

Some German Reports from 1971

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THE newspaper *Offenburger Tageblatt*¹ of August 12, 1971, carried a report by Otto Peter Paeffgen under the headlines: *Unknown Flying Objects Seen: Confirmation By Several People*. I give below a translation and digest of the salient points of the article:

For about three weeks before August 12, 1971, people were puzzled by strange sky phenomena. Several individuals, whose veracity cannot be doubted, sighted unidentified flying objects in the area of Offenbourg and to the north of Achern. As a former pilot in the last war, Herr Paeffgen says that he himself had seen these objects three times. From his training in astronavigation and meteorology he could tell the difference between, on the one hand, stars or weather balloons and, on the other hand, unidentified flying objects. Enquiries which he made at the meteorological office in Freiburg, the State Observatory at Heidelberg, the German Federal Defence Department in Bonn, and the American Air Force Headquarters in Wiesbaden, all indicate that unquestionably the objects were real flying bodies, although the civilian authorities have so far failed to give any explanation as to their nature.

Herr Otto Paeffgen's account continues:

"The comments of the Defence Department and the American Air Force are still awaited. But in the meantime the teletyped reply from the Freiburg Weather Bureau is of special interest. They say: 'From our own experience in a similar case we know that only a few specialists can answer these questions. Try the American Military Airfield Rhein/Main, though of course they may be prohibited by security regulations from issuing any information at all.' From this reply we may deduce that the Freiburg meteorological bureau has made similar observations of flying objects in the past or has been informed of such sightings.

"Equally significant is the reply received from the State Observatory in Heidelberg, where Dr. Klare, a member of the Observatory staff, explained to us last Tuesday that, judging by the trajectories of these flying bodies, they could not be stars. Dr. Klare, who would not commit himself, said: 'At the present time there are a whole lot of artificial bodies flying around in Space.' He does not preclude the possibility that the objects seen over Offenbourg and several neighbouring places could have been so-called slow-flying fireballs, i.e. meteors. However, the likelihood of this explanation being correct is small, since the object, emitting beams of light changing from pinkish-red to pinkish-yellow, has already been seen several times, and always flying on the same East-West trajectory.

FLYING DISC NEAR ACHERN CLEARLY DESCRIBED BY THREE PEOPLE

"It all started on July 16, 1971, with the sighting of a mysterious flying disc near Achern.² Senior Police-Officer Heinrich Koller of Bühl and his wife were driving near Grossweier, on their way home to Oberachern, when they suddenly saw a large brightly

glowing rosy-red disc right above them. As Koller said later: 'It was uncanny. I stopped my car on the road, and we got out and watched as this disc slowly flew away towards the Achern railway station, changed course, flew along above the railway line, then changed course again, and finally disappeared towards the mountains.' The 32-year-old Police official, a very level-headed man, stressed with conviction: 'What I have seen, I have seen.'

"His statements were corroborated by his wife, who said: 'I had a really weird feeling when I saw this thing, hanging there noiseless above us.'

"When asked how they had first noticed the disc, they explained: 'That was precisely the uncanny thing about it. All of a sudden it was there in front of us. Just like switching on a light in the dark.'

"Koller described the object as a disc, and he believes he could make out some sort of superstructure on the upper side despite the darkness. Whether this superstructure was round or pointed he could not see exactly.

"The statements of the Kollers were confirmed precisely by the truckdriver Franz Wratny, likewise aged 32, of Grossweier, who was also on the road at the time and pulled up his truck just a few metres from the Kollers and watched the disc. He said: 'It was about the size of the Moon to look at, but I can't imagine what it was.' Shortly afterwards, he went into a bar where he reported his experience. 'They laughed at me, but what I said about the disc is the truth, and nobody is going to persuade me otherwise,' he added.

MYSTERY FLYING OBJECTS SEEN SEVERAL TIMES
IN OFFENBURG AREA

"During the following days there were more reports from Offenbourg and surrounding area of flying objects seen over the Kinzigtal³ (Kinzig valley), over Offenbourg itself and to the west of that town. Among the eye-witnesses is Artur Seiter of Offenbourg, a businessman, who up to now has seen 'UFOs' three times, namely on July 19, August 5, and August 9. This particular flying object, seen by Seiter and distinguishable by reason of its extreme brightness and its size (nearly double the size of Venus) was also seen three times by myself (Peter Otto Paeffgen). I timed the period it took to go from the eastern to the western horizon (1 hour 50 minutes). A very short time for a star, which conclusion was also verified by the comment from the Heidelberg Observatory: 'That can't be a star!' The conjecture that it might have been a weather-balloon can hardly be valid in this case either, since such balloons do not reach such altitudes that they catch the rays of the Sun at night and so become luminous.

"A telesatellite perhaps? This question was also answered in the negative by the Heidelberg Observatory, where it was pointed out that such satellites are faster than that. But then what else was it?

"Last Tuesday the object appeared again to the East of Offenburg just after 9.15 p.m. It was clearly visible for only a few minutes, as thunderclouds then intervened and hid it from sight. It was once again at the same time of the day as on the previous occasions, and once again it was the same East-West trajectory. But this time a camera was ready, loaded with highly sensitive film and fitted with a telephoto lens, and the object was photographed. [Photo accompanied original article but we do not have good copy—EDITOR.] The photo corroborates the description given by Artur Seiter who said: 'Seen through binoculars, the object had a flat shape and was travelling, in a diagonal sort of fashion, from S.E. to S.W.'

"Since this object cannot be the Soviet space-capsule *Salyut*, which moves in the opposite direction, and has been seen over the Baden-Württemberg area of Germany several times, the question as to the nature and origin of the flying object still remains open. Was it, perhaps, this same flying object that was sighted near Achern on July 16?

DO "FLYING SAUCERS" ACTUALLY EXIST?

"The talk about these discs, or 'flying saucers' as they are called, began only a few years after the last World War. The detailed description given by the Oberachern Police-officer, his wife, and the truck-driver, inevitably leads our minds back to this theme which is indeed dismissed by so many as fantasy but which nonetheless has a very real background.

"In the book *Die deutschen Waffen und Geheimwaffen des éweiten Weltkrieges (German Weapons And Secret Weapons Of World War II)* by Rudolf Luser, published by the well-known firm of J. F. Lehmanns in Munich in 1959, precise details were given about these 'flying discs,' and we read:

"Since 1947 flying saucers have been haunting the world, turning up suddenly here and there, arriving and

departing again at hitherto unheard of speeds with rotating flames around their rims; are tracked by radar, are chased by fighter aircraft, and yet right down to this present day it has not been possible to identify any such *flying saucer*, or to ram it, or to shoot it down. The world, and indeed the scientific world, finds itself confronted with an alleged mystery or with a miracle of technology.

"Only slowly is the fact, the truth, leaking out, namely that, already during the War, German researchers and scientists had taken the first steps towards these *flying saucers*, and that they actually built and tested out such flying devices bordering on the miraculous. According to confirmed reports from experts and from people who worked on them, the first projects, called *flying discs*, were begun in the year 1941. The plans for these machines derive from the German experts Schriever, Habermohl, and Miethe, and from the Italian Bellonzo. Habermohl and Schriever adopted a broad ring which rotated around a stationary cupola-type cockpit and consisted of controllable blades that could be adjusted to any required position, according to whether they were needed for take-off or for level flight. Miethe on the other hand developed a discus-like shape, 42 metres in diameter, to which adjustable jets were fitted. Schriever and Habermohl, who worked in Prague, took off on February 14, 1945, in the first *flying disc*, and in three minutes they reached an altitude of 12,400 metres and a speed of 2,000 km.p.h. There were plans to reach speeds of 4,000 km.p.h.' "

1 Offenburg (Lat. 48° 27' N.; Long. 7° 56' E.) is in the State of Baden, in the South-West of Germany, and not far from the east bank of the Rhine.

2 Achern, also in Baden, lies slightly to the N.E. of Offenburg, at Lat. 48° 37' N.; Long. 8° 05' E.).

3 The Kinzig is the river on the East bank of which Offenburg stands.

Readers' Reports

Dartmoor mystery circles

Dear Sir,—With regard to the recent publication in FSR of readers' letters referring to circles found on the ground, I would like to record the following for your interest.

While on holiday in Devon and returning by car from Okehampton across the Moor, my wife and I, and a friend, came across the most perfect circle we have ever seen. It was cut in the ground on the side of a very steep hill which we estimated to be at an angle of about 35 degrees. We first saw this circle during Whitsun in 1971 and at the time we were unable to investigate it further as our holiday was over and we had to return to London. However, on a subsequent visit the following year we made a thorough check on the circle with the following results.

We found the location quite easily but could not see the circle, which I

suppose is not surprising after a lapse of twelve months. However, my wife, who has very keen eyesight, eventually located a very faint outline of the circle with the aid of binoculars. The odd thing was that the circle seemed to be much further down the hill and not so large as the original one. We left the car and walked over to the circle, having great difficulty in finding it.

When we finally located it we drove a screwdriver into the centre and attached to it a length of thin rope. I then walked to the outer edge of the circle, marking this point on the taut rope with my thumb. I then walked all round the edge of the circle while one of my friends supported the screwdriver. To our utter amazement the thumb-mark on the rope never deviated from the outline of the circle. In other words, it was a perfect circle, just like you cut out of pastry with a cup. Now came another surprise,

which will explain why we had trouble in finding the circle in the first place.

My wife discovered that somebody had very carefully replaced the turf in irregular strips measuring about 12 inches by 3 inches; these had been pushed in in all directions in no particular pattern. From this we assumed that it may have been covered in a hurry, the covering not being important as long as the circle's outline was obscured. We all searched about in the vicinity of the circle trying to find where the turfs had been taken from but could not find any marks that would bear any reference to them at all.

Inside the circle we found bracken which was broken down and stunted in growth. Everything within was flattened as though it had had a heavy weight lying on it. Also inside the circle we found short lengths of gorse twigs about ½ inch in diameter that were black as though they had been burnt.