

I remember Blue Book

by Jennie Zeidman

■ ■ Jennie Zeidman, author of *A Helicopter-UFO Encounter Over Ohio* (1979), is a CUFOS board member and a contributing editor to *IUR*.

The dark recesses of the CUFOS archives have yielded up a paper titled *Report to Stork on Blue Book Henry*. The by-line is my own; the date is August 1953.

The document is a compendium of 148 "FLYOB-RPTS" (flying object reports) and their cursory analyses as they passed from the Air Technical Intelligence Center (ATIC) through the hands of J. Allen Hynek (and me) between January and July 1953. (See illustrations 1 and 2 for examples.) The report also summarizes correspondence with the 35 amateur astronomical societies, 19 Ground Observer Corps Filter Centers, and 48 CAA (now FAA) Control Towers which were contacted with the objective that they would or could provide corroborating (or disconfirming) information for the official reports, specifically with regard to phenomena such as bright meteors/fireballs, normal aircraft, or meteorological phenomena.

The report itself is of little import. The Air Force favored astronomical answers, and Hynek was able to provide many from the selected raw reports presented for his analysis. (See bar graph.) The extremely high number of unknowns (22 percent) and cases of insufficient data (another 10.8 percent) reflect not so much the high strangeness of the information presented as the inadequacy of the reporting mechanism. One paragraph of teletyped tidbits was supposed to provide enough information for a justified, probable, or at least possible identification. Of course it couldn't be done. I don't recall our criteria for differentiation between "unknowns" and "insufficient data." The only certainty I can see in perusing this report is that Venus was in eastern elongation during that time period and that lots of people, even those from college physics departments, couldn't identify it.

Of greater interest than the report may be some associated memories of those heady times: the convolutions of funding of UFO research, the desperate emphasis on hush-hush amid an environment of ludicrously slipshod security, and the unfolding mystery of where Hynek's consultancy to the Air Force on Project Blue

Book really fit into the larger scheme of the UFO hierarchy. Enlightening discussions of these matters appear in Hynek's *The Hynek UFO Report* (1977) and David M. Jacobs' *The UFO Controversy in America* (1975). The remarks that follow reflect my personal involvement and interpretations as Hynek's assistant between 1953 and 1956.

Project Stork

Let us start with Project Stork. I doubt, 38 years later, that I'll ruffle any feathers with that name. Heaven knows, it's been mentioned in print, and from time to time I've come across persons (there must have been thousands of us, worldwide) who worked on various phases of it. **The fact is that the mission of Stork was to ascertain the capability of the Soviet Union to engage in technological warfare.** The specific interest for our purpose is that the group at Battelle Memorial Institute which produced the (in)famous *Project Blue Book Special Report 14* was associated with Project Stork. **Okay, let's not beat around the bush. *Special Report 14* was a product of Project Stork.**

Does that mean that the government thought UFOs might be Soviet technology? Or does it mean that the government already knew (five years after the Roswell incident) what UFOs represented, wanted to see what the Stork statisticians came up with, and then made sure that the "analysis" met with government "standards"? (Shades of the Condon Committee 15 years later.)

The answer is: probably not. The Condon Committee's blatant objective was to pacify the public, whereas *Special Report 14*, within Battelle/Stork, was Top Secret. It didn't need to be created (for public consumption) if the answer was already known—in other words, that the empirical characteristics of UFO reports were statistically different from those of reports that were ultimately resolved into mundane phenomena. Or was Stork perhaps merely a convenient funding vehicle for *14*, a legitimately asked question, a relatively small effort that could be justified (or hidden) under the scope of the Stork mission? Regardless, Battelle was the right place for the work to be done. It is a superb group of scientists and engineers scrupulously devoted to excellence.

Battelle's involvement with the fringe subject of UFOs was therefore a source of great embarrassment to it—a family secret, a skeleton in the closet equivalent to