

ELEONORE ZUGUN: THE RE-EVALUATION OF A HISTORIC RSPK CASE

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ABSTRACT: This investigation of two distinct phases of the Zugun Case focuses on (a) establishing the total number of phenomena by evaluating the original reports in order to identify indicators of possible fraud (or the absence of such); (b) analysis of a documentary film on the phenomena which Dessoir claimed to prove fraud (Rosenbusch, 1928, p. 157)—an author still quoted in Kurtz' *Skeptic's Handbook* (Kurtz, 1985, p. 474); (c) scrutiny of the alleged exposure, analysis of which showed that it is not tenable; (d) evaluation of Eleonore's psychoanalysis, which, however amateurish, had an impact on the transformation of the phenomena; (e) investigation of the frequency distribution of the phenomena, the question being whether the distribution of maxima and minima showed an internal periodicity or any correlation with external variables or if it is entirely random. Whereas Countess Wassilko (1966) hypothesized that the frequency distribution was an anticipation of the female menstrual cycle, Schrenck-Notzing hypothesized a coincidence of the maxima of phenomena with the full moon (Price, 1926, p. 459). Neither of these hypotheses can be maintained, nor could any correlation be found when probing modern hypotheses of geomagnetic fields (Persinger, 1985, 1986, 1988, 1989; Persinger & Schaut 1988; Schaut & Persinger 1985) or LST—Local Sidereal Time (Spottiswoode, 1990, 1993, 1997a, 1997b). However, there is an apparently strong correlation with purely psychological variables.

This case is a prime methodological example for applying quantitative methods on a hitherto apparently qualitative case. It demonstrates that the abundance of historic cases in parapsychology is a most valuable "treasure" that needs to be re-evaluated periodically, and that the gap between idiographic and nomothetic approaches can indeed be bridged.

The world famous and much disputed case of Eleonore Zugun has been alternatively called the Talpa Poltergeist Case, due to the name of the Romanian village where it originated. Two initial statements about the case can appear to contradict each other, yet are both equally true: "The Zugun Case is unique and unparalleled"; "the Zugun Case fits well into the pattern of other RSPK (poltergeist) cases."

The first of these aspects, its uniqueness, indicates why it is worthwhile to investigate a historic case that took place three quarters of a century ago. More than 3000 phenomena were recorded, out of which 844

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are extremely well established, and the focus person (F. P.) or agent lived with the prime researcher, Zoë, Countess Wassilko, even sharing a room for over a year.

The methodological approaches implemented in the course of its investigation were (a) an attempt to communicate with the F. P.'s unconscious by various means, also in order to provoke phenomena, (b) systematic attempt to transform the spontaneous phenomena into séance phenomena, (c) a psychoanalysis of the F. P. (this case appears to be the first one where psychoanalysis has been applied on an RSPK focus person), (d) experimental confrontation of the F. P. with other mediums or psychics, and (e) cinematographic documentation of part of the phenomena—an early application of cinematography in psychical research and the first one in an RSPK case. This case also had an enormous impact on the history of parapsychology, ultimately becoming the cradle of the "Austrian Society for Psychical Research" (now the "Austrian Society for Parapsychology and Border Areas of Science").

However, the Zugun case also presents the general characteristics of poltergeist (RSPK) cases. The onset of the poltergeist phenomena was three months prior to Eleonore Zugun's 12th birthday, which makes her a slightly, but not exceptionally, young F. P. (see Table 1). The bandwidth of categories of observed phenomena also "fits well into the pattern of other RSPK (poltergeist) cases."

The dermal phenomena that dominated the second phase of the case is an exception (and caused Eleonore to be dubbed "The Devil Girl" by the mass media) but, while dermal phenomena in RSPK cases are rather rare, they are in no way unique to this case (see Table 2).¹

THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE ZUGUN CASE

Eleonore Zugun was born on May 24, 1913 to a peasant family in Talpa, a poor village in the Bukowina which, at the time of the poltergeist activities, had become a province of Romania.² To characterize the situation in this remote area it may suffice to mention that she got her first

¹ What made Eleonore Zugun's dermal phenomena, bite and scratch marks, impressive was the fact that she suffered from unusually strong dermatographic reactions, a reaction that is rare, but in no way unique. For example, when her skin was scratched "normally" by a sharp instrument or even by a fingernail, it showed the same kind of reaction as could be observed when she was ostensibly being "paranormally" scratched "by the *Dracu*": within a few minutes, the scratches would develop into heavy white weals (urticaria) that would last for a while, then gradually disappear during approximately half an hour. This dermatographic reaction as such is no indicator for distinguishing between "genuine" and fraudulent "phenomena." Impressive pictures of strong dermal reactions—though in a quite different context—are found in Wilson's *The Bleeding Mind* (1988).

² Eleonore, also Eleonora, = Eleanor. The name "Zugun," which is the original spelling, is frequently rendered as "Zügun" in publications in English language. This spelling might have been seen as phonetically superior to the original one.

Table 1
AGE OF FOCUS PERSON (FEMALES ONLY)
AT THE ONSET OF RSPK PHENOMENA

	Year	N	Median	Modal	Mean	Youngest
Eleonore Zugun (Wassilko, 1925)	1925	1	11.75*	-	-	-
Schrenck- Notzing's Database (Price, 1926)	1926	8	14	14	13.7	9
Huesmann & Schriever's Database (1989)	1989	23	12.5	12.5	n/a	4

*Eleonore's age at the onset of her phenomena.

pair of shoes only when she was transferred to Vienna in the course of the investigation of her case by Countess Wassilko.

In February, 1925, she was reportedly taken by an 18-year-old male cousin to visit their grandmother in the nearby village of Buhai who, 105 years old and blind, has fallen ill. On their way through a forest she found a 2-Lei coin wrapped in a handkerchief on the ground which she took, although being warned by her cousin that this was "Devil's money" and she should better leave it. In Buhai, she spent this money on candies which she ate all by herself, refusing to give some to her young female cousin living there, although this girl had given her a nice coral chain as a welcome present. The grandmother felt disturbed by the ensuing quarrel and cursed Eleonore that she had now swallowed the Devil together with the sweets bought with the Devil's money and that she would never more be free from him. This malediction apparently induced a Devil complex in Eleonore.³

The very next day poltergeist activities commenced in Buhai. Stones were thrown against the house from the outside, breaking windows, and small objects in Eleonore's vicinity moved, jumped, flew, and were thrown. Soon Eleonore was sent back home to Talpa, with the only result that the phenomena continued there after a short break of three days.

As happens time and again with RSPK phenomena, immediate

³ When talking about the Devil later, Eleonore used the Romanian word for devil, *Dracu*, like a proper name. The diminutive of *Dracu*, *Dracula*, is well known from Bram Stoker's novel. Eleonore even used the name "Dracu" to refer to the hypothetical force underlying the phenomena of other mediums with whom she was put into contact (e.g., Christoph Schroeder's mother-in-law).

Table 2
COMPARISON OF THE FREQUENCY OF DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF PHENOMENA

Huesmann & Schriever's Database (1989)			Zugun Case/Phase I (Wassilko, 1925)		
Phenomena	Frequency (%)		Phenomena	Frequency (%)	
	Reported	Overall			
Inexplicable movement of objects	87	23.5	Throwing of objects: Movements of objects Needles (real)	59.3	
Inexplicable sounds*	68	18.3	Acoustic Phenomena	4.3	
Sudden disappearance of objects	55	14.8	Disappearance of Objects	4	
Bodily phenomena	46	12.4	Scratches: Bites Needles (imaginary) Bites (wet) Colored spots on the skin Needles (real)	30.1	

Table 2, *continued*

Huesmann & Schriever's Database (1989)			Zugun Case/Phase I (Wassilko, 1925)	
Phenomena	Frequency (%)		Phenomena	Frequency (%)
	Reported	Overall		
Phenomena involving liquids: water/others	43 37/15	11.6 10/4	Bites (wet) (Rare, hence included in "Other")	0.6
Apports	31	8.4	Apports	1.9
Apparent materialization of objects in the air	17	4.6	(A few isolated cases, hence included in "Other")	
Smearings	15	4	Colored spots on the skin	< 1
			Other	6.1

* Total of the two categories, "Sounds independent of movement of objects" plus "Sounds at movement of objects."

witnesses inform their friends and relatives, and the case eventually comes to the attention of the local media, then to the regional media, and ultimately to media read nationwide. The same happened here. The first newspaper article by journalist Kubi Klein appeared on April 18, 1925, and some expatriates read it; a small article based on Klein's report was published in the "*Psychische Studien*," a German-language journal devoted to psychical research (Konecny, 1925). Ultimately, the "Revalo-Bund," an organization founded by businessman and devoted spiritualist writer Hinrich Ohlhaver, dispatched the then eminent German parapsychologist Fritz Grunewald (who did not share Ohlhaver's spiritualist convictions) from Berlin to the scene for a preliminary investigation of the case.

Grunewald arrived on May 1 for a three-week visit. Apart from his own observations of Eleonore, he became the first to interview the witnesses to the early stages of the case. In the meantime, Eleonore had spent three weeks in the Gorowei monastery, where the family who were disturbed by the phenomena had brought her, expecting that an exorcism or some other religious interference could make them cease.⁴ After these expectations collapsed late in April, she was brought to the Mental Asylum in Czernowitz, the capital of the Bukowina, "for observation" where she stayed until Grunewald's arrival. With Kubi Klein's assistance, Grunewald managed to get her free again.⁵ She was brought back to the Gorowei monastery, where Grunewald first met her on May 9, 1925, and started his own records on her phenomena.

After his return from Gorowei, Grunewald published a short statement in which he said that he was convinced the phenomena he witnessed were genuinely paranormal, and he announced that there would be a full report in the journal of the "Revalo-Bund." Unfortunately, he died unexpectedly shortly afterwards, in his early forties, from a heart attack. After some delay, his records were published posthumously by Christoph Schroeder of Berlin, in the latter's own journal (*Zeitschrift für metapsychische Forschung*) (Schroeder, 1927). Grunewald's interviews of the witnesses, including the monks at the monastery, were later corroborated by Countess Wassilko, who, at this time, would soon enter the scene.

In order to give some examples, I quote one statement of a witness and one incident observed by Grunewald himself. Joan Teodorescu, a schoolmaster at Zamostea, gives this account (Wassilko, 1926):

I decided to turn my gaze on a selected object . . . I fixated [on] a water-jug

⁴ It turned out to be impossible to establish the exact dates of her stay at the monastery and at the asylum.

⁵ The statements of the doctors were meager and noncommittal. It remains unknown whether any records of the case are preserved in that "Mental Asylum" or its successor organization. I have never received a reply to my written inquiry on this matter.

which stood below the window on a big stool, and leaned obliquely against the wall. The jug was full of water. After about five minutes, I saw the jug raise slowly upwards about half a metre, after it had raised itself from its leaning position. Then it went in a slanting decline onto the other end of the stool, where it remained standing upright. Not a drop of water was spilled

All the people in the room saw this with their own eyes, so that it was impossible that one of us could have moved the jug with his hands. (pp. 20–21)

On May 15, Grunewald records (Schroeder, 1927):

8 phenomenon, 10.55 a.m. E. sat quite still in front of Gru. as previously, and he watched her. Something came from E.'s back, about 80 cm. above the table, and 20 cm. above her head. It went away toward her left (Gru.'s right), and dropped outside the table-edge to the floor, about 1 m. from E.'s left side (Gru.'s right). It was a little silver chain with a blue stone, a present from Klein which E. had in turn given to the cook.⁶ It must accordingly have come from the kitchen or the prior's house. (pp. 77–78)

Grunewald stresses that this phenomenon had been of special value to him, because he saw the chain fly away over Eleonore in not exactly fast motion. She was sitting quite still. Moreover, this phenomenon took place in bright daylight, outside the building on kind of a veranda.

COUNTESS WASSILKO ENTERS THE SCENE

After Grunewald's death, Countess Wassilko resolved to engage herself in the investigation of the Zugun Case. In September, she traveled to the Bukowina to see Eleonore.

Biographical Notes on Countess Wassilko

Zoë, Countess Wassilko von Serecki was born on July 11, 1897, in Czernowitz. The noble Wassilko family—at this time, Barons von Serecki—had resided for more than 500 years in the Bukowina, which was then the easternmost county of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. After the collapse of the Hapsburg empire at the end of World War I, the Bukowina became Romanian, only to become divided between Romania and the Ukraine in 1941 and it remains so today.⁷ Countess Wassilko was thus born Austrian and remained Austrian all her life, so the strange

⁶ This chain came later into Countess Wassilko's possession but it is no longer preserved; the reasons for its loss are unknown.

⁷ The border between the two countries runs right through the area in concern. Czernowitz, the Bukowina's capital, is located in the Ukraine, whereas the small town of Dorohoi, the district's capital, is on the Romanian side of the border. The villages of Talpa, Buhai, and Gorowei are too small to be found on a world atlas.

statements found in the parapsychological literature—particularly those pertinent to the Zugun case—alleging that she was Romanian, Polish, or even Russian are clearly wrong and need to be strongly refuted.⁸

The Barons Wassilko held enormous estates in the Bukowina, causing them to be nicknamed “the uncrowned kings” of that region. Only the eldest son, however, was heir to this territory, so Countess Wassilko’s father, Stephan Freiherr Wassilko von Serecki, the second of four sons, decided in 1900 to follow the gravity of the capital city of the empire and to move with this family to Vienna, in order to pursue a career as a civil servant there. A reserve officer in World War I, he was wounded in 1915 and eventually lost one leg. In autumn of 1918, immediately prior to the end of the monarchy, the Wassilko family (i.e., the families of all four sons) were raised to Counts by Emperor Charles I, the last Hapsburg emperor.⁹

By the age of 22, she had become interested in psychical research and the occult, and read all the well-known works of this period, beginning with Schrenck-Notzing’s books.¹⁰ In 1924, following a suggestion by Prof. Wettstein, a botanist and then head of the Austrian Academy of Science, a University Committee for the investigation of the claims of the paranormal was founded, headed by theoretical physicist Prof. Hans Thirring. Focusing the committee’s investigations on physical mediumship, Thirring held séances at the Vienna university with the Schneider brothers, prominent mediums of the day who were also popular in private circles. Countess Wassilko participated in séances with Rudi, the younger of the two brothers, and thus met Thirring, as well as Baron Winterstein, an immediate disciple of Sigmund Freud, in one of these overlapping circles.¹¹

⁸ Except, of course, during the years of Austria’s annexation to Nazi Germany when Austria ceased to exist as a sovereign state.

⁹ In 1919, the parliament of Austria—which by now had become a republic—passed a law doing away with nobility. It then became illegal to use aristocratic titles as part of the name. Neighboring Germany did not, and still does not have such a regulation. Hence, as Countess Wassilko’s booklet and papers on the Zugun Case (and later on other topics as well) were published in Germany, there was no objection to calling her “Countess”; yet the skeptics’ camp raised the allegation that she had no right to this title.

¹⁰ Albert, Baron Schrenck-Notzing, M.D. (1862-1929) was the absolutely dominant figure in parapsychology in Germany and one out of less than a handful of leading figures in Europe. Outside of parapsychology he was as disputed as the field was. Starting from research in hypnosis as a young doctor, his main field of interest became physical mediumism (telekinesis and materialization). He was also influential due to his economic power; he supported the “*Zeitschrift für Parapsychologie*” [Journal for Parapsychology] financially and also funded the research projects of various investigators (mainly poltergeist cases abroad, also a number of physical mediums). His impact, both on scientific progress and in terms of organizational and financial influence behind the scene, can hardly be overestimated.

¹¹ Dr. Alfred Baron Winterstein was a member of Freud’s famous “Wednesday-Evening-Circle,” the forerunner of the “Wiener Psychoanalytische Vereinigung” (Viennese Psychoanalytic Association). I believe it is fair to suppose that Winterstein, once he took part in the investigation the Zugun Case, might have brought it to Freud’s attention, as he did raise matters parapsychological in this group (e.g., he published “On the Psychoanalysis of Spooks” in the special issue of the “*Imago*” journal at Freud’s 70th anniversary [Winterstein, (1926)]), but I could not find solid evidence for this conjecture.

In autumn 1924, Countess Wassilko took part in séances which Thirring organized with a medium named Kraus, allegedly a school teacher by profession, who introduced himself as one of Schrenck-Notzing's mediums. Soon she realized that Kraus' performance relied on tricks alone, and she was able not only to expose him, but also to demonstrate how his fraudulent effects had been accomplished. Kraus' exposure led to a souring of relations between the Viennese research group headed by Thirring and the Munich group of Schrenck-Notzing. Countess Wassilko therefore made her début as a critical investigator and can by no means be called credulous.¹²

Her family ties to the Bukowina were never severed, despite Austria's territorial losses. Three of her uncles and numerous other relatives still lived there, and from them she received newspaper clippings of the spectacular Zugun story early in its development, and took a keen interest in the case. After Grunewald's sudden death, she felt called to play a more active role in this case that was taking place within her family's former estates.¹³

From September 3 to 12, 1925, she traveled to the Bukowina, where, on Sept 8, she met Eleonore for the first time. This was an encounter to change both their lives!¹⁴

The Countess was impressed by what she saw and decided to take the little girl back to Vienna with her for further investigations, although it took until early the next year for this plan to materialize. After her return to Vienna, Countess Wassilko wrote a booklet on the case, *Der Spuk von Talpa* (The Talpa Poltergeist), that was published in Munich (Wassilko, 1926a).¹⁵ The booklet rendered the early history of the case as exactly as was possible seven months after the onset of the phenomena, thereby corroborating Grunewald's account.

The Arrival of Eleonore Zugun in Vienna and the Beginning of the Countess' Investigations

On January 29, 1926, Eleonore Zugun arrived in Vienna, accompanied by Kubi Klein, the journalist who had "discovered" her. This was the beginning of the first of two phases of the Zugun case examined in this

¹² Needless to say, this assessment relates to the period of her life that is of interest here. She remained, however, a critical and alert person until the last few years of her life, when the aging process took its toll.

¹³ Because of the political changes in 1919, the Wassilko family lost most of their estates to the new Romanian government.

¹⁴ Both this travel and the ensuing costs of bringing Eleonore to Vienna and supporting her there were subsidized by Baron Schrenck-Notzing, a wealthy man who not only financed the *Zeitschrift für Parapsychologie* (*Journal for Parapsychology*) but also supported various research projects in the field.

¹⁵ Again, it was impossible to establish the exact date of this event.

Table 3
DISTRIBUTION OF WITNESSES TO THE ZUGUN PHENOMENA

Witnesses*	Phenomena	
	Number	%
(Phase I only)		
Wassilko on her own	961	55
Wassilko and witness(es):	793	45
W. + several witnesses	211	12
W. + only one witness	582	33
Total	1754	100

* From this table, it would appear that the Countess was always present and that not one single phenomenon occurred during her absence. Indeed, she was present *almost* all of the time. On four of the few occasions she was absent, phenomena were reported to have taken place—reported either by Eleonore herself or by members of the household. Eleonore's own statements were discarded for obvious general reasons, and the observations of household members were simply not reliable enough to be included (misobservation or fraudulence is certainly not ruled out).

study. The second phase is the Countess' five-month trip with Eleonore to England and Germany, starting in September, 1926.

From these early days, the stage was set for the main problems of investigating RSPK cases, such as the difficult-to-assess credibility of witnesses, the psychology of observation, and the thin dividing line between genuine phenomena and trickery and fraud. On January 30, the first phenomenon is reported to have already happened: the maid allegedly saw a silver spoon falling down from the table by itself. The next entry in the Countess' record again refers to a silver spoon, one that allegedly fell from the ceiling, disappeared and reappeared, and another spoon Eleonore let drop perhaps "on purpose." From this entry in her log—"absichtlich?" [on purpose?]²—it is clear that the Countess was well aware of problem areas in the case (Wassilko, 1925, p. 38).

The Countess recorded each and every phenomenon in her handwritten logbooks; Vol. I contains 50 pages (Jan. 29-March 22, 1926), Vol. II, 65 pages (March 23-Sept. 24), and Vol. III 26 pages (Sept. 24, 1926-May 18, 1927). Volumes I and II belong to Phase I, which took place in Vienna; Vol. III equals Phase II, commencing with the start of the travel

period, during which only a part of the phenomena that occurred was entered in the log. On other occasions during this time, someone else acted as a log-keeper, such as Harry Price during their stay at his National Laboratory, whereas for the time they spent in Germany, the handwritten records were discontinued in favor of typed ones.¹⁶ The handwritten notes (which afterwards were typed out) by various people appointed log-keepers on different occasions are not preserved, whereas the three hand-written logbooks kept by the Countess herself still exist, and are reproduced in my research report to the IGPP (Mulacz, 1997).¹⁷ These records are the main source material for the current investigation.

It appears that the entries in the Countess' own logbooks (Phase I, Vol. I & II) are much more reliable, and more detailed, than the later (typed) ones by various log-keepers. Furthermore, most of the phenomena—indeed, almost all of them—occurred in the Wassilko apartment and were witnessed by a limited number of people.¹⁸ This eighteen-person group was composed mainly of scientists, plus the five household members (the Countess herself, her parents, the maid, and the former *gouvernante* of the Countess who remained with the family); another 25 people witnessed only isolated phenomena (see Table 3).

In contrast, Phase II shows an extreme fluctuation in the kinds of participants in the Zugun demonstrations, many of them laypersons who shared an interest in psychical research and were members of study groups; often it remains unclear who is responsible for the entries in the log, even if it is clear who has done the actual writing. The emphasis of the current investigation is therefore on Phase I. Yet Phase II was also important because numerous individuals in different places were able to witness the phenomena, whereby not only the Zugun case as such gained public attention, but also the entire topic of psychical

¹⁶ They were taken up again on the return to Vienna; by then, however, the phenomena started to decline rapidly following the onset of Eleonore's menses on Feb. 14, so from Feb. 12 until June 17, phenomena occurred on only seven days.

¹⁷ The entries were made by pencil, and had become hard to read because of fading.

¹⁸ Nevertheless, the ones that occurred elsewhere are often particularly interesting, for example, phenomena in the apartment of a Prof. Bocklet, a musician, who ceased playing piano as he felt disturbed by Eleonore's phenomena and an apport of coral beads during a walk outside, where fraud is hardly conceivable.

On March 10th, the string of a coral necklace Eleonore was wearing broke and the corals fell to the floor. Apparently the rupture of the string or thread was a phenomenon because a piece of some 10 centimeters (four inches) was found missing and never returned, so the string must have been broken in two spots simultaneously. The corals were picked up from the floor and collected in a tray. During the following weeks, there were a few incidents when these corals started "raining from the ceiling" and quite a number of occasions when single corals appeared to be thrown by invisible forces or just fell from above. All these phenomena occurred in the Wassilko apartment, except for the incident on May 28th that took place in the open air, when the Countess took Eleonore on a walk, during which one coral was thrown on Eleonore's shoulder and fell from there down on the pavement.

research/parapsychology.

Another difference between the two phases is the fact that during Phase I, the locomotion of objects was in the foreground (see Table 2), whereas during Phase II, the dermal phenomena played a major role. Both the documentary movie and Rosenbusch's claimed exposure or allegation of fraud belong both to Phase II.

THE FURTHER COURSE OF EVENTS

Phase I

Eleonore Zugun lived in the Wassilko household as an additional member, giving a hand now and then, receiving some kind of education by the Countess herself, not "studying" as such, but, rather, needlework and skills unknown to a peasant girl such as answering the phone, and general good behavior. There were some pets, too, that Eleonore partly had to take care of (which offered good observation possibilities; e.g., when she sat motionless holding the cat on her arms her limbs were practically immobilized, and movements of objects in the vicinity could hardly be attributed to trickery on her part).

Though the apartment (which I remember very well) was quite spacious, it was necessary for the Countess to share her own room with Eleonore, which made almost continuous observation of the F. P. possible. The room was divided lengthwise by a curtain, with one bed in each compartment. Some smaller pieces of furniture were standing along that curtain (e.g., bookstands). The Countess had her desk near the window of the compartment she used herself; this desk had a board that could be pulled out which became Eleonore's workspace for drawing and writing.

The Countess' aim was to change the mere spontaneous phenomena into séance phenomena in order to make their appearance more reliable and to arrive at better preconditions for this type of investigation. In order to do so, she practiced automatic writing with Eleonore, by which means she could get in direct contact with the *Dracu* who used to announce at what time he would generate the next phenomenon.¹⁹

Many of the Countess' "scientific friends," including the aforementioned Prof. Thirring and Baron Winterstein, visited her in order to observe the F. P.'s phenomena. Hans Hahn, a mathematician and member of the famous "Vienna Circle" around the philosopher Moritz Schlick, needs to be mentioned in particular because Hahn, though not a frequent visitor, became by accident the person who would witness the

¹⁹ This approach introduces conceptual and terminological problems because in its later stages this case should not be called a "poltergeist" case, but a case of physical mediumship. However, conventionally it is still referred to as an RSPK case.

largest number of phenomena (79 during only 6 occasions).

In the beginning, the majority of the phenomena were apports or locomotion of objects; the Countess, however, viewed most of the movements as kinds of small-range apports. Only gradually did the phenomena shift toward dermal ones (i.e., the bite and scratch marks). First came movements of needles, then needles were found stuck into the skin of the F. P. (what is categorized as "Needles [real]" in Table 2). Later, she felt pricked by needles but only their marks appeared on the skin (categorized as "Needles [imaginary]"), and eventually these needle phenomena gave way to the well-known scratch and bite marks.

These marks appeared almost exclusively on parts of the body that were not covered by clothing: on the face, the décolleté, the neck, the backs of her hands—never on the palms—and on her arms, if she was wearing short sleeves, etc.

The scratches inflicted on her "by the *Dracu*" must by no means be confused with stigmata like the ones of Padre Pio or Therese Neumann of Konnersreuth. Religious stigmata are produced internally, whereas Eleonore's scratches were effected *externally*. This could be established beyond doubt by applying a layer of colored make-up on the regions of Eleonore's skin where scratches occurred, and it was found that the make-up was plowed aside when scratch marks were made. Moreover, in some instances, only this layer of make-up was found furrowed as if the scratches were not strong enough to damage the skin. On other occasions, the skin was actually torn by the scratches, with particles of the top layers of the skin removed. The bites were sometimes found dry, sometimes wet, which led to the development of the *Dracu* eventually "spitting" (the probable reason for this shift in her phenomenology will be discussed later). It also needs to be noticed that in a few instances, bitemarks occurred on places one cannot reach with one's own mouth, such as on the neck. Also, the imprints of teeth did not correspond to Eleonore's own teeth, and, in isolated instances, even the imprints of all molars were visible.

Visit by Prof. Verweyen

Between April 10 to 15, 1926, Johannes Maria Verweyen, professor of philosophy at Bonn University, paid a visit to watch Eleonore's phenomena. One phenomenon occurred frequently during this early period: the books standing on the shelf, with their backs lined up like soldiers, were found moving forward, as if being pushed by an invisible hand (i.e., the ones smaller in size pushed in further). Verweyen observed this happening several times, under conditions which both he and the Countess considered ruled out trickery.

Visit by Harry Price

Between April 30 and May 3, 1926, Harry Price, then the ASPR's research officer, paid a visit, after which he published his own account on the phenomena he had witnessed with Eleonore Zugun (Price, 1926). (Schrenck-Notzing, by the way, was furious that the first paper on Eleonore Zugun was not published in "his" *Zeitschrift für Parapsychologie*.) Later, Price invited her and the Countess to his National Laboratory and, at a later point in time, to Thirring for a lecture.

After his visit to Vienna and the visit Countess Wassilko and Eleonore Zugun paid him in turn in October, 1926, Harry Price became incredibly active publicizing this case. Apart from scientific papers both in JASPR (Price, 1926, 1927a) and in the Proceedings of his National Laboratory (Price, 1927a, 1927b), he included chapters on the Zugun case in several of his books (Price, 1933, 1939, 1945), and he launched numerous newspaper articles, resulting in the fact that the Zugun Case is still better known in the anglophone world than among parapsychologists of German-speaking countries.²⁰

Harry Price, however, is notorious for a few strange actions: his allegation of fraud by Rudi Schneider and delayed release of that disputed photo (which was probably a double exposure); his account on Borley Rectory in Essex; and his spectacular, yet ridiculous Walpurgisnacht "Brocken experiment" that called both his seriousness as a psychic investigator and his character as a gentleman into serious doubt. In hindsight, it might have not been wise by the Countess to associate herself with such a dubious personality; on the other hand, not only was she young and inexperienced, but also Price's dubious actions came only much later.²¹ Even Thirring accepted Harry Price's speaking engagement, so the Countess might have felt that Harry Price was the right associate for her.

Phase II

Departure to Paris and London. On September 24, 1926, Countess Wassilko and Eleonore Zugun departed for Paris where they met with Kubi Klein, whose behavior cast some shadow on his character.²² On October 1, they arrived in London. The observations on Eleonore Zugun from

²⁰ This is a counterpart to the old days of mesmerism when the somnambules used to announce the time when they would suffer their next crisis or when they eventually would be cured, and by which means.

²¹ I am grateful to Mr. A. H. Wesencroft of the Harry Price Library for providing me access to this material. The number of newspaper clippings on the Zugun Case are several hundred; of course, there is only little difference, if any, in their content.

²² Klein departed his hotel or B&B in Paris without paying, pretending that the Countess would pay for him when she arrived, but no such agreement had been established with her. Continued financial irregularities such as this resulted in either a police action or a lawsuit against Klein. The written witness statement by the Countess is in my records.

this visit are well covered in Harry Price's report (Price, 1927b), one outstanding event being an apport of a metal letter "L" from the ground floor of the building housing the "National Laboratory." Later, Price's colleague Tillyard (Tillyard, 1927c) reported a similar but more sophisticated event: the apport of a metal letter "C" that was found attached to the case of Prof. Tillyard's pen knife in the latter's pocket. (Strangely enough, more than a decade later, a C. E. M. Joad claimed to have had this experience (Salter, 1939). At the publication of Joad's book, Tillyard was already dead, so the matter could not be resolved.)

Berlin, Munich, and Nuremberg. On October 25, they arrived in Berlin, where medical doctors Kroener, Bruck, Koerber, and Doeblin (the well-known novelist), formed a committee to engage in the investigations, as did the prominent zoologist Prof. Zimmer and several others.²³ The RSPK events had shifted toward the dermal phenomena, with "wet bites" or when the *Dracu* was "spitting," which seemed to be an apport of a saliva-like fluid. Both Zimmer and Kroener took samples of *Dracu's* saliva, which they found to have quite a different population of micro-organisms compared to Eleonore's own saliva, which lacked staphylococci.²⁴ The results of these analyses remained somehow ambiguous, because even Zimmer had doubts whether the liquid in question was saliva at all.

Also in Berlin, they met with another medium, Frau Vollhardt (Rudloff), Schroeder's mother-in-law. This encounter apparently boosted Eleonore's ambition, but was otherwise uneventful. Another such encounter took place later, at a séance with Willy Schneider in Schrenck-Notzing's laboratory in Munich, but it did not live up to Schrenck's expectations. However, an impressive spontaneous case of apport is reported to have taken place in Berlin, followed by a similar case in Nuremberg, but in both cases there were no witnesses apart from the Countess and Eleonore, which is very unfortunate for documentation purposes.

On January 25, 1927, they arrived in Munich, where a documentary movie (that will be discussed later) was shot at the Emelka studios; on February 5 they continued to Nuremberg. When they were about to return to Vienna, Schrenck-Notzing asked them to stop by Munich again. A group of skeptics—Rosenbusch, Count Klinckowstroem, and Gulat-Wellenburg—had recently published a book that was received as being very damaging for physical mediumship (Gulat-Wellenburg, Klinckowstroem, & Rosenbusch, 1925), and Schrenck-Notzing wanted to give

²³ This needs to be viewed in the context of the time. Although there had already been female students at the university in her generation or even in the one before, the Countess had—according to the social status of the family—received her education by private tutors, thus had only limited contact with the "real world" outside.

²⁴ Kroener played a hyperactive role in the German parapsychological community of those days, trying desperately—albeit in vain—to challenge Schrenck's otherwise undisputed leadership in the field. Again, as has been the case with Harry Price, it would appear that the Countess was not very lucky with her choice of her associates.

them the opportunity to watch some well-developed genuine phenomena and to possibly change their minds.

Return to Munich and Rosenbusch's "Exposure" or Pseudoexposure

On February 9, 1927, the Countess and Eleonore accepted Schrenck's invitation and returned to Munich. Soon, Rosenbusch extended an invitation to them for a séance in his villa, together with colleagues who were known to take a positive stance toward psychical research. When the Countess arrived the following day with Eleonore, Rosenbusch conveyed the serious apologies of the representatives of the "friendly camp" who were unable to attend (actually, they were never invited), and asked them to stay; they accepted. Again, the Countess—though critical in matters of parapsychological investigations—showed how inexperienced she was in practical issues of social contacts, naïvely taking someone's word at face value.

During the course of this séance, Rosenbusch, acting like an accomplished gentleman, invited the Countess to change places with him in order for her to sit closer to the others, and, by the same token, for him to sit closer to Eleonore. Two days later, when the story of the exposure was published (Rosenbusch, 1927), it turned out that the entire setting was a trap carefully planned by Rosenbusch in order to catch them in the act. It was first published in a newspaper, not in a scientific journal, so an intention to discredit the entire field of psychical research cannot be overlooked. Rosenbusch had not discussed his observations and reservations with the Countess, but had kept his friendly attitude until their departure; the "exposure" came as a complete surprise.

Everyone involved in the investigation of the Zugun case was aware that Eleonore was increasingly resorting to trickery, but, first and foremost, so did the Countess. In her records, she religiously logs whenever she caught Eleonore cheating. On one early occasion, she slapped Eleonore. This is not the place to discuss pedagogic issues of the early 1920s, but these records cast some light on the fact that the Countess was well aware of the possibility of fraud, well able to detect it, and remained constantly on the alert vis-a-vis the possibilities of cheating.

Rosenbusch, however, was the first to accuse the Countess of complicity. Rosenbusch and his acquaintances at this séance had divided their attention in a methodologically sound way and had taken separate notes that fit well together when later compared to one another. (His report makes interesting reading, if one does not compare it to the Countess' records of the same events.) Rosenbusch describes at some length how the Countess pressed her fingers into Eleonore's hand, and, shortly after, Eleonore winced and showed a curved mark on her hand. The Countess defended herself in the *Zeitschrift für Parapsychologie* (Wassilko, 1928b,

1928e) by pointing out that the mark that had appeared was a bite mark and not a scratch, that at no time did marks of any kind appear on the palmar side of Eleonore's hand, and that he, Rosenbusch, could hardly have observed through Eleonore's hand what was happening on the other side of that hand, etc.²⁵

Firstly, I concur with Gauld and Cornell's (1979) judgement of this "exposure" episode:

On the whole it seems to me that Rosenbusch's allegations must be set aside as not proved. His notes are far from clear and his observations, when examined carefully, are ambiguous. One must remember that the Countess was at this period in effect Eleonora's foster-mother, and was obviously accustomed to fuss over her a little, as any other mother of a teenage daughter might do.²⁶ The movements and manipulations which a fussing mother carries out without thinking might very easily in a seance room setting confirm the worst suspicions of a man with Rosenbusch's powerful preconceived ideas. . . . It is worth noting, as the Countess pointed out, that Rosenbusch has nothing to say about those occasions on which phenomena took place without any suspicious manoeuvres being observed by the attentive witnesses. He simply passes them by. He was pretty clearly one of those dedicated but tiresome persons, to be found alike amongst the sceptics and the credulous, who constantly shop and distort phenomena to fit them upon some preferred Procrustean bed. (p. 140)

Secondly, there is one more point to this that appears to have escaped Gauld and Cornell's attention (probably due to a certain language barrier) which I consider the salient one: during this period of the Zugun mediumship, many dermal phenomena occurred on areas of her skin that had been accidentally touched just before, be it by herself or others. In many of these cases it was clear that a fraudulent production of dermal marks was definitely ruled out. For example, someone who was aware of the possibly ensuing problems touched her softly by the *finger tips only*, being careful to deliberately avoid getting his *finger nails* in contact with her skin. Thus the phenomena could actually be provoked by touching her! The documentary movie shows another way of provoking the phenomena: she symbolically hits the *Dracu* by hammering a drawing of it she had made some time before and immediately afterwards she winces and indicates on which part of her skin she has felt pain inflicted on her by

²⁵ Zimmer in the laboratory of the Zoological Institute at Berlin University, which he headed, Kroener later on in his private clinic; Schrenck-Notzing repeated this kind of investigation in Munich. The original records of these investigations could not be traced.

²⁶ Apart from the ensuing dispute in various journals, the Countess also turned to the court and accused Rosenbusch of slander. The procedure and her attorney were paid by Schrenck-Notzing. The case ended with the dismissal of the action, because Rosenbusch's report was seen as a scientific statement that by its nature may include some critique of others.

Dracu's claws (scratches) or teeth (bite marks) followed by the usual developments of weals within minutes. As another example, when Eleonore was about to drink a sip of beer (the *Dracu* "does not permit" Eleonore to drink beer) she usually winced when raising the glass to her mouth and indicated where the "attack by the *Dracu*" had taken place.²⁷

The Countess describes her observations of these provoked phenomena quite clearly, but unfortunately the Countess did not mention these observations earlier than in the rejection of Rosenbusch's accusation. When reading her original protocols, most of which had been written long before the Rosenbusch incident, this effect of provoking dermal phenomena by soft stimuli on the skin such as light touches becomes quite evident. It would be totally wrong to think the Countess might have made these statements ad hoc for tactical reasons in her defense against Rosenbusch; on the contrary, they are the fruit of several months of careful observation.

Return to Vienna

On February 12, 1927, the Countess and Eleonore returned to Vienna after a tour of almost five months. It was only here that the Countess became confronted with Rosenbusch's attack that appeared in a newspaper published in Berlin.

First Menstruation

Within two days of their return, Eleonore Zugun had her first menstruation, following which her phenomena declined dramatically, both in respect to their frequency and magnitude, and soon faded away entirely.

Apprenticeship in a Viennese Hairdressing Salon

As Eleonore's mediumship drove to a close, the Countess had her learn a trade by which she could support herself back at home. She found a place in a ladies' hairdressing salon and also learned how to do manicures. Though she started this job soon after the return to Vienna—that is, during a period where a few phenomena still used to occur occasionally—no such events have been observed at her workplace. It appears that this was a quiet and uneventful period for her, lasting approximately one more year, her last in Vienna.

²⁷ This assessment by Gauld and Cornell is not undue. In contrast, however, some authors of popular books on psi write that the Countess had adopted Eleonore. This is not only untrue but quite ridiculous to those who knew the Countess and her awareness of her social status as opposed to that of a peasant girl.

Control (or Rehabilitation) Séances

During March and May, 1927, a few more séances were held that the Countess called "Control Séances" (they might also be called "Rehabilitation Séances" due to the preceding Rosenbusch allegation). The one on March 9 is particularly interesting because it took place at the Institute for Theoretical Physics of the University of Vienna, headed by Thirring, who was also in charge of this séance. Thirring (who later became the founding president of the Austrian SPR²⁸) and all the other members of the (informal) Circle for the Study of Eleonore Zugun's Phenomena signed a declaration that the phenomena they had witnessed for a considerable time were genuine. In order to support Countess Wassilko in her struggle against Rosenbusch, this statement was first published in a highly reputed Viennese newspaper, then reprinted in the *Zeitschrift für Parapsychologie (Die Phänomene der Eleonore Zugun, 1927)*. It is unthinkable that a body of scholars, many of them full professors at Vienna university, would unanimously sign such a statement were they not truly convinced of its veracity.

Final Departure to Romania

The last of Eleonore Zugun's phenomena were logged by Countess Wassilko on June 17, 1927. Three quarters of a year later, on March 30, 1928, Eleonore Zugun left for good. Her departure, after a period of two years plus two months during which she was under almost continuous observation by the Countess, marks the end of this unique case. Eleonore later married a Mr. Gheorghiu, with no children, and was widowed. On one occasion, the Countess mentioned that she learned of a re-occurrence of phenomena from a letter from Eleonore, but no details were given. It appears that this had been only transient (and could have happened during menopause).²⁹

The Countess had announced her plan to publish the entire case, a plan she later altered in favor of a joint publication with Kroener. However, after the Rosenbusch attack, she was so disappointed that she never carried out this publication plan. Yet, on the occasion of the Third International Congress for Psychical Research held at the Sorbonne in Paris in 1927—soon after the Zugun phenomena had come to their ultimate end—she delivered a lecture on this remarkable case.³⁰ Kroener also gave

²⁸ There is a strong tendency of punishment in all of *Dracu's* attacks, be it throwing of objects towards the F. P. in the early stages of the RSPK phenomena, later assaults by needles, then scratches and bites; the *Dracu's* spitting on Eleonore, though not a painful action, is at least humiliating.

²⁹ The Austrian SPR was founded on Dec. 2, 1927. Countess Wassilko became the Secretary General of the Society, a position she held for 38 years until she left the Society after a quarrel in 1966. (She died in 1978).

a paper on the Zugun Case, focusing on the investigations carried out in Berlin during the "tour."³¹

In 1966, Countess Wassilko presided over a low-profile congress on parapsychology convened in Constance by German researcher Hans Gerloff. Her presentation of the Zugun Case there is her final word on this case. However, it appears that during the almost forty years that had elapsed, the Zugun Case, important as it was, had grown considerably in her reminiscence and in her assessment. She estimated the total number of phenomena as approximately 5000, which, because of my investigation, can safely be called definitely much too high.³²

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of my investigation into the Zugun Case:

1. Establish a reliable *total number* of phenomena.
2. Assess the "exposure" and the *allegations* of fraud.
3. Scrutinize the *documentary movie* for indicators of fraud.
4. Assess the *psychoanalysis* of Eleonore Zugun.
5. Test correlations of the frequency of the phenomena with various variables:

Internal: Anticipation of the female cycle (Wassilko, 1966)

External: Phases of the moon (Schrenck-Notzing [Price, 1926, p. 459])

Fluctuations of the geomagnetic field (tentatively; Persinger 1985, 1986, 1988, 1989; Persinger & Schaut 1988; Schaut & Persinger 1985)

LST (tentatively; Spottiswoode, 1990, 1993, 1997a)

1. The Total Number of Phenomena

Before actually starting to count the phenomena, each and every one had to be assessed as to whether or not it should, according to its description, be entered as a presumably genuine phenomenon. There was the question, for example, whether multiple scratches should be counted as

³¹ There were five such congresses held in the inter-war years: 1921 (Copenhagen), 1923 (Warsaw), 1927 (Paris), 1930 (Athens), and 1935 (Oslo). The congress management was in the hands of a Carl Vett, a Dane with some anthroposophical tendencies, and congress offices or national committees had been established in 26 countries. After the Oslo congress, Tenhaeff took over from Vett, but the next congress, planned for 1937 in Budapest, did not materialize due to the political and economic developments in the 1930s.

³² Schrenck-Notzing gave a talk on the medium Kraus whom he called "Weber" in his paper; the individual concerned is the one who was exposed in 1924 by Countess Wassilko in Thirring's laboratory. Schrenck considered him a "mixed case," Thirring and the Countess viewed him as a fraud. From our perspective, the assessment of the Viennese researchers might be better justified.

one phenomenon, or as many single scratches. The same problems arose with the pushing-back of books on the shelf. I counted several neighboring books pushed back simultaneously as one single phenomenon, and multiple scratches in the same area of the body as one phenomenon (e.g., parallel scratches on one forearm). If, however, such scratches occurred simultaneously on each arm, I counted them as two.

Phenomena that were exceptionally well-observed, either by several witnesses or where the Countess made explicit statements such as "by accident, I have just been looking in the direction of . . . when such-and-such happened right in front of me," were labeled "corroborated cases" and a total of these has been established, too. A good example is the following observation (Wassilko 1927b):

Most interesting were the very rare cases when the last part of the hypothetical line of flight of a moving object was to be observed. Once I entered my room and looked at the window. Eleonore was standing behind me. Suddenly I saw a shadow which glided down slowly in front of the window and not straight but in a zigzag line. . . . Then I heard a low sound of something falling. I looked and saw a little iron box filled with dominoes. The box was closed but some of the dominoes lay next to it on the floor. . . . Another time I was sitting with Mr. Klein at the round table, while Eleonore stood with a cat in her arms at the book-stand. Mr. Klein unintentionally looked at the girl, and on this occasion noticed a dark grey shadow come from behind her, pass along her right side and fall under our table upon the cushion at our feet. It was a tin box which had before stood on the washstand on the other side of the room. I had always the impression that a returning object of the kind was only again submitted to the normal laws of the physical world when it was perfectly itself again. . . . The foregoing shadow has nothing at all to do with the appearance of the object itself. I think that the impression which this moving riddle makes is described best by the words: "Hole in the world," which I used for it. (p. 148)

The total of 3454 established by adding up Countess Wassilko's single data falls short of her estimate of some 5000. Perhaps I was more strict in my count because I arrived at a total of 3060, yet the orders of magnitude of the two counts are the same. Out of these 3060, there are 884 corroborated cases, the major part of which belonging to Phase I (which was to be expected). Anyway, even if the figure of 884 alone is taken into account, the Zugun Case is one of extraordinary richness in phenomena.

2. Assess the "Exposure" and Allegations of Fraud

Basically, this has already been dealt with during the narration of the sequence of events. To summarize, Rosenbusch's alleged exposure is not tenable; based on his skeptical belief system, he mistook harmless

touches evoking reflex dermal phenomena for fraudulent productions.

3. *Scrutinize the Documentary Movie for Indicators of Fraud*

The documentary movie on Eleonore Zugun, financed by Schrenck-Notzing, was shot in the studios of the Emelka company in Munich early in 1927. It was one of the early employments of cinematography for scientific documentation purposes within parapsychology, although not the first, but it was definitely the first RSPK case to be filmed.

The original movie is silent, in 36 mm, and is kept at the IGPP, Freiburg. It was shown by the Countess in Paris, 1927, and again in Constance in 1966. However, there are several copies on 16mm film—including one at the SPR in London—and even more on video tape. (The Parapsychology Foundation will receive a copy shortly.) I based my investigation on a videotape which I scrutinized in its relevant portions frame by frame.³³

Unfortunately, the single sequences are short, and there is no uninterrupted sequence from the supposed assault by the *Dracu* (indicated by Eleonore's wincing) until the development of the well-observed urticaria. Yet there are a few interesting observations.

First of all, it is clearly visible that Eleonore does not wear any rings on her fingers. This is important in light of the fact that Dessoir had spread word she was fraudulently producing the scratches by pointed fingernails or by the sharp-edged setting of the ring she allegedly was wearing when he saw her. Whether or not she had been wearing a ring on the occasion of her encounter with Dessoir cannot be determined, but during the séances filmed by the Emelka company she did definitely not wear any rings, and the same phenomena still occurred. The Countess occasionally makes a remark that she always had a eye on Eleonore having her fingernails cut short in order to avoid such allegations. Allegations, however, hardly die, and Dessoir's story, incorrect as it is (at least in its generalized version, i.e., that the observation of this ring would explain away all phenomena) is still perpetuated through a reference to Dessoir in Kurtz's *The Skeptic's Handbook of Parapsychology* (Kurtz, 1985, p. 474). Moreover, this mere reference is just about all Kurtz has to tell his readers about the Zugun Case. The documentary movie, however, permits one to strongly reject Dessoir's representation of the case, and Kurtz's selection.

A second point of interest in the movie is that on several occasions, one of the researchers taking part in filming this documentary (a group that included the eminent parapsychologist Rudolf Tischner) pointed

³³ During the years of her observation of the Zugun phenomena, she did not only log each and every single phenomenon, but also counted them; however, this count was introduced a fortnight after Eleonore's arrival in Vienna and was discontinued during the tour, to be resumed only on their return to Vienna for the short remaining period. Therefore, there are a number of monthly totals but no overall grand total.

out portions of Eleonore's skin to another researcher using an instrument like a pencil to indicate various areas. It is evident that this instrument is not touching her skin at all, and that the individuals involved are using the instrument in a flat angle toward the skin in order to avoid any appearance of having accidentally scratched her with the point of the instrument. One may conclude that the investigators were well aware of what to avoid in order to give no room for allegations of trickery.

4. Evaluation of the Psychoanalysis of Eleonore Zugun

From May 17, 1926 until August 3, 1926, the Countess carried out a series of sixty psychoanalytical sessions with Eleonore Zugun. Their records (in Romanian³⁴) are still preserved, but, as is the case with the entire Zugun material, the announced publication of her analysis by the Countess never took place.

It is an achievement of Countess Wassilko to have introduced psychoanalysis as an instrument for parapsychological research. Although some theoretical articles had been published on the relationship between psychoanalysis and parapsychology, it was the Countess who first carried out an analysis with the F. P. of an RSPK case.

However, this analysis was carried out somewhat amateurishly. Because the Countess had not undergone analysis herself prior to her psychological evaluation of Eleonore, it needs to be labeled a "wild analysis." Whether Freudian Baron Winterstein was involved somehow (through tutorial or supervision) or was at least informed about the analysis could not be established. In the surprisingly short analysis of Eleonore, the Countess might not have paid sufficient attention to the processes of transference—particularly countertransference. The Countess' biography reveals that

Table 4
TOTAL NUMBERS OF PHENOMENA ACCORDING TO DIFFERENT COUNTS

	Phase I	Phase II	Totals
Wassilko Single Data	2092	1362	3454
Wassilko Totals*	1430	418	1848
Actual Count	1754	1306	3060
Corroborated Cases	702	182	884

* See footnote 31.

³⁴ I am grateful to Prof. Werner Schiebeler of Ravensburg, Germany, for arranging for this copy.

experiences during her adolescence definitely influenced her relationships with older men, although saying that she had a father complex is perhaps too extreme. Knowing the Countess' history very well, I have reason to presume that a few of the underlying complexes attributed to Eleonore by the Countess, such as recollections of being raped by her master and of an incestuous episode, might have been connected to her own mind and projected onto Eleonore through countertransference.³⁵ (Although these instances of rape and incest cannot be denied outright, there are no other indications that they happened.)

The Countess always viewed the psychological mechanisms underlying Eleonore's phenomena as indications of self-punishment (i.e., Eleonore unconsciously punishing herself through the agency of the "Dracu" and its assaults) resulting from guilt over her actions while visiting her grandmother in Buhai, and from the ensuing "curse" which marked the onset of the phenomena. Through the Countess' (hypothesized) countertransference of thoughts and emotions connected to incidents such as rape by a much older man or incest, Eleonore's feelings of guilt were enhanced, and therefore the acts of self-punishment became more aggressive, changing from throwing objects at her to physical assaults such as scratches and bites. Thus the psychoanalysis carried out on Eleonore was likely instrumental in the transformation of the Zugun phenomena from apports or locomotion of objects to the dermatographic phenomena.

5. On Correlations of the Frequency of the Phenomena with Various Variables

As mentioned before, Countess Wassilko started a bit of a quantitative approach: she counted the number of phenomena and made a curve on their frequency. According to the shape of this curve, which showed one distinct peak and, for a few days, a zero-line, she arrived at the hypothesis that the monthly distribution of the frequency is an anticipation of the female cycle, with one peak and one low each month.

Schrenck-Notzing, however, provided the hypothesis that this frequency distribution is not due to internal, physical processes, but is synchronized by external forces that show a similar rhythm, most likely the phases of the moon (Price, 1926).

Current hypotheses also discuss external influences. Persinger (1985, 1986, 1988, 1989; Persinger & Schaut 1988; Schaut & Persinger 1985) has found a sort of antagonism in the correlation of psi phenomena (both ESP and PK scores) with minima/maxima values of the geomagnetic field, and Spottiswoode (1990, 1993, 1997a, 1997b) recently found a strong correlation of ESP with a certain Local Sidereal Time

³⁵ The records have been translated into German by Dr. Hans Dama, a Romanist at the University of Vienna. A copy of this translation is incorporated in my research report at the IGPP.

(LST). Though not clearly related to RSPK cases, an obvious speculation is whether there might be a sort of antagonism—analogueous to the geomagnetic one—between ESP and PK in reference to LST.³⁶

This makes four hypotheses with one internal and three external variables to be tested against a total of 3060 single phenomena.

1. *An internal source (anticipation of the menstruation)*

Countess Wassilko (1966) was clearly premature in forming her hypothesis that Eleonore's phenomena were connected to a woman's cycle; she arrived at this conclusion after too short a time of observation. Apparently, the curve of the month of March 1926 showed this distinct distribution by mere accident. The following months show curves with more than one peak and every kind of irregularity, but no pattern in the vicinity of a 28-day rhythm. Hence this hypothesis must be rejected.

2. *Correlation with phases of the moon*

Schrenck-Notzing also jumped to his conclusion prematurely (Price, 1926, p. 459). His hypothesis looked good for the frequency distribution of one month, but it is not tenable over the entire period of observation. In fact, there is *no* correlation between the peak values in phenomena frequency and any phase of the moon, Pearson's correlation co-efficient Phase I: $r = 0.028$, Phase II: $r = 0.015$. Therefore, Schrenck-Notzing's hypothesis must also be rejected.

3. *Correlation with peak values of the geomagnetic field*

The geomagnetic daily mean values on which my probe is based were supplied by the *World Data Center C1 for Geomagnetism*, Copenhagen, Denmark, and originally came from the observatory Niemegek or Seddin resp. (Lat: 52.072 N, Long: 12.675 E) near Berlin.³⁷ They are representative for all of Central Europe.³⁸ As it turns out, again there is *no* correlation between the phenomena frequency and the geomagnetic peak values, Pearson's correlation co-efficient Phase I: $r = 0.085$, Phase II: $r = 0.021$. Hence, the hypothesis based on Persinger's findings must be rejected as inapplicable in the Zugun Case. (It goes without saying that no investigation of the local level of geomagnetism at the outbreak of the RSPK phenomena can be carried out, because the exact day on which the poltergeist activity

³⁶ The Countess later underwent an analysis herself, which, it appears, she prematurely abandoned.

³⁷ William G. Roll in particular urged me to look into this matter while discussing related items at the 40th Annual Convention of the Parapsychological Association in August, 1997, at Brighton, UK.

³⁸ I received these data through the "Zentralanstalt für Meteorologie und Geodynamik," in Vienna. I am grateful to Dr. Gerald Duma for his mediation in this matter.

commenced remains unknown.)

4. *Local Sidereal Time*

A simple consideration demonstrates that any conjecture of a connection between PK or RSPK and Local Sidereal Time similar to what Spottiswoode (1990, 1993, 1997a, 1997b) found regarding ESP and LST is inapplicable in this case.³⁹ If it were, we should—regardless at which LST—find a “window” of increased or decreased phenomena that is moving backwards in time. This daily increment totals approximately two hours after one month; after three months, this hypothetical window would have moved (from the afternoon to the morning hours, for example). After six months, it would have moved from daytime to nighttime, or vice versa; an effect of this magnitude could be overlooked. As no such pattern can be found in the Zugen data, this conjecture must also be rejected.

DISCUSSION

It is now established that these variables, internal or external, had no

Circadian Distribution (Phase I)

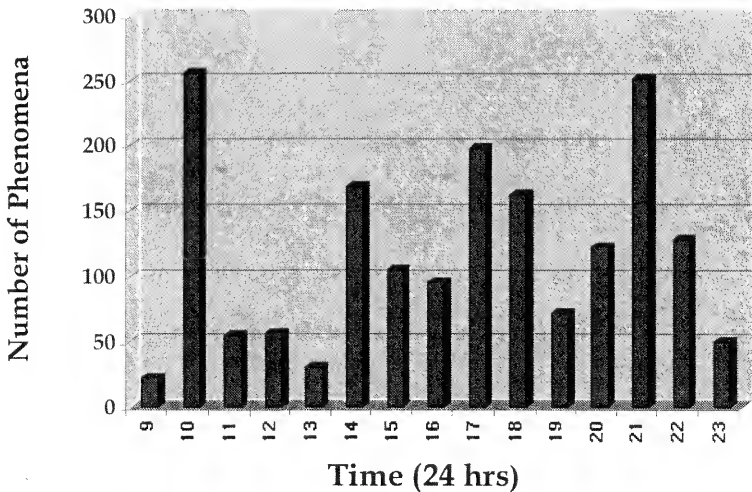


Figure 1.

³⁹ Information from Dr. Duma.

Circadian Distribution (Phase II)

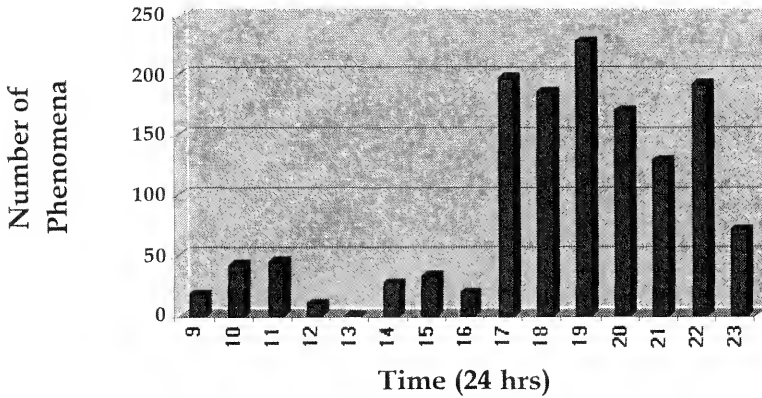


Figure 2.

influence whatsoever on the frequency of the Zugun phenomena; all four hypotheses discussed here must be rejected as either wrong or at least not applicable in this case.

One variable that could be correlated with the frequency of the Zugun phenomena is Eleonore and the Countess' daily routine. The circadian distribution is significantly different between Phase I and Phase II, due to the different circumstances of everyday life, which is obviously dependent upon the Countess' daily rhythms as a social variable. For several months there is no change in the average daily distribution of phenomena, a pattern which mirrors the phases of activity and rest, periods of family life and of receiving guests, etc. The same is true for the daily routine during the months of the tour (see Figures 1 and 2.).

Moreover, it can be demonstrated that there is an apparently strong—albeit hard-to-quantify—correlation with purely psychological variables that had impact on both the frequency and the character of the phenomena, such as suggestions, or the discussed reflex reactions to being touched.

CONCLUSIONS

The Case of Eleonore Zugun, the peasant girl from Talpa in whose presence strange phenomena took place and who suffered from the assaults of her *Dracu*, is still, after three quarters of a century, not only remarkable, but unique.

After all, this extraordinary case of RSPK offers not only the opportunity to discuss the case as such, but also as a prime methodological example of applying quantitative methods on a hitherto apparently qualitative case, thus combining proof-oriented and process-oriented aspects of parapsychological research. This approach to historic cases is different from mere reception studies. It demonstrates that the abundance of historical cases in parapsychology is a most valuable "treasure" that needs to be periodically re-evaluated—a permanent process—and that the gap between idiographic and nomothetic approaches can indeed be bridged.

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