

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Best UFO Cases—Europe** by Illobrand von Ludwiger. Las Vegas, NV: National Institute for Discovery Science, 1998. 173 pp. \$19.95, paper. ISBN 0-9666077-0-8. Available from: The National Institute for Discovery Science, 1515 East Tropicana Avenue, Suite 400, Las Vegas, NV 89119.

Although there is a plethora of books in English about unidentified flying objects (UFOs), the majority deal with the North American scene, with several covering phenomena in the United Kingdom and other English-speaking countries. *Best UFO Cases—Europe* helps fill a void in the libraries of investigators who are interested in central Europe. The author, Illobrand von Ludwiger, is well qualified to present this wide array of physical evidence, having been employed as a systems analyst at Daimler-Benz Aerospace AG-DASA in Ottobrunn, Germany, since 1964. He has participated in rocket launches (1966) as a member of the European Launcher Development Organization (ELDO) and was the project manager responsible for the simulation of traffic for new transportation systems. He has studied UFO phenomena for almost 30 years, and he founded the MUFON UFO Network, Central European Section, in 1974, now named the Society for the Scientific Exploration of Anomalous Atmospheric and Radar-Phenomena, MUFON-CES, Inc., which has employed groups of technically trained and equipped field investigators.

*Best UFO Cases—Europe* begins with three forewords written by John F. Schuessler, Bruce Maccabee, and Richard F. Haines. Each provides different views of ufology in general and of this volume in particular. As Schuessler points out, this work “is especially valuable because it provides data showing a level of UFO activity comparable to what has been going on over the United States, South America, Australia, Japan and other parts of the world.”

The professional reader of *Best UFO Cases—Europe* will find much to analyze, but the book will interest even casual readers. Chapter One provides a historical look at UFO cases in central Europe from the 16th through the 18th centuries, as well as more recent phenomena such as the so-called Foo Fighters of WWII and “Ghost Rockets.” There are several previously unpublished cases presented. Chapter Two presents five cases involving well-defined UFO shapes that have been reported, mostly from the 1970s through the 1990s. Readers discover that the same object shape names were reported in central Europe as were reported in America. The huge number of triangular-shaped object sightings merits its own chapter, and thus Chapter Three begins with the Belgian flap of November 1989 through April 1991, when at least 3,500 separate UFO sightings were reported. All of these were seemingly of the same large, round-cornered, triangular object. Another 13 new cases are also reviewed, three witnesses of which were MUFON-CES members. Numerous

helpful drawings in both color and black and white are included. In Chapter Four objects with complex structures are reviewed (eight cases). These cases are important because such highly detailed yet unusual objects do not appear very often. They become more persuasive when citizens in one part of the world independently report seeing the same or similarly shaped objects. The author gives several such examples.

The two main sections and 10 subsections of Chapter Five are perhaps the most troubling in this book, for they deal not only with landed UFOs but also their alleged "occupants." The author begins with four cases (1914 to 1954) from Germany and France in which none of the witnesses knew each other, yet the UFOs and "entities" still had the same basic shape. These "entities did not conform to the description of UFO occupants as handsome humans with long hair then in vogue." Three more occupant cases are presented in detail, with emphasis given to after effects, various physical and psychological tests given, and artist drawings and photographs of witnesses and locales.

Chapter Six is devoted to a single CE-2 nighttime case in Vaddo, Sweden, on November 11, 1956. This case involved two men who saw a silent, flattened, elliptical, metallic sphere approach their car and illuminate the entire surrounding countryside as bright as day. The object seemingly caused their engine to sputter and die and their headlights to go out as it landed directly ahead of them in the roadway. The UFO (estimated at about 8 m in width) was wider than the two-lane road. After some 10 minutes, it took off rapidly. The two men searched the landing area and found that the grass had been flattened on each side of the road and also discovered a small chunk of metal the size of a matchbox. It was still very hot to the touch. Details of the eight separate laboratory chemical analyses that were performed on this sample are given, along with drawings and macrophotographs. It was found to consist of pulverized wolfram (tungsten) carbide and cobalt.

Three major photographic cases (Greifswald Lights of August 24, 1990; Guseppe Lucifora photos of June 19, 1987; Rudi Nagora photos of May 23, 1971) are discussed in Chapter Seven. Thirty color plates present these mostly daylight disc images. Relatively little technical information is included about them.

I consider the major contribution of this book to be found in Chapter Eight, "Traces of Unidentified Flying Objects on Military Radar Devices over Central Europe." Within these 34 pages of text and radar plot diagrams are found numerous examples of discontinuous flight paths, very sharp corners, ultra-high-velocity flight, and other anomalous data. Von Ludwiger also includes the almost mandatory discussions of false returns and the various kinds of radar in use today. He makes the intriguing statement here: "During daily operating procedures, such points or short tracks are interpreted as *disturbances* and ignored. Every employee of military airspace control is familiar with them. But nobody can satisfactorily explain what they are. They are considered to be radar or the computer program mistakes or some kind of atmospher-

ic phenomenon. They are not reported because of fear of being reproached by colleagues and superiors for (having an) insufficient working knowledge of the radar system.” In short, European air-traffic controllers behave the same way as controllers do elsewhere in this regard. Also provided are almost 30 different radar traces of highly provocative aerial flight paths by UFO and unidentified aerospace vehicles. Nonetheless, not even America’s F-117A Stealth Fighter can perform most of the maneuvers shown here. Anyone who claims that no radar traces of highly anomalous flight behavior are available should study this chapter in detail. One drawback is the lack of all background technical information that one would need to fully understand these traces. Of course, each radar contact case could fill a book of this size.

In Chapter Nine, we are treated to a brief but informative discussion on magnetism and selected details of a “Fluxgate” magnetometer designed and built by two MUFON-CES members. Sample X, Y, Z channel output tracings are given for two 24-hour periods but are not related to UFO phenomena. The following 14 pages (Chapter Ten) are devoted to various data catalogues and statistical analyses, with special emphasis given to physical interactions between UFOs and the local environment. Results of a study of electromagnetic and “gravity” cases by Adolf Schneider is presented (1,319 total events for the period 1930–1982); these data are broken down in many useful ways for the interested reader. Donald Johnson’s work published in the *Journal for UFO Studies* (1983) is also included for comparison. Three other cases are reviewed in moderate detail as well (August 13, 1970; August 14, 1973; and January 8, 1981).

Chapter Eleven is, in my view, the second-most valuable contribution of this book. It presents nine proposed explanatory hypotheses for UFO phenomena, although it can be argued whether some actually nestle together in fewer categories. I suggest that only four basic groups are needed: (1) extraterrestrial origin (ET visitation, parallel universes), (2) intra-cranial origin (psychological, paranormal, psychic projection), (3) environmental origin (tectonic strain, earth lights), and (4) exotic origin (interdimensional, the author’s “projector theory,” which deals with hyperdimensional, “transcendental” manifestations, time travel). Of course, how one subdivides this theoretical “pie” is actually a matter of interpretation, definitions, and personal taste, rather than hard-and-fast science. Nevertheless, such discussions are valuable because they force readers to make explicit what they expect of the data collected about UFO phenomena.

In the final chapter, von Ludwiger perhaps may be forgiven his personal interpretations of earlier occupant evidence presented in which he appears either to go beyond the evidence or to disregard still other data. For example, he states, “The fact that the UFO occupants are very human-like speaks for the Earth as their home planet. Sometimes their appearance doesn’t differ from that of a European, and witnesses will have heard that these occupants also spoke in earthly languages to each other. That would be understandable if the

UFO occupants were from a time that is still to come. In that case they must avoid any close contact to the people who are born in a different time period, because all actions could influence future events and therefore undesired reactions to the chain of events for the occupants” (p. 157). The author seems to have overlooked a large and continually growing number of cases describing (a) nonhumanoid creatures and (b) narrative interviews with people from around the world who claim to hear occupants speak in no earthly language but with other strange utterances. He also invokes the well-known “categorical imperative” from science fiction that one race should not interfere with the development of another, even itself seen from the future.

These few difficulties notwithstanding, *Best UFO Cases—Europe* is a serious and positive contribution to the literature on a variety of UFO phenomena and is likely to remain so for many years to come. Its rather minor problems with English grammar, which is not the author’s native language, are far outweighed by its emphasis and clear presentation of hard data from Central Europe. Illobrand von Ludwiger is to be commended on collecting, translating, and presenting these data for the benefit of many others around the English-speaking world. The National Institute for Discovery Science is also to be commended for bringing this work into print.

Richard F. Haines  
325 Langton Avenue  
Los Altos, CA 94022

**The Last Laugh** by Raymond Moody. Charlottesville, VA: Hampton Roads Publishing Company, 1999, paper. 210 pp.

This well-written and entertaining book bears the subtitle *A New Philosophy of Near-Death Experiences, Apparitions, and the Paranormal*. The author proclaims that this book is an obligatory addendum to his original celebrated work *Life After Life*. As such, it consists of the thoughts that commercial publishers edited out of his works in a 20-year period. Indeed, the author claims that the publishers over the years hacked out so much of his work that he does not recognize his work anymore. He objects, for example, to covers of books stamped with untruthful exclamations such as “Scientific Proof of Life After Death!” Although he objected in various ways to such extravagant claims about his work at the time, he felt it nonetheless was important to have the work published, especially because publishers were not interested in the work without the addition of such hype. These publisher’s tactics were a constant headache for Moody—and a continuing source of embarrassment. In fact, the author frequently claims in this book, and elsewhere, that the idea of proving by appeal to paranormal phenomena, scientific or otherwise, any form of life after death is a waste of time because it cannot, in his view, be done. He is emphatic, however, in insisting that it cannot be disproved either.