

INFO ONLY
NOT SUBM. TO OMNI.



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Oct. 27, 1978

Dear Wido Hoville:

Thank you for your inquiry and the issue of UFO QUEBEC. I am sending you a copy of ZETETIC SCHOLAR under separate cover and will be glad to exchange future issues with you. I am also very pleased to have your international exchange list.

To answer your questions: I was one of the founding members of the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal and was its co-chairman and editor of its journal for the first year. I resigned from the Committee over differences between myself and the Executive Council. This was over several different issues, but a major one concerned our differences in regard to the proper scientific approach to claims of the paranormal. Their position was essentially a hard-line skepticism which I found frequently bordering on being the equivalent of dogmatic denial. My own view was a skeptical one but basically more constructive and receptive to the idea of seeking evidence for extraordinary claims. In other words, they seemed more interested in debunking claims than promoting serious inquiry into them. Whereas their role was primarily that of advocates for the Establishment positions towards strange claims, I was more interested in promoting cooperative inquiry into the best evidence that might be offered. Towards that end, I have started ZETETIC SCHOLAR which will hopefully promote dialogues between both proponents and critics of the paranormal.

The Committee includes a sub-committee on UFOs consisting of Philip J. Klass, Robert Sheaffer, and James Oberg. They have taken a consistent hard-line against UFO claims and do not see UFOs as constituting a serious scientific problem. They do indeed believe they have successfully explained the alleged phenomena that Hynek and others (including myself) consider still anomalous. Klass, as you probably know, is a strong debunker and this sub-committee echoes his leadership. Though I consider Klass to have done some excellent investigation that has furthered our understanding of many once inexplicable UFO events, I do not consider him to have shut the door on the issues involved by any means. (In fact, his plasma theory put forward in his first book on UFOs has been largely rejected by both ufologists and plasma physicists.) In general, this subcommittee has been set up to "answer" the claims of the ufologists.

As for myself, my editorial board on ZETETIC SCHOLAR includes both skeptics and proponents. I hope to promote constructive interchanges