



From the jacket design by Howard Morris for "Flying Saucers Uncensored."

Visitors From Space

FLYING SAUCERS UNCENSORED.

By Harold T. Wilkins. 255 pp. New York: Citadel Press. \$3.50.

THE FLYING SAUCER CONSPIRACY.

By Maj. Donald E. Keyhoe. 315 pp. New York: Henry Holt & Co. \$3.50.

THE REPORT ON UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS.

By Edward J. Ruppelt. 315 pp. New York: Doubleday & Co. \$4.50.

By JONATHAN N. LEONARD

THE flying saucer cult has split into sub-cults, as cults have a way of doing. The prophets of its mystical left wing hold philosophical conversations with friendly Saucerians; they even visit mother-ships hanging in space and find them loaded with lovely girls from Mars and Venus. One of their articles of faith is that the Saucerians are benign messiahs who hope to put an end to war on sinning Earth. In the less imaginative wing of the cult are byzantine controversialists who wage an endless campaign against an heretical conspiracy in the depths of the Pentagon.

Harold T. Wilkins, author of "Flying Saucers Uncensored," is one of the mystics. His style is so slippery that it is hard to tell what he really believes, but he seems to be saying that the earth has been visited for untold thousands of years by superhuman space beings of various kinds. According to one of his unnamed informants, these creatures are fifteen feet tall and come from the Heavy World. According to another they are "Etherians" who live in the fourth dimension.

Wilkins himself inclines to this theory. "Fourth-dimensional beings are really there," he says. "They intend, in certain American opinion, to keep man from disrupting the solar system, and are prepared to do so, even if they have to take over and run our entire planet."

Only the most pious saucer believers will take Wilkins' book seriously. It is a mish-mash of old wives' tales, wild theorizing and ignorant pseudo-science. It has little entertainment value. Wilkins, apparently, has never ridden in a flying saucer or met a lovely girl from Venus.

"The Flying Saucer Conspiracy" is by Major (of Marines, long retired) Donald E. Keyhoe, a thin, nervous, serious man who insists over-and-over that

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the high command of the U. S. Air Force is deliberately concealing a dangerous threat from space. This is one of the basic dogmas of the flying saucer cult. It performs two important functions: It permits saucer prophets to pose as martyrs, and it explains after a fashion why the Air Force scientists, who are admittedly skillful and well-informed, should deny that flying saucers are invaders from space. Keyhoe's style is dense with military jargon which he presumably uses to give an official tone. The book describes few new saucer "sight-

ings." Most of it is a repetitious and unconvincing attack on the Major's great enemy: the Air Force "silence group."

LONGEST and dullest of the current crop of saucer books is "The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects" by Edward J. Ruppelt, who was connected until 1953 with the Air Force's efforts to make sense out of saucer reports. Ruppelt seems to have quarreled with Keyhoe, and he gives the Air Force some credit for honesty and patriotism. But he also seems to believe that there is some sort of conspiracy of silence. The great bulk of Ruppelt's book is accounts of "sightings," most of which are familiar to saucer addicts. Some of them are exposed as material objects that have been misinterpreted. In other cases, however, Ruppelt apparently believes that the object seen was something darkly mysterious, probably from space. It is hard to tell from his text just what he does believe.

While the above three books were in preparation, the Air Force released the results of a massive, intelligent, painstaking and detailed analysis of all flying saucer reports. It employed excellent scientists and used elaborate apparatus. The conclusion is negative. Nearly all the reports were explained, on close examination, in unsensational ways. The scientists found no evidence whatever that even the few surviving "unknowns" were likely to have come from space. Ruppelt may have known before his book went to press that this cruel blockbuster was about to be dropped on the saucer cultists. In his last chapter, at any rate, he takes a prudent attitude of objective doubt. "Time will tell," he says.