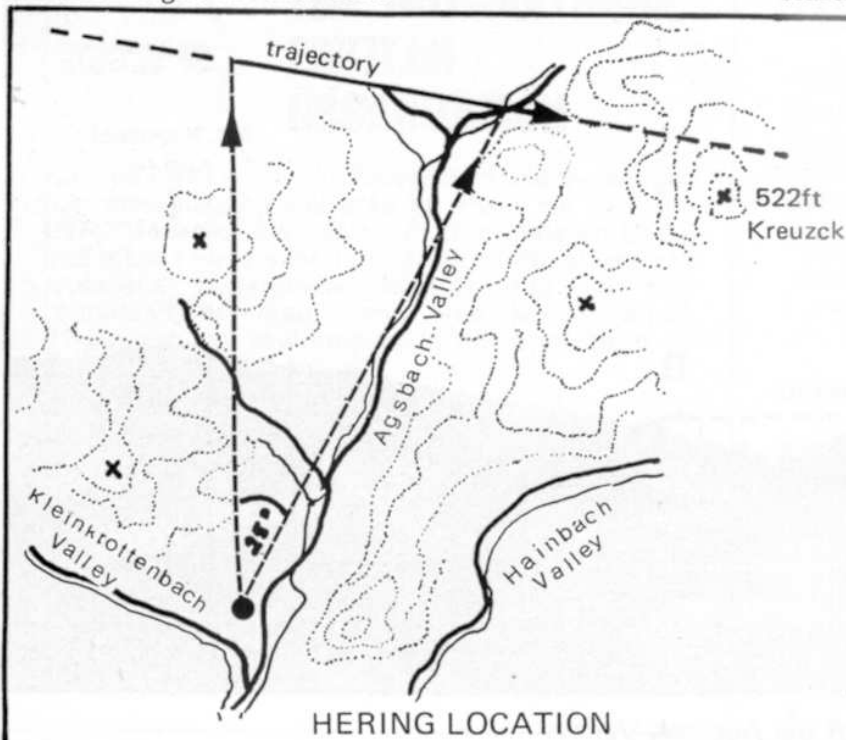
\* Preliminary results of my investigations have been published in the *APRO Bulletin* of September/October, 1972.



Panorama of the Agsbach Valley.

The strange object passed over Agsbach Valley in a horizontal trajectory from the north to the north-east and was in sight for 10-15 seconds. It went behind the slope of Kreuzeck Hill, approaching the village of Sulz. During my field investigation in August, 1972, I used a quadrant to find out the height of the object's trajectory. Mr. Hering has considerable experience in estimating distances at night; during World War II he was in a special division for night-fighting, and as a professional hunter he is often deer-stalking in the vicinity. The object was about 2 miles away from his location at Mitterriegel. I measured an angle of  $4^{\circ}$  elevation for the trajectory and computed a maximum altitude of 600 feet for the object above Hinterriegel. According to Hering's estimate in the goniometric test, the thick disc had a diameter of 180 feet. As the object was in sight for 10-15 seconds and the real length of its trajectory (pine tree to Kreuzeck slope) proved to be 1 mile, we can assume a maximum speed of 480 feet per second.

After the sighting, the witnesses drove to Hering's home in Kleinkrottenbach Valley where Hering telephoned the rural police station at Alland at 9.30 p.m. Newsmen got wind of the police report and Hering was ridiculed as "the forester on a UFO hunt." The Central Meteorological Station of Vienna announced that the object was not likely to have been a *kugelblitz* (ball lightning) or one of their balloons, but rather more likely a meteor. If we consider the facts about speed, height and structure of the object, this explanation has to be ruled out. A second explanation came from the Vienna daily newspaper: "The UFO was a plane coming in to land." Hering just laughed when I brought up the matter during my investigation. "If a plane flies over Hinterriegel at that altitude, I'm sure the pilot will be fired immediately." That is true. The object kept a flight level of 600 feet and Kreuseck has a relative height of 522 feet.



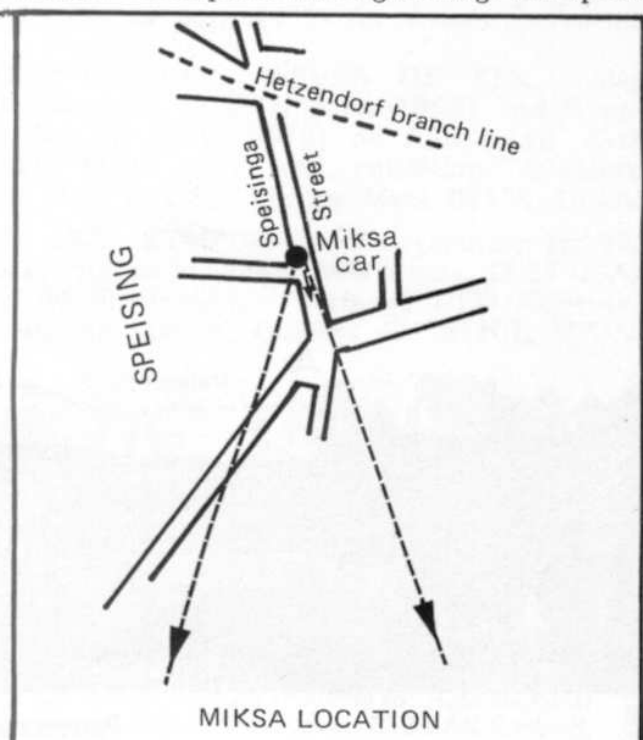
## The Miksa sighting

At about 8.50 CET, Councillor Friedrich Miksa, an official in his early sixties who works for the Military Science Department at the Stifts barracks in Vienna, was driving along Speisinger Street in Hietzing (District 13) in his new Peugeot 204. Miksa was accompanied by his wife Anna and they were on their way home to Liesing (District 23). They had just crossed the railway track of the Hetzendorf branch line and were approaching the Feldkellergasse cross-roads when Miksa spotted a luminous object in the south-west. Traffic was low at that time so he kept his car going and watched the object, as did his wife.

Mr. Miksa told me: "It was a quiet evening with good visibility, no wind, no clouds. Suddenly I saw that flying body. That's no plane, I thought. But what was it really? It appeared roundish and clearly outlined, a bright yellowish orange. It swept across the southern sky in a parabolic trajectory. I had an eerie feeling — the speed looked impossible to me. Two seconds later it moved behind a rooftop and was gone."

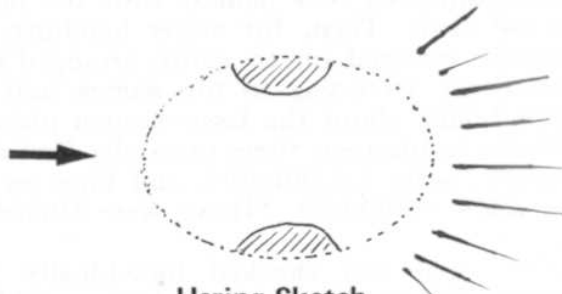
Although the observation did not last longer than 3 seconds, Miksa turned out to be a remarkable witness and I investigated the case thoroughly. The flying object, Miksa said, was more luminous in the centre and had a distinct outline. He compared its light to a halogen fog-headlight. On a colour table, Miksa pointed at a mixture of chrome yellow and yellow-orange. It did not flicker and was "much brighter than a sodium vapour street light;" the whole surface was emitting light steadily and "you could look right into it without being dazzled." The sliding top of the car was open at the time of the sighting and no sound was heard.

The object seemed to be like a squashed egg or a thick disc. But it was not the strange shape that startled Miksa. "The speed was frightening. The speed

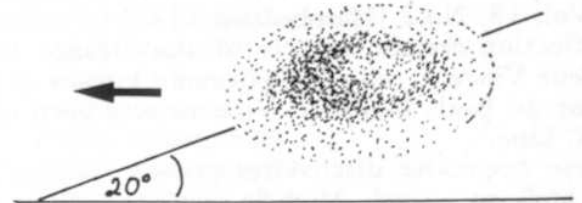




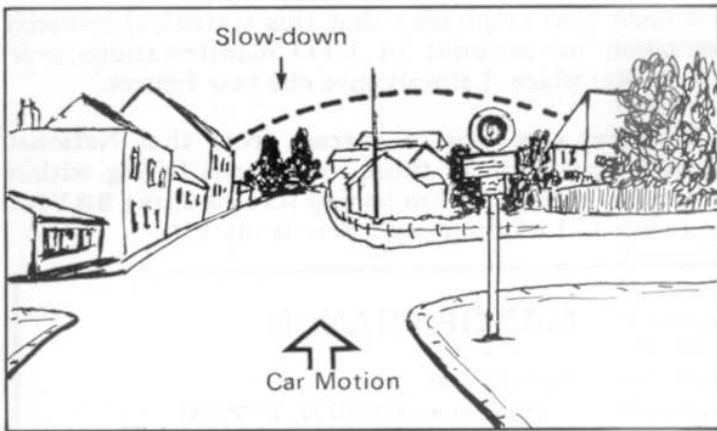
Above: Map showing resulting trajectory and the locations of Hering and Miksa



Hering Sketch



Miksa Sketch



Miksa Trajectory

was about Mach 5 or 6, much faster than a supersonic jet, but completely noiseless and without any exhaust trail. I've never seen motion like that." During his holidays, Miksa had seen supersonic jets manoeuvring over Germany, France and the Iron Curtain countries.

Miksa has unique experience in estimating speed, distance and height of aerial objects. He was in command of an anti-aircraft platoon in World War II and had to aim the 88 mm. Flak gun at his targets only with fore and back sight and a simple computing system. He told me: "I have watched tracer ammunition, flares and Russian bombers over the Eastern front, but I never saw a speed like that." I asked about the object's distance and height. "It looked like that unforgettable Russian IL-2 we hit in the midst of its landing approach (a rare success for

a Flak gun); it had about the same distance and height — 4 miles away at 4,500-6,000 feet altitude and it was the size of a small dirigible." The results of a goniometric test done with Mr. Miksa and his wife indicate a diameter of 360 feet.

The object reached its culmination point at 11° elevation. Its inclination towards the horizon was about 20° (somewhat tilted) and remained constant during the sighting; the angular length of its trajectory was about 30°. In a test with a stop watch, Mrs. Miksa estimated the total duration of the sighting at 3 seconds; her husband gave it as 2 seconds. If we treat the two results as minimum and maximum estimates, a rough computation yields Mach 3, 4 or 5 as possible speeds of the unidentified object (definitely above present supersonic jet standards.

There is a further detail recounted by Miksa which refutes the usual aircraft light and meteor explanations:

"Just a moment before its disappearance it went a little slower, some kind of glow seemed to radiate from a source in the bottom and when the faint halo went out, the object accelerated and moved behind the rooftop. It appeared to be reducing speed for a quick ground observation — and then up and away. My wife said, You've a wish now, that's a nice falling star!' I replied, rather confused, No, that's no shooting star and no plane — I don't know what it is! When we reached the cross-roads and looked around, the object was gone."

The Miksas continued their way home and arrived

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# THE BIRTHPLACES OF PROMINENT PEOPLE IN RELATION TO BAVIC

A Statistical Study based on a suggestion by Aimé Michel

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Translation: Gordon Creighton

IN an article which appeared in *Flying Saucer Review*, Vol. 15, No.6 (November-December 1969) Aimé Michel discussed the prehistoric caves of la Vézère and pointed out that certain shapes drawn or incised there resemble the UFOs of today. Moreover these shapes seem to come from the caves located along the orthotenic line known as BAVIC (short for "Bayonne-Vichy"). And in a second article by the same author, likewise published in *FSR* Vol. 18, No.2 (March-April 1972) he offered us for reflection certain aspects of the strange life of Monsieur Vincent, who later became known as Saint Vincent de Paul. Monsieur Vincent was born on the BAVIC Line.

These respective discoveries proved nothing however, and so Aimé Michel suggested that some statistical investigations be made regarding the men and the events located on BAVIC.

I started my research in March 1973.

My first job was to collect as many names of people as possible, with the dates and places of their birth and the reason for their having been well known. In order to do this, I spent two months collecting the names from three encyclopaedias (Larousse, editions of 1937, 1939, and 1973), exercising no choice and leaving nobody out. Every personality would do, whatever the domain in which he had

distinguished himself, be it even murder. In the course of the work I discovered moreover that the editors of the various Larousses had "skimmed off the cream," taking only the most notable historical personages. I must therefore emphasise the point that nobody was arbitrarily excluded from my list.

Finally my list, drawn up on a national basis for France, contained 954 names, with the places and dates of birth. Then, for easier handling, I transferred the material on to cards, arranged in alphabetical order according to the names, and I added various details about the lesser-known places, so as to be able to pinpoint them precisely, first on a map of France, scale 1:1,000,000, and then on regional maps, scale 1:200,000. (These were Michelin road-maps.)

Every item was checked individually and the distances measured, so that there would be no subsequent errors.

I must also emphasise that this statistical research has taken no account of UFO manifestations over this or that place. I simply give the raw figures.

My next step was to extract from that National List the names of all those individuals falling within a corridor of 2 x 50 km having its axis along BAVIC. There are 171 of them, and here is my list:

