

High Altitude Objects over Romania

Florin Gheorghiu

Translated from the French by Gordon Creighton

FOR the people of Cluj and vicinity the second part of 1968 was full of strange aerial sights. The reports of observations of peculiar objects in flight commenced in June and reached a peak with the photographs taken in August and September (see my first article, *Flying Saucer Over Cluj, Romania*, in FSR Vol. XV, No. 6 (November/December 1969)).

I received a whole series of very interesting reports about these cases, investigated many of them, and published them in various Romanian newspapers. By pure chance I was able, on four occasions, to observe UFOs performing spectacular evolutions and on each of these occasions I was accompanied by several fellow-witnesses. All this served to deepen my conviction regarding the great technical and scientific importance of the UFOs.

The Cluj photos of August 18, and my detailed account of the analysis of them, showing as they did the close approach of a UFO to the ground, had aroused great interest, and this interest swelled to lively discussion when, on September 19, 1968, another UFO was seen stationary over Cluj by thousands of the town's inhabitants, for a period of several hours. There were subsequently also lively discussions in the capital, Bucharest, where the photographs were shown before various specialists.

I. The incident of September 19, 1968

At Cluj the morning of September 19 was a typical fine one, as is characteristic of the Romanian autumn, with a friendly sun shining in a blue sky flecked with white clouds. At about noon the wind began to blow more and more strongly from the west. It reached a velocity of 73 km/H by 3.00 p.m., as was reported by the local meteorological office, and this velocity was indeed exceeded at times between 3.00 p.m. and nightfall.

On the previous day, September 18, the Romanian national press and television had carried the photos of the saucer seen over Cluj on August 18 (see photos illustrating the article in FSR referred to above), so it was a curious coincidence that another UFO should now be seen over Cluj on the 19th. By some of the eye-witnesses this was described as a strange sort of balloon, by others as a conical object, while others thought it was tetrahedral in shape. *Its behaviour was, however, quite unprecedented, for it remained virtually stationary right overhead for four hours.* The peculiar nature of the occurrence was moreover enhanced by the fact that, during the same period of four hours, other very strange aerial objects were observed over the whole of Transylvania, the Romanian province which abuts on the Carpathians in the north-west, and in which Cluj itself is situated.

The mystery cone appeared and took up its stationary position suddenly at 2.30 p.m. above the south-central

part of Cluj. But it had apparently already been seen some 15 minutes earlier, as I was told by witnesses M. Radu (a 31-year-old technical worker) and Z. Martou (a 57-year-old civil servant). Said the latter: "I was returning home from work at 3.15 p.m. when I saw a big triangular balloon travelling westwards rapidly. I was struck by the fact that, despite the strong wind, the object was travelling so fast *against the wind.*"

Having taken up its stationary position overhead, tens of thousands of people were able to observe it between then and 7.15 p.m., when a thick belt of cloud came up quickly and hid it from view, covering the whole sky.

During the afternoon, however, the object stood out clearly against the blue sky. The upper part of it was of a transparent white colour, evidently plastic, which shone in the rays of the sun. When first seen, its observable dimensions gave the impression that it was at no very great height. Most of the passers-by whom I questioned gave the opinion that it was at about 2,000 metres, but this estimate must have been wrong and caused by the "balloon's" great size. Air pilots flying on the line from Bucharest gave its height as 8,000 metres [just over 26,000ft.—ED.]. One pilot, flying in a machine belonging to the Ministry of Health, went up to over 3,000 metres, but estimated the height of the object at over 9,000 metres. Dr. Peligrad, head of the local meteorological office, reported as follows in an article which appeared on September 26 in the Cluj paper *Tribuna*:

"The shining cone-shaped object seen over Cluj was not a radio-sonde balloon. At the altitude of 8,000-9,000m. (at which it was estimated to be) the wind velocity was between 72 and 86 km. per hour, predominantly from the WSW. In such conditions, a balloon would soon have been out of sight."

Another witness, engineer-surveyor S. Muresan, who observed the object by theodolite for almost one hour, told me: "The cone-shaped object was at between 9,000 and 10,000 metres. Its plastic upper portion or roof looked as though not fully inflated, as though the top of it had fallen in. In the object itself, near the base, there was a large yellow-coloured body which had its own light." A few days later I received a completely similar report in a letter from G. Narodot, a technical worker in the survey service, who was at the time in a village more than 25 km. from Cluj.

University professor G. Chisu, of the Astronomical Observatory, who watched the object through a telescope, told a press reporter: "Seen through the glass, it appeared to be a quarter the size of the full Moon. In the centre it had a convex part which shone more brightly than the plastic upper portion—which itself was reflecting the sun's rays."

I myself first learnt of the presence of the strange "balloon" at 4.10 p.m., when I began to receive phone

calls about it. At 4.40 p.m. I was asked by a member of a TV unit who were filming the object to go to the nearby Central Square. The director of the film unit put various questions to me, my replies—pertaining to three clearly visible features—being as follows:

- (a) the object definitely had a plastic upper part;
- (b) although stationary, it showed nevertheless perceptible oscillations, probably due to atmospheric movements;
- (c) there was visible inside it a sort of sequence of changing orange-yellowish lights, which, paradoxically, were to be seen in the part of the object turned away from the sun, i.e., in the part that was in the shade.

That evening, I again met a member of the TV film unit in the town, and he told me he had been to the Observatory and, viewing the object through the telescope, he had been able to see that the plastic top part was moving and was indented by the force of the wind striking against it.

The end of the sighting came quickly at about 7.15 p.m., when the cloud front moved over and the crowd of watchers began to break up. However, some residents of the south-eastern district of Cluj, over which area the cloud cover appeared some few minutes later than over the rest, had a final view of the last stage which was quite curious and rather like the beginning. Here, for example, is the written statement that I received from a 58-year-old economist, P. Gheorghe:

“There is an electricity power line running across over my garden. Anxious to go on observing the oscillations of the luminous balloon, I positioned myself so as to be able to see it between two cables of the power line. When the mass of clouds arrived, the luminous body moved away at high speed towards the west, that is to say *against the wind*, which was blowing the cloud mass along from west to east. I was able to observe this very well by lining it up against the power cables . . .”

II. Associated Phenomena

The afternoon of September 19 brought surprises to the other towns and indeed to the villages right throughout Transylvania. At about 6.00 p.m., unidentified luminous objects appeared, and became more or less stationary in the sky. Then, after various curious changes of colour, they moved off, always towards the East. It is possible that, while the “balloon” was stationary over Cluj there were just one or two others flying about. To my great regret, I have been unable to carry out a full investigation of these other sightings.

The magazine *Cutezotorii*, issue No. 55 of 1968 (published in Bucharest) reported that there were sightings at this time over the towns of Blaj, Medias, Sighisoara, Dumraveni, Fagaras, and Brasov.

I went to Sighisoara (150 km. to the south-east of Cluj) two days later (September 21) and questioned numerous residents of the place. Here, for example, is the statement made to me by the 58-year-old lady, Professor T. Mihalovici:

“I think it would have been about 6.10 p.m., when the neighbours told me something luminous had appeared in the sky. And I saw, towards the NW, at an angle of 60° a luminous body stationary in the air. It looked like a very, very big star. After about ten minutes, it turned a dark red colour, and then blue. Then it vanished rapidly towards the North-East.”

The same (or perhaps another, but similar) flying object was seen over the north-eastern part of Transylvania at about 6.30 p.m. Reporting this, the German-language paper *Neuer Weg*, issue No. 6033 of 1968 (published in Bucharest) said that residents of a whole series of villages (Ocnita, Orosfaia, Archiub, Galatii Bistritei), as well as of the town of Bistrita, saw a “real flying saucer” moving slowly through the sky. *While over the town of Bistrita, it caused interference to TV reception, and to reception of the local amateur radio station YO5-TZ.*

A. Suciu, a resident of the village of Ocnita, was one of those who sent me letters. He wrote:

“Observing the thing with binoculars, I could see that it was a flying machine shaped like a saucer. It was stationary right overhead. Above it, I could see a sort of luminous trail which was moving to both right and left. On its lower portion the object had what seemed as it were a luminous spindle.”

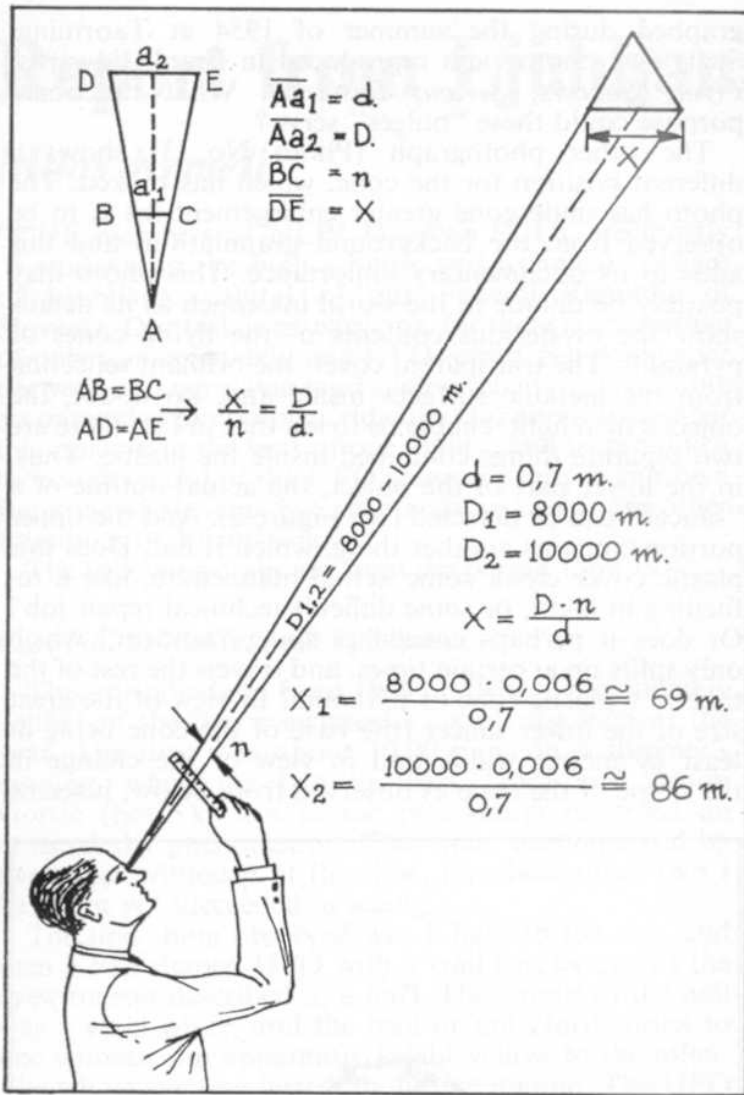
Let us now return to the “balloon” seen over Cluj.

III. A Comparative Analysis

A powerful impression had already been produced the previous day, September 18, by the photos of the clearly defined “Flying Saucer” seen near Cluj exactly one month before. At first the new sighting, this time of a cone-shaped object with what seemed to be a plastic top, did not cause me to formulate any very firm conclusions, since I did not yet have the convincing data that I was able to gather later. All that I did therefore was to publish two articles, merely outlining the important features of the case. These articles were in *Faalia* No. 6860 of 1968 and *Magazin* No. 584 of 1968, both of which publications appear in Bucharest. In Bucharest too various specialists attended at the analysis of the colour film made by the TV team, but no conclusions were reached. (This was reported in the Bucharest newspaper *Contemporanul* of November 1, 1968.)

Later however, after I had received the various letters and statements mentioned above, I received two photographs which had been taken with a telescopic lens, and from them I was enabled at last to arrive at some rather interesting conclusions. But first of all, in order to provide a firm basis for discussion, let me recall certain of the more recent and therefore better-known similar cases:

On April 7, 1967, the inhabitants of the Bulgarian town of Stara Zagora watched for a long time a large triangular flying object which finally vanished at high speed. And on November 21, 1967, the inhabitants of the Bulgarian capital, Sofia, observed an even more interesting sight. (See Photograph No. 1.) Here is the text of the report about it which appeared in the Romanian daily paper *Romania Libera* of November



23, 1967 (similar accounts appeared in all the rest of the Romanian national press):

“At sunset on Tuesday a large shining object could be observed with the naked eye in the sky over Sofia. To begin with it looked like a globe, larger than the sun, changing later to what seemed a trapezoidal form. D. Simetciiev, of the staff of the Institute of Meteorology, stated that it was moving in a direction perpendicular to the direction of the wind.”

The French publication *Lumières Dans La Nuit* No. 97, of December 1968, has (page 7) a report of a similar sighting made, on a fine sunny morning, at Garches, France, on August 18, 1968. It said: “The object, intensely bright, and cone-shaped,” travelled against the wind and was clearly seen to change in shape and size.

In quoting these examples, I do not of course wish to suggest that there is anything mysterious about the various types of terrestrial balloons launched for various types of study. Good observation and good analysis should enable us to separate these two different kinds of phenomena most demonstrably. A good example is given by the well-known investigator Aimé Michel who, in his book *A Propos Des Soucoupes Volantes*, takes and studies the sighting, in the S.E. of France on October 15,

1954, of a large balloon put up by the University of Padua in Italy.

But one thing is sure. Large meteorological balloons are not equipped with means that—invisible from the ground—could permit them to remain stationary over a fixed point with wind blowing at several tens of kilometres per hour.

And even greater are the questions which are raised by balloons that are clearly seen moving in the opposite direction to the wind. I regard all such cases as unquestionably falling within the category of flying objects unknown to general Earth technology.

If we accept that there exists a strange category of unknown balloons, then the first question that arises is this: can we conclude, from the numerous sightings made, that there are also UFOs constructed with a plastic hull?

Personally I do not think that such can be the technical solution, and I think the sighting at Oka (Canada), and the new photographic documentation secured at Cluj, can be instructive on this point.

Reprinting a report from the Canadian paper *Le Petit Journal* of October 1, 1967, the French journal *Lumières Dans La Nuit* described, in 1968, how, on August 29, 1967, the young witness Y. Guindon observed the landing of a luminous object. Then he watched a long cylinder emerge on the upper part of a cupola, and a plastic curtain drop down to the ground from the end of the cylinder. The object, now transformed in shape into a “conical balloon,” then took off again and vanished. The purpose of this operation remains unknown, but in my opinion the technical or functional significance of it is much more than a mere act of camouflage to mislead terrestrial observers.

Returning now to the “balloon” seen over Cluj on September 19, 1968, I propose to point out several features: at first the object was flying westwards, while there was a strong wind blowing both at ground level and aloft. Throughout a whole afternoon it remained virtually stationary (by taking careful bearings witnesses were able to note that it moved against the wind very slightly). The moving masses of air beating against it made it rock to and fro, no more than that, no sign of any motive system such as could enable it to main-

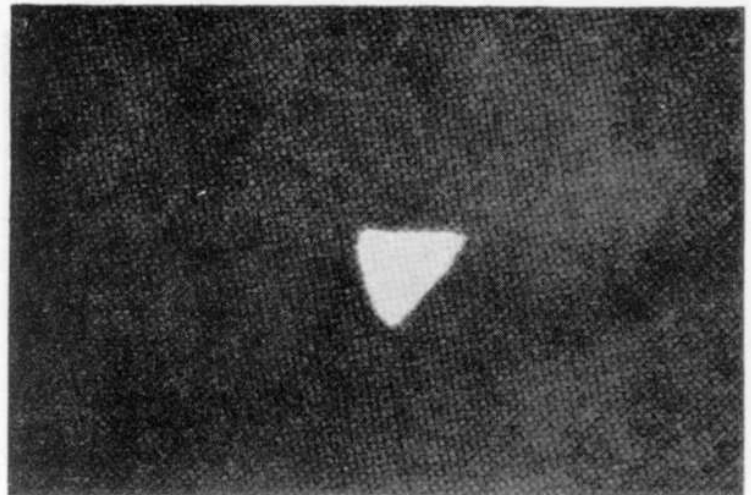


Photo 1. The photograph published in the Bulgarian journal “Trud” of the unknown flying object over Sofia

tain its position being observable by eyewitnesses. In these circumstances, can we imagine that it may perhaps have been a balloon employed for scientific studies? (*Some days later, I learnt that no large balloon had been launched by any European country during the period in question.*)

From approximate but clear calculations (see Fig. 1) it emerges that the object had a minimum base diameter of 69 metres. What could so large a body contain? What was the lower convex portion which reflected the rays of the sun more brightly? One report which reached me a few days later stated that it had been established by means of radar that there was a large metal object inside it, which might well account for the effect of yellow lights observed inside it.

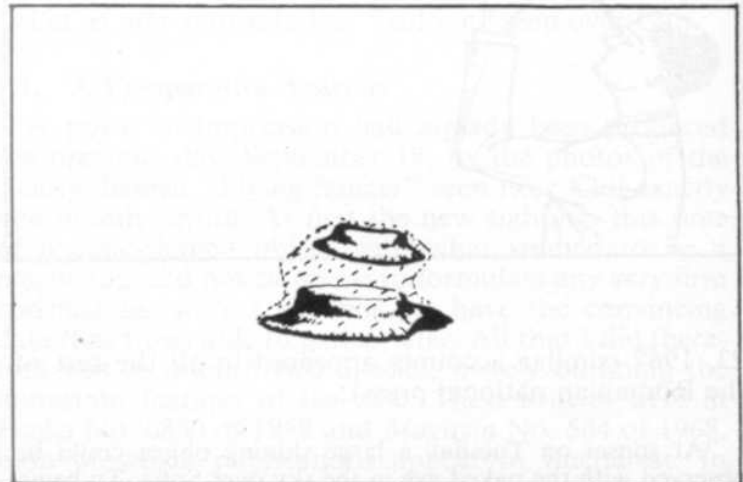
A clarification of the whole matter seems however to be provided by two photographs—possibly the only good ones out of all the several hundreds taken (but without telescopic lenses) on the afternoon in question (Photographs 2 and 3). Any kind of hoax in these photographs is ruled out by the fact that they only portray what tens of thousands of people were able to observe by various media in the sky above their city. The quality of these photographs is due to the fact that the man who took them was the reporter-photographer R. Wagner of the local paper *Faalia*. One aspect of the matter and one which is not without its humorous quality, is that Wagner is a well-known opponent of the idea of UFOs. He viewed the photos merely with disdain, and it was his Editorial Department which sent them to me for study.

IV. The Analysis of the Photographs

This second series of Cluj photos throws light on fresh aspects of the technical and scientific complexity of those remarkable flying craft, the UFOs. Thus, in photo No. 2 the axial "bulge" of the base of the cone can be seen clearly, brightly lit up by the sunshine. The same sort of appended feature, which must definitely have been quite large, was reported as present on the other object that was seen at 6.30 p.m. over the village of Ocnita. Was it the same constructional or functional detail in both cases? I would point out that a similar detail is also to be seen on the two flying objects photo-

graphed during the summer of 1954 at Taormina, Sicily (see photograph reproduced in Frank Edwards' *Flying Saucers, Serious Business*). What functional purpose could these "bulges" serve?

The other photograph (Photo No. 3) shows a different position for the cone, which has rocked. The photo has undergone greater enlargement (as is to be observed from the background granulation) and this adds to its documentary importance. This photo may possibly be unique in the world inasmuch as its details show the mysterious contents of the flying cones or pyramids. The transparent cover, the brilliant reflection from the metallic surfaces inside and, no doubt, the object's own light, enable us to see that in fact there are two separate things contained inside the plastic. Thus, in the lower part of the object, the actual outline of a "saucer" can be detected (see Figure 2). And the upper portion contains another thing, which is flat. Does this plastic cover cloak some actual manoeuvre, like a refuelling in flight, or some difficult technical repair job? Or does it perhaps conceal a flying "tandem" which only splits up at certain times, and travels the rest of the time in a plastic cone or pyramid? In view of the great size of the lower saucer (the base of the cone being at least 69 metres wide), and in view of the change in the shape of the cone as observed from below, it seems



The interpretation of the photograph no. 3

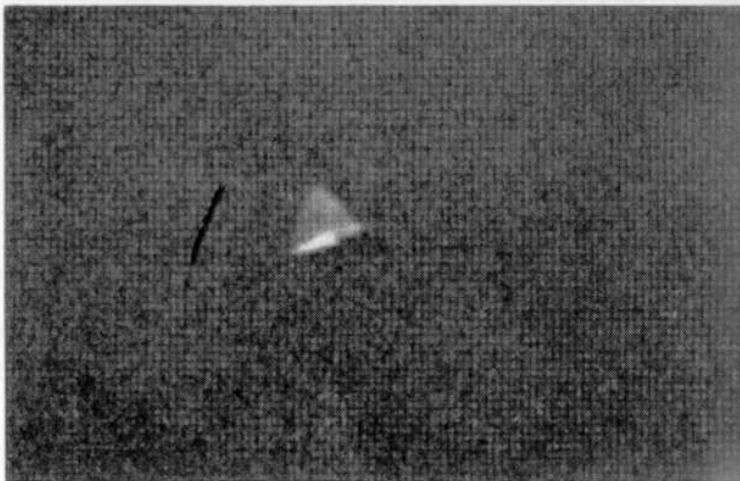


Photo 2. The flying cone which was over Cluj, Romania for 4 hours



Photo 3. With its form modified the strange 'balloon' photographed at Cluj in 19/9/68 reveals that it conceals two UFOs

Report from Ljubljana, Slovenia

Milos Krmelj

THE members of NLP* Drustwo SOLT are mostly students in the high schools and technical colleges of Ljubljana, capital of our Federal Republic of Slovenia. Our task is no easy one, for there is an average of only approximately one UFO report per newspaper per year in Yugoslavia, and such publicity is invariably accompanied by complete ridicule. Our aim is to combat this ridicule to the best of our ability, and to provide a thorough record of the UFO scene not only in our own Republic of Slovenia but, insofar as we can, in the other Republics of Yugoslavia.

The following cases are from the period 1969-1972.

Case No. 1: Moste, near Ljubljana

This episode dates from 1969 or 1970. Unfortunately neither of the two eyewitnesses recalls the date or the year. The time was about 10.00 p.m. on a summer's evening, when the two brothers Janez and Anton Gorsic (both known to me personally) observed an unusual sky phenomenon. They were accompanied by two other witnesses at the time, but these other two I have not yet succeeded in seeing.

The first thing observed was a light in the sky, and then a ball-shaped UFO with a trail (or, as one of the eyewitnesses described it, a *tail*). The colour of the ball was a vivid white, and the trail or tail bluish-violet to one witness, but apparently bright yellow to the other. The whole sighting lasted about one minute. The UFO seemed to be noiseless. No smell or other effects were observed. The white ball travelled in a slight parabola,

The author of this report—which has been edited by Gordon Creighton—lives in Ljubljana, in the Yugoslav Federal Republic of Slovenia. He is a student of biology and chemistry and has already contributed an article, *UFO Landing Reports in Yugoslavia (FSR Case Hist. 12)*. He informs us that besides being a subscriber to FSR he is the Yugoslavian representative for both APRO and NICAP. With a few friends, he has recently established (March 1972) the NLP Drustwo SOLT (UFO Investigation Society of Students in National Technical Colleges), and the cases dealt with in his article have all been the subject of direct enquiry by him and his co-workers. Mr. Krmelj tells us that the job of investigating such matters in Yugoslavia is by no means easy, for his is the only serious investigative body in the whole country, so far as he knows, and the normal way in which the Yugoslav newspapers deal with UFO reports is to give them the ridicule-treatment familiar to us from the accounts of our other correspondents in all parts of the world.

We wish the young Slovenes all success in their valiant endeavour.

EDITOR.

and the place where they saw it was Moste, on the outskirts of Ljubljana.

Anton, the younger of the brothers, is a student of Engineering in the Ljubljana Technical College. He had

* **Note by Gordon Creighton:** NLP = abbreviation of Slovenian for *UFO*.

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to me that this theory of temporary coupling is more probably correct.

This new piece of photographic documentation from Cluj thus constitutes important proof that the plastic which "disguises" the external aspect of the UFOs is inherent in the construction of these marvellous craft and serves a precise functional purpose for the occupants, though what this purpose is still remains an enigma. More detailed sightings may throw light on this in due course.

Now I also want to draw attention to a further interesting detail, namely that the rim of the large lower saucer seems, on the right-hand side of the photo, to be segmented. But we are wont to regard this rim as *continuous* around all saucer-shaped flying objects. What has happened then in this case? I want to draw special attention to this point, because I was in fact greatly intrigued by a similar detail in the series of three photos taken of the UFO near Cluj on August 18, 1968, as shown in my article in FSR for November/December 1969. Can it be that there is in fact a portion of the saucer rim which is withdrawn into the interior of the object during certain functional manoeuvres? And do

these manoeuvres perhaps explain the inversion of the shadow in the second photo of August 18th?

I am drawing special attention to this point, and to all these related questions, in the hope that they will receive more study in future, so that we may perhaps arrive at a clarification of the important technical problems involved in the operation of the UFOs.

V. General Considerations

The wave of flying objects seen over Europe in the summer and autumn of 1968 clearly extended to Romania too. The numerous investigations which I made into sightings in the Cluj area during that period culminated in the excellent photographs taken on August 18, and were then augmented by the remarkable documentation secured on September 19.

It is my earnest hope that the effort I have made in analysing these cases may constitute a small Romanian contribution towards the immense task confronting us in the technical problem of the UFOs. As Dr. James McDonald showed, in case after case, the problem of the UFOs still remains the greatest scientific problem of our times, and for all peoples.