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Translate: Modin N.S.*

Mystery of the Dyatlov group death

(Mystery of The Dyatlov group incident)

Documentary investigation

To blessed memory of the Dyatlov group



1959 - 2014

*Посвящается
светлой памяти группы Дятлова*

ЕВГЕНИЙ БУЯНОВ

Mystery of the Dyatlov group death

«Автор»

2014

Буянов Е.

Mystery of the Dyatlov group death / Е. Буянов — «Автор», 2014

The earlier version of this book published on the Internet literature sites in January 2009 was called «The mystery of Dyatlov's accident». In August 2011 a «paper version» of the book, improved and revised, was issued in an edition of 3000 copies, with financial help of Nikolai Antonovich Rundkvist and his publishing house, Eltsin URFU (former USTU, UPI) and a fund «In memory of Dyatlov's group» with active participation of an academician P. I. Bartolomey. We thank everyone for contribution to our book. According to a proposal of Bartolomey we changed a title of the book to «The mystery of Dyatlov's group death» and its size was considerably cut by way of removal of some appendices (they can be found in the earlier edition). We also added several articles of other authors in order to «introduce different opinions» that existed before our book. This book edition – more full and correct – was created on the basis of new investigation facts and as a result of constant revision of the book during last years. The huge «inertia» of the investigation of Dyatlov's group Tragedy let us to receive new proofs and data of its events and facts but we also reached a higher level of understanding of crucial reasons of accidents increase in tourism and mountaineering during solar activity peaks, and explored connection of this factor with other natural phenomena.

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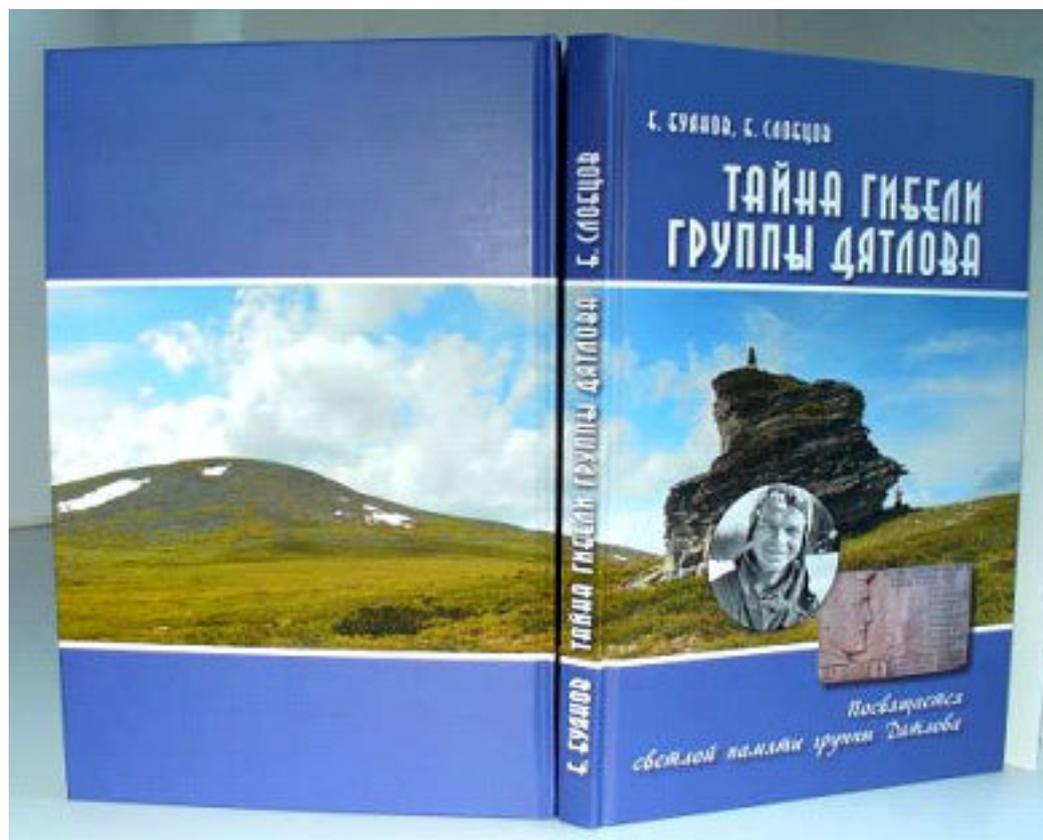
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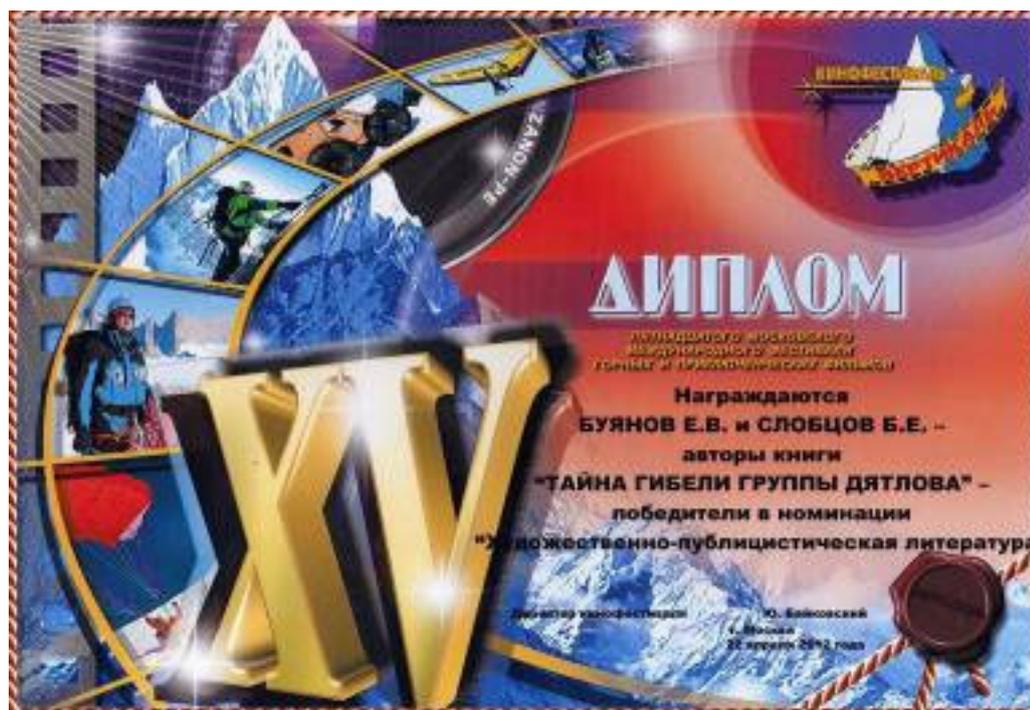
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E. V. Buyanov, B. E. Slobtsov
Mystery of the Dyatlov group death
(Mystery of The Dyatlov group incident)
Documentary investigation

To blessed memory of the Dyatlov group

The incident ended only after its roots and course of events had been clarified and proven.







English edition dated 24 July 2013, revised and supplemented № 22, to be printed and published on the Internet

_____ E.V. Buyanov «_____» _____ 2014
Russia, Sankt-Peterburg,
2014

Note:

... Quite a few issues turned out to be tied with this history of death of a group of tourists, – both mysteries of missile flights, and radiation caused by nuclear tests, and mysteries of injuries, and mysteries of natural elements, and mysteries of human behavior. But in order to understand what happened on the fatal night from February 1st to February 2nd 1959, it was necessary to place all facts and events in the right place, – when where and under which circumstances they occurred. Afterwards the role of major event factors became clear – both in the incident itself, and in the multitude of rumors and legends which arose around it ...

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This edition of the book was also issued in Internet in its English version; now foreign readers have an opportunity to become familiar with the book too.

In a complicated case investigation is not only «a search for black cats in a «dark room» where they may not be found» – this image is created by a character of the film «The meeting place cannot be changed». In this film and in the case with Dyatlov's group, and during any serious investigation it is a movement through dark maze full of assumptions and strange facts that has a lot of «entrances» – «versions», and quite entangled paths (connections between facts and events). Only few paths lead to a reliable description of the events.

A complicated investigation process does not include only examination of one «entrance» (a version) and one «path» of the event; it requires a goal-oriented and consecutive examination of a whole «maze» of events, such as checking and explanation of all unclear facts and disproof of «false paths» of events. It demands discovering all «black cats» of Tragedy reasons and motives of people behaviour. It demands discovering a right «entrance» to the maze in the form of well-grounded version – in this case the «entrance» in the beginning was not even found. And it requires reasonable conclusion based on the examination of every strange fact as well as its connection with catastrophe events, its place and role in events development.

Only proved facts can be a base for a «tree», explaining different Tragedy events, with «fruits» – specific interpretations of some unclear facts and events. This «tree» has a main «trunk» – an explanation of a whole objective cause-and-time chain of events that took place in practice.

Those people who follow only one false version cannot find the way out of the «maze» of assumptions and leave it through «entrance» of a wrong theory (an unreliable «version» of events). Until they give up their assumptions they are doomed to wander in the «maze» aimlessly looking for evidences and facts in favour of their own wrong theory – looking for mythical facts.

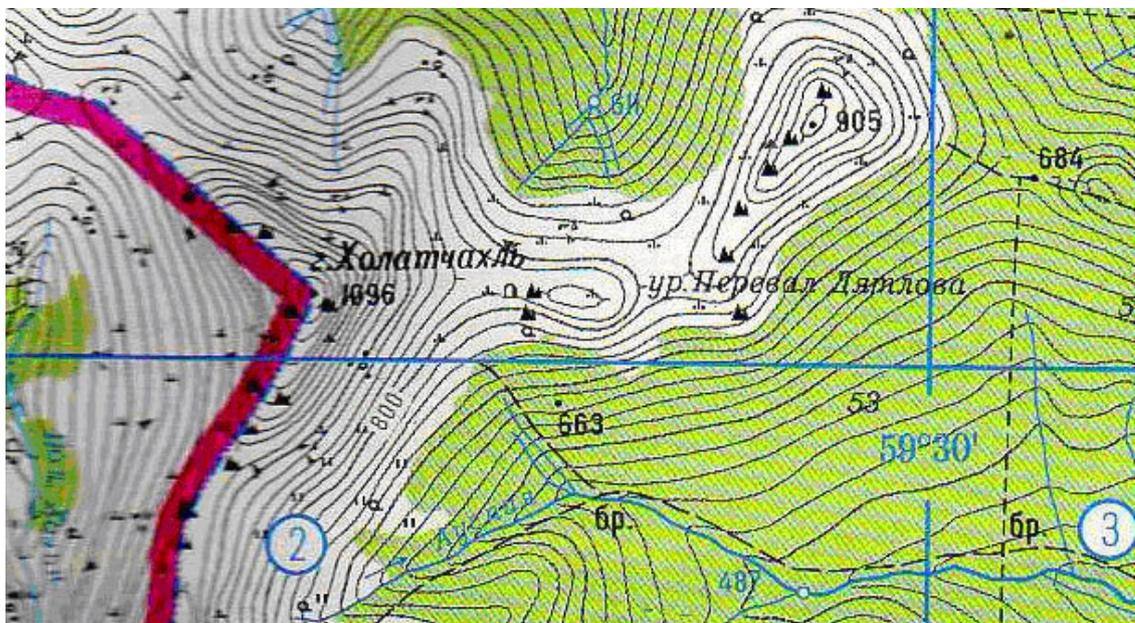
Those people who follow a correct path again and again find new evidences and improvements of true «version» that turns to description of events.

In memory and on the map. Prologue

On the map of The Northern Ural, 12 km away from the dominating mountain Otorten(1182) in the riverheads of the Lozva river there is a place marked red on modern maps: «Dyatlov pass» or «Natural boundary Dyatlov pass».

The name of this remote place historically arose after the tragedy which occurred at the bottom of the mansi (voguls) «Dead mountain» Holatchakhl (Holat-Syakhyl: 1096,7 m and 1079 on old maps). Here a group of 9 tourists from the Ural polytechnical institute (UPI) under the direction of Igor Dyatlov died under mysterious circumstances at the night of February 1–2, 1959.

The reasons and course of events were unclear for a long time although lots of researchers tried to disclose them, and the place of incident and the memorable obelisk on the rock-ostanetse (single rock) turned into goals of many hikes, expeditions and searches.



Mountain Holatchakhl (1096) and Dyatlov pass on the map of Sverdlovsk Oblast



Mountain Holatchakhl and obelisk on an ostanetse (outlier)

This history also involved facts curdling the souls of susceptible people, – mysteries on the level of thrillers. What kind of mysterious force made the group cut and tear the tent at night? Why did tourists throw their tent with stuff, went down to the forest in easy clothing where they later died from fierce frost? From what source did radioactivity spots appear on their clothing? What mysterious «fireballs» did fly at night in the Ural sky with light of «full Moon», and was this phenomenon in any way connected with the tragedy? Why and how did victims get such odd and heavy injuries, and without visible external damages? Why did one victim have no tongue?

Why did the official investigation give no answer to causes of the accident? What did the authorities hide, what did they know and what were they unaware of?? Official «case» of the prosecutor's office related to the failure, also closed for further investigation, and free access, didn't give any answer to these questions. In the conclusion regarding «irresistible force of nature» which had caused the death of tourists, there was some «innuendo», "uncertainty", "omission".

Attempts of researchers who had even studied this "criminal case" to give an answer to the mysteries of the Dyatlov incident caused new questions which didn't explain the situation, and made it more and more confused. Each «answer» to the question which rose a new question wasn't the answer, and didn't yield a correct result. Publications didn't give answers to mysteries and only gave assumptions. «Rearrangement» of facts, evidence, indications of witnesses and «versions» like «solitaire» didn't make up an integral picture of them.

Quite a few rumors, assumptions and legends arose around this story. Dozens of articles and a couple of books are dedicated to it, – Yuri Yarovoy's story «Highest category of difficulty», a documentary basis of the female novel by Anna Matveeva «Dyatlov's Pass», Anna Kiryanova's mystical thriller «Sorni-Nye's hunting», A.Gushchin's books «A state mystery costs nine lives» (1999) and «Murder at the dead mountain» are devoted to it. Ural television agency created a TV series «The Mystery of Dyatlov Pass». This tragedy is regularly mentioned in TV programs and articles about ufologic, abnormal, paranormal and mysterious events. In the book «100 great mysteries» a story about this tragedy is narrated by the head of «Death of detachment from the Ural Polytechnical Institute».

What was this «Dyatlov incident»? Was it an ordinary "natural disaster" of a tourist group or did it involve any “technogenic” factors like falling of missiles, weapon tests? Or

did the tragedy grow out of a crime, a deliberate, or undeliberate one? Or did any abnormal natural phenomena take place? And did it contain any pages «closed» by the authorities made in order to eliminate "leakage of information" about any «secrets» or actions of the authorities?

The current narration is a documentary one, – it tells about Evgeniy Buyanov's initiative investigation, assisted by a lot of other people – skilled experts and professionals. Without this help, without work of researchers' «collective mind» the investigation wouldn't have been able to achieve success within foreseeable terms. This book offers our explanation of the course and causes of the Dyatlov incident and analysis of false facts and versions.

The results of investigation can be understood faster, easier and in a more interesting way if the way the researchers had gone through is stated. Therefore here we have not only results, but also the process of their search, the process of overcoming numerous errors, false facts and speculations. The course of investigation was inseparable from this fight against errors. It turned out that rejecting them is even more difficult, rather than explaining the incident events because without a denial they turned into significant rejections of the main version of events. Speculation and errors became «malicious aura» of the tragedy which drove investigation into darkness of misunderstanding, and false ways of search for a «crime» in a false manner.

We gradually approached to understanding of the course of incident through vision of causes and effects of preceeding, accompanying and following events leaving out both mysteries and false imaginations. Gradually «the main lines» of investigation were determined, – those directions of search which led to detailed understanding of separate important facts. Examples are investigation lines of «injuries», «fireballs», «radiation» and others. The narration is conducted along these «lines» of investigation which give answers to the questions put. But first the narration touches upon history of disappearance of the group and its searches, earlier unprecedented in terms of scale on the huge territory of about 300 square kilometers is briefly stated. Let's begin with it before providing answers to mysteries, and to explaining, why and how the incident occurred. So:

Alarm!

The Dyatlov group" Hibina"¹ made up of nine tourists from the UPI sports club has disappeared:

¹ Khibiny, or «Khibiny tundra» – a mountain area in the western continental part of the Kola Peninsula, well mastered by tourists and rich in minerals (Apatitovy ores). The group name was probably cast by dreams to make a route in this area in the future.

		
<p>Dyatlov Igor Alekseevich — Дятлов Игорь Алексеевич (13.01.1936)</p>	<p>Dubinina Lyudmila Aleksandrovna — Дубинина Людмила Александровна (12.05.1938)</p>	<p>Kolmogorova Zynaida Alekseevna — Колмогорова Зинаида Алексеевна (12.01.1937)</p>
		
<p>Doroshenko Yuri Nikolaevich — Дорошенко Юрий Николаевич (12.01.1938)</p>	<p>Zolotaryov Semyon Alekseevich — Золотарёв Семен Алексеевич (02.02.1921)</p>	<p>Kolevatov Alexander Sergeevich — Колеватов Александр Сергеевич (16.11.1934)</p>
		
<p>Krivonishchenko George Alekseevich — Кривонищенко Георгий Алексеевич (07.02.1935)</p>	<p>Slobodin Rustem Vladimirovich — Слободин Рустем Владимирович (11.01.1936)</p>	<p>Thibaut-Brinyol Nikolay Vasilyevich — Тибо- Бриньоль Николай Васильевич (05.06.1935)</p>
<p>...- 02.02. 1959...???????? (9x?)</p>		

– four students, four graduates of the UPI (Kolevatov, Krivonishchenko, Slobodin, Thibaut-Brinyol) and senior instructor of the Kourovsko-Slobodskaya tourist base Zolotaryov – the only professional sportsman and veteran, order bearer in the group.

Another member of the group, – Yuri Yudin, – fell ill on the way and returned from the settlement of the Second northern mine, from where The Dyatlov group had begun an active part of their route. Yuri Yudin reported about his return to the university sports club and went to his relatives in order to recover on holiday.

According to the route plan the Dyatlov group was supposed to send a telegram from Ivdel about the end of their campaign till February 12th, and was to get back to Sverdlovsk till February 15th. But on February 15th the telegram didn't arrive, and the group didn't return. The first people to raise an alarm were Galina Radosteva, member of the UPI tourist section, and Igor Krivonishchenko, Georgiy Krivonishchenko's younger brother. Radosteva tracked the progress of all tourist groups in accordance with journal entries in the low-grade route commission of the UPI (which could coordinate only routes of the first category of difficulty, but was controlling the passing times of all UPI groups). Igor and her went to the UPI trade union committee and insisted that a telegraph request should be sent to Vizhay asking if the Dyatlov group had been there and if there had been a telegraph message confirming the end of their route. Vizhay replied that the Dyatlov group hadn't been back to Vizhay and no telegram had been sent. Yuri Blinov, head of the group of UPI tourists who had been travelling from Sverdlovsk to Vizhay together with the Dyatlov group, also raised an alarm. Here their routes had dispersed: Blinov's group went west to the Molebnyi Kamen ridge and mountain Isherim (1331), and The Dyatlov group went northwest towards the Poyasovyi ridge and mountain Otorten (1182, but on the maps from those years: 1234). Rimma, Sascha Kolevatov's sister, Dubinina, Krivonishchenko and Slobodin's parents were also disturbed.

Gordo, head of sports club, and Vishnevsky, head of physical education chair at the UPI, still hesitated for a day or two expecting the group to come back, since there had been delays of groups on the route for various reasons. On February 16–17 they communicated with Vizhay again, trying to find out whether the group had come back from the campaign. But loss of group and negative answers to inquiries in Vizhay and Ivdel definitely specified that with it something happened.

They began to investigate, where The Dyatlov group had gone to. It turned out that there was no copy of the route commission (RC) protocol and route book ("marshrutka") in the sports club. Dyatlov had issued protocols in the route commission and left them there and in the city sports committee. And he took three copies of the "RC" with himself (it was discovered later). The RC protocol was found, but it had almost no information about the campaign route.

Absence of route description first complicated the work of rescuers. Action was also slowed down because Maslennikov, a person who made a final approval in the RC, who was the first one to consider and approve the plan of Dyatlov's campaign, was not found and involved in searches at once. Other members of the RC (Korolyov, Novikova, Ufimtsev) were not aware of the route in detail. Maslennikov learned about the disappearance of the Dyatlov group only on February 20th and starting from 21.02 through Ufimtsev he actively joined the searches in order to organize the work of rescuers. After his joining the action of rescuers staff became properly organized and directed. Maslennikov, who had graduated from the UPI in 1948, a party organizer and branch manager chief of the Top-Isetsk plant (producing steel for transformers), was «in the wrong place» both in terms of his tourist experiment, and his knowledge of the route of the Dyatlov group. And also in terms of moral responsibility he felt towards the group he had approved before the campaign. And finally in terms of his organizer

experience – both in tourism and in production. The plant director let Maslennikov go from work on 22.02.59 in order to help UPI rescuers.



Farewell of two “economists” of the UPI: Yuri Yudin and Lyuda Dubinina in the Second Northern settlement (Dyatlov is behind). Forever ...



Yudin Yuri Efimovich – (19.07.1937 – 27.05.2013, foto of 2008)

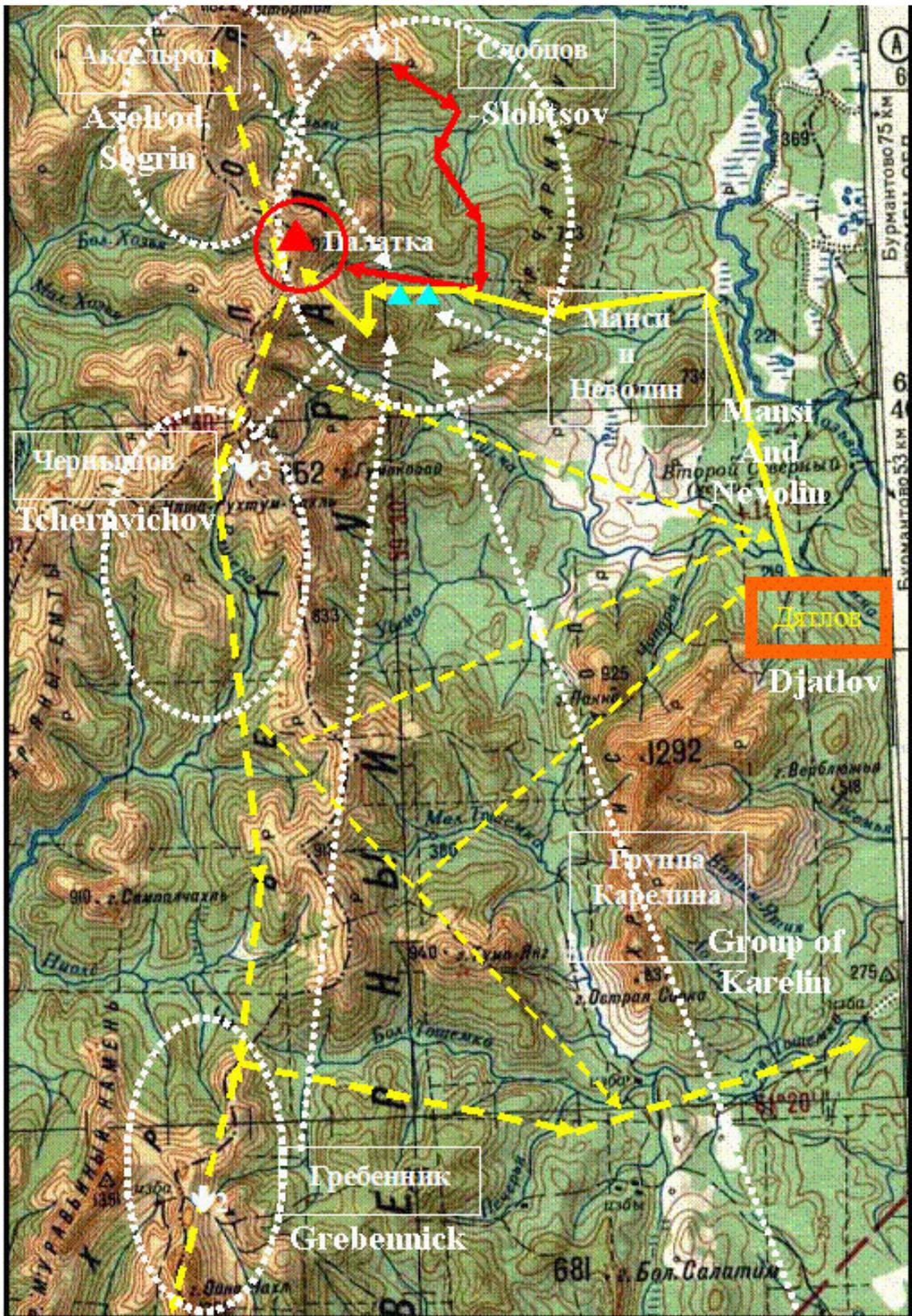
Skilled tourists could quickly organize tourists of journey groups and begin searches – they were heads of these groups. But not all of them learned about the incident at once. For example, Akselrod didn't visit Sverdlovsk often – he lived in a worker's settlement Sysert and worked as a senior master at the Hydro-machines plant. He learned about the loss of the Dyatlov group only on February 22nd from Dyatlov's hostel neighbor Chiglintsev and starting from 24.02 Akselrod actively joined the searches. Only on February 24th Sergey Sogrin learned about Dyatlov's loss. He had returned from a campaign across the Subpolar Ural Mountains where his group has got into a very difficult situation, but had managed to get out of it with only one ill member.

Lev Semenovich Gordo, head of UPI sports club, tried to agree through CS DSO “Burevestnik” about allocation of a plane for searches, but they refused him. An attempt to directly communicate with airport Ivdel thanks to support of prosecutor Tempalov was more successful. He managed to get a plane and a helicopter.

Actively recreation of the *Dyatlov route* was started by polling tourists and relatives, rescuers began searching for Yudin. With the help of Kolevatov's sister Rimma rescuers

found Ignatij Fokievich Ryagin (deputy chief of Uralgipromed') who gave the map to Sasha Kolevatov and talked to him about the forthcoming route. But the map and route books had been taken by the lost group! Ryagin restored the route and put it on another map from memory, and Rimma gave this map to rescuers on February 19th. On the same day Gordo and Blinov left for Ivdel in order to coordinate search of the Dyatlov group.

A general scheme of the route was recreated: from the Second Northern mining camp the group was going to move northeast along the valley of the Lozva river and along its head to the mountain Otorten (1182, on old maps: 1234). After a radial ascension onto this top they were planning to turn sharply towards south and along the Poyasovyi Kamen ridge to pass heads of the rivers Unya, Visheru and Niols up to mountain Oiko-Chakur (or Oikachakhl, 1322) with a radial ascension onto the top of this mountain. Straight distance between Otorten and Oiko-Chakur makes up about 70 km, but in fact the Dyatlov group was supposed to pass more than 100 km on the ridge. Later they were planning to move east from Oiko Chakur along the valleys of the Malaya Toshemka or the Bolshaya Toshemka and get to their confluence into the Severnaya Toshemka and get to the road to Vizhay along its valley, thus closing the campaign ring. Here the campaign was supposed to finish with a return to Sverdlovsk through Vizhaj-Ivdel-Serov.



Arrangement scheme of search groups
Red arrows – way of the Slobtsov group
Yellow full lines – way of the Dyatlov group
Yellow dotted line – Dyatlov's route and his spare options
White dotted ovals – search zones of groups.

(surnames of group leaders, bold arrow – landing place with conventional and serial group numbers)

White dotted arrows – concentration of groups in the Auspiya valley

Red triangle emergency tent of the Dyatlov group

Blue triangles search groups camp of rescuers on the Auspiya

Dyatlov had foreseen spare options shortening the route in case of delays, as well as emergency exits in short ways along river valleys leading to settlements in case of an emergency case in the eastern direction. Exits to the west (to the Ust-Unye, Diy, Priiskovoi) weren't provided because of their remoteness. This general scheme of route was visible, but there were a lot of possible options of its passing, especially at the final stage of the campaign. It was also not clear along which heads of the Lozva the group would go to the Otorten mountain in the initial part.

The group disappeared on this route. Tourists of the Ural Polytechnical University were captured by panic. Volunteers record began in order to form a rescue team of the UPI. On February 20th there was a meeting of tourists «state of emergency with the Dyatlov group!» for the purpose of mobilization and preparation of search groups (70 people came). Only strong guys who had tourist experience and equipment could become members of the search and rescue group, – others should not be taken. It was both unsafe and useless, – untrained people would have first needed a training on life and work in the winter taiga. Female student-tourists actively helped with organization of communication, collection and distribution of information and search of volunteers, urging familiar guys to participate in searches. On February 22nd the UPI staff of search activities was created which formed the management structure of search groups. These groups were supposed to be headed by tourists who had experience of managing several campaigns: Boris Slobtsov, Oleg Grebennik, Moisey Akselrod. From 21.02 the local prosecutor Tempalov and representatives of the UPI Blinov and Gordo were engaged in the search of tourists in Ivdel. Excerpt from Maslennikov's protocol (sheet 67 of the criminal case):

«... in the morning of 24.02 I left to Ivdel by plane. The Grebennik group, Vishnevsky and Ortyukov also flew with me. Blinov, Gordo were already in Ivdel. Blinov was the organizer of search, and Gordo was responsible for equipment ...».

Note. Here and further on literal excerpts from documents and literal quotes of witnesses (without corrections) are marked in italics.

Tempalov received an instruction from Prodanov, secretary of the Ivdelsky city town committee of CPSU to take measures to search for tourists (and Prodanov himself had received this order from regional party authorities in Sverdlovsk). Sverdlovsk ordered aviators to carry out air reconnaissance. Prodanov involved Dryakhlykh, engineer of Power wood plant who had communicated with the Dyatlov group in the 41-st quarter.

On February 21 Dryakhlykh and Blinov carried out investigation by plane along the valleys of the Auspiya and Toshemka rivers, but no traces of the Dyatlov group were found. From Blinov's diary:

«... The plan was as follows – to fly to the 2nd Northern settlement, then up along the Auspiya towards Otorten, then further to the south along the Vishera River to the mountain Oyka-Chakur, then along the valley of the Severnaya Toshemka to the settlement Northern Toshemka. Because of bad weather we didn't reach Otorten. We flew to Auspiya's middle course, flew along the Severnaya Toshemka-no traces were found.»

On February 22nd Dryachlyuh together with Gordo took off by the helicopter on northern Toshemka, where on the road of visors with itself forester Kuznetsov A.I., visited Anyamov A.P. settlement. and Bakhtiyarov P. I. yurtas. They asked Muncie on passable tourists, but traces of DyatlovDyatlovthe Dyatlov group didn't find and on finishing sites of a route of a campaign.

The organization of rescue efforts from 24.02 charged to the head of the UPI military chair to colonel George Semenovich Ortyukov. Ortyukov could agree with the chief of the Air Force of the district about allocation of the plane and two helicopters, and Maslennikov was engaged in preparation and the organization of actions of search groups of tourists and climbers. A radio communication with groups adjusted by means of Nevolin and Yaburov radio operators of the Northern geological expedition (hands. Sulman). By means of regional and local authorities and the Ministry of Internal Affairs in searches involved group of military led by captain Tchernyshov from Post/Box-6602 (connection of internal troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Ivdel). Involved Moiseyev's conductors and Bridge with office and search dogs, and later – the soldier of protection of Ivdellag (Ivdel-Camp) under command of lieutenant Potapov and sappers of lieutenant colonel Shestopalov with mine detectors.

Locals also were involved in searches, – Kurikovs, Anyamov's Mancie families from the settlement Suyevatpaul and hunters of Komi. Bakhtiyarov's family conducted search of tourists in the zone of dwelling on valleys of Vizhaya and Toshemka. Some locals joined groups of search: hunters, foresters (Pashin, Kuznetsov), military (Cheglakov). Actively interrogated hunters, researchers and locals, whether saw they DyatlovDyatlov's tourist group. Warned about need to inform a search staff at detection of any traces of the gone group.

The area of search was huge, and to avia investigation and descent groups by military helicopters during searches by times very much stirred a lack of time of short winter day (only 6 hours) and adverse weather conditions. The review from the plane is very limited therefore to find group or to make out on snow traces of skis on taiga open spaces very difficult. For such region of strength of rescuers were obviously insufficient. Therefore the staff of search tried to narrow a zone of searches tactically. The main attention concentrated to the most remote, difficult and dangerous area from Otorten's mountain to Oyko-Chakur. Therefore the two first search groups decided to land near Otorten's mountain (Slobtsov's northern group) and around Oyko-Chakur (Grebennik's southern group), – in 70 km to the south of Otorten. Moving towards each other, these groups should find DyatlovDyatlov's traces and meet on ridge. To groups of searchers the task was put to find traces of the gone group: ski traces and traces of parking to leave on them to the place of incident and to assist DyatlovDyatlovThe Dyatlov group.

Search works were also saving, it was necessary as to rescue both live, and dead, – for burial and clarification of causes of death. But all hoped for the favorable outcome of searches, – here for success it was required to find for live participants of DyatlovDyatlovthe Dyatlov group as soon as possible. And the delay with search of victims was not so critical as couldn't prevent the tragedy any more.

Tactically searches built so: after disembarkation around search the group was divided into some prospecting links from 2–3 people who made within one day search of traces with light baggage in the radial directions on distance some kilometers with return to the camp. Conditions of radial investigations determined by the district, trying to guess, what way DyatlovDyatlovThe Dyatlov group could go. Then the group in full strength moved to a new point on an expected route of DyatlovDyatlovetsets, equipped a new camp, and again prospected in the radial directions forces of prospecting links. Investigation in the lateral directions allowed to hope that searchers will come across sooner or later the linear ski trace left by DyatlovDyatlovthe Dyatlov group. In case of detection of such trace of group assumed

to move on it, finding places of parking of DyatlovDyatlovetses and a place of their failure. Here so decided to find at first traces, and then and emergency group. Before appearance of radio operators of the instruction to groups were given by dumping of pendants from planes, and searchers gave the answer by laying on snow in the form of a conventional sign (letter).

One for other group of rescuers went to the area of search, landed from helicopters and moved on a taiga and mountains, looking for traces of the gone group. On scales and duration at that time these rescue efforts appeared unprecedented. Later longer and large-scale works took place after the «Chivruaysky tragedy» of 23.01.73 with KuAI group, – it is described below in head about failures analogs.

Boris Slobtsov's group, the youngest on structure of students, gathered the first. Two locals entered into it, – forester Ivan Pashin and the officer the Ministry of Internal Affairs (fireman) with experience of the taiga hunter Alexey Cheglakov. And also students of UPI: Vadim Brusnitsin, Stas Devyatov, Yuri Koptelov, Vyacheslav Krotov, Vladimir Lebedev, Vladimir Strelnikov, Vyacheslav Halizov, Mikhail Sharavin, – only 11 people. Group with equipment and a week stock of products from Sverdlovsk by the plane transported on military airfield of the town Ivdel on February 22. Next day by helicopters group two parts threw and landed, as late established, at the mountain Pumsalnel (1055, and on old cards: 1023) in east spur of the mountain of Otorten. In Otorten's massif there are three large tops, and in the conditions of poor visibility pilots couldn't find main of them and land group more precisely as in the beginning it was planned to deliver even closer than rescuers to Otorten, – in the upper courses of sources of river Lozva.



The AN-2 plane in airfield Aramil for group of rescuers (V. Brusnitsin's photo)

After disembarkation, an exit of a prospecting link to the mountain «1023» for definition of a site, descent to Lozva and the equipment of a camp Slobtsov's (23.02) group 24.02 crossed Lozva's sources, aspiring to find traces of DyatlovDyatlovthe Dyatlov group. Traces didn't find, but understood that they could remain only in a taiga. And on an open part of mountains snow represented a firm crust on which skis didn't leave traces. Therefore decided to look for traces below, in a taiga, and to cross a wood part of a valley of river Auspiya on which other

possible way of DyatlovDyatlovthe Dyatlov group lay. On February 24th Slobtsov's group moved to the south, – to Auspiya's valley.



Landing in the helicopter (V. Brusnitsyn's photo)

On February 23 the settlement Suyevatpaul on Auspiya left Stepan Kurikov's group of 5 people, – Stepan, two his relatives, hunter Nikolay Anyamov and radio operator geologist Egor Nevolin.

On February 24 to the mountain area Oyko-Chakur landed Oleg Grebennik's southern group (O.I.Grebennik, Vladimir Shlyapin and 4 more tourists).

On February 26 in 30 km to the south of Otorten on a watershed in upper courses of the Vishera Rivers and Purm (approximately in 25 km from «the pass of the mountain Holatchakhl 1079») landed group of military of captain Tchernyshov with skilled pathfinders, – captain Vlasov, foreman Sidorov, the Art. the sergeant Verkhovsky and civilian Yablonsky (5 people).

Axelrod managed to agree and took off for Ivdel 24.02 together with Tipikin and Sogrin, and Axelrod's group 26.02 (around 16.00) landed in 8 km to the east of Otorten's mountain, – at the mountain Pumsalnel, where three days before and Slobtsov's group. Axelrod assumed that DyatlovDyatlovThe Dyatlov group didn't reach Otorten, and it should check this assumption for definition of the place of incident. On February 27 Axelrod with Sogrin and Tipikin surveyed Otorten's vicinities, having passed more than 40 km. From Otorten's top removed the note of Moscow State University group dated 1956. Traces of DyatlovDyatlovthe Dyatlov group didn't find.

Karelin's group planned to throw in upper courses of sources of the river Niols between Grebennik and Tchernyshov's groups, – to the area of the mountain Sampalchakhl (910). Karelin's tiurists with 9 till 24.02 made a campaign near the mountain Molebny Kamen, – on 50–60 to the south of DyatlovDyatlovThe Dyatlov group. At the beginning of a campaign near the mountain Oyko-Chakur they planned a meeting with DyatlovDyatlovThe Dyatlov group, but the meeting didn't take place, – all decided that DyatlovDyatlov didn't manage to reach an extreme southern point of the route and went down according to Toshemka in Vizhay. Into structure of group of Karelin entered: Atmanaki George, Borisov Boris, Goryachko Oleg, Granin Victor, Karelin Vladislav, Serdityih Evgeniy, Skutin Vladimir, Shavkunov Vladimir. In a dining room at the station (25.02) town of Serov the casual visitor approached to group (called as the representative of Northern geological party) and asked: «What it for group?

Whether for you search?». It guarded at once: «How «search»? At us control term yet didn't end!». Hastened to call to Sverdlovsk, learned from Orlova about loss of DyatlovDyatlovthe Dyatlov group and about the organization of a staff of search in Ivdel. To Ivdel didn't phone immediately, but through militia specified a situation and received the instruction whenever possible to follow in Ivdel. Two most tired and least strong participants (Goryachko and Granin) sent to Sverdlovsk, and other six directed to the aid of rescuers and arrived to Ivdel by train 25.02 at 23.00. The 26-th Atmanaki and Skutin fled by the plane to investigation for specification of a place of disembarkation of group of Axelrod (around Otorten). From Yuri Blinov's diary: «... By this time (on February 26) the aircraft saw almost everything that was planned, that is all inflows, all rivers, the majority of tops. Survey of results didn't give...».

Among rescuers the most skilled tourists were the master of sports Maslennikov, Karelin (which then already executed norm of the master of sports), Sogrin (is younger DyatlovDyatlov, but more skilled on a tourist experience and existence of climbing preparation of the 2nd category and the instructor). Didn't concede DyatlovDyatlova (with his 10 campaigns to the management 3 categories of difficulty and 1 category of tourism) by tourist experience Axelrod, Blinov, Grebennik. Some rescuers were also climbers (Atmanaki, Grebennik, Sogrin, Tipikin).

On February 24 the message on detection of the first trace of DyatlovDyatlovthe Dyatlov group arrived: «Radiogramm 24.02, time 10–30. The trace was seen by shepherd Anyamov Andrey about 8–9 days ago a trace of narrow sports skis, the number of people isn't established, traces go from Auspiya's right inflow from it the direction of east slope knot to the North to Lozva's upper courses it is necessary to look for this place Auspiya's upper courses Lozva also on the western slope of ridge on upper courses of the rivers Vanya and Vishera. Nevolin»

The group of the 4th hunters Mancie (Anyamova and Sheshkin) reported that on Auspiya's river they 15–16.02 met rather «fresh» traces of «narrow skis» any tourist group ("wide" skis of Mancie had other trace). Traces belonged to DyatlovDyatlovThe Dyatlov group as other tourist groups didn't pass in this area of search.

Ortyukov and Maslennikov understood that DyatlovDyatlov went to Otorten on a valley of the river of Auspiya, – Lozva's right inflow. Therefore the staff of search focused two search groups on this site, – from below according to Auspiya the Mancie group as a part of which there was radio operator geologist Egor Nevolin from 23.02 moved. And from the North there was Slobtsov's group.

Ortyukov's provided plan task to Slobtsov's group for 24.02.59 dumped a pendant from the plane when Slobtsov approached to Auspiya's valley (about date of dumping of reminiscence of participants of search dispersed, it was or on February 24 or 25th).

Ortyukov's plan task to Slobtsov's group (24.02.59):

- 1. In the area верховьев Auspiya's river is found parking of DyatlovDyatlovthe Dyatlov group approximately in 10–15 km from a ridge crest on Auspiya's river.*
- 2. Parking is found by mansiyets 8-10 days ago*
- 3. To the area of parking of DyatlovDyatlovthe Dyatlov group on Auspiya's river 25.2 left group of mansiyets with radio station with a task to find DyatlovDyatlov's traces and to move on them further to upper courses of river of Auspiya.*
- 4. You should go down with upper part Lozva's rivers in Auspiya's riverheads, to find a trace of DyatlovDyatlovthe Dyatlov group, his second parking at the ridge bottom in upper courses of river of Auspiya and to meet mansiyets.*

5. Having incorporated to group of mansi to discuss results of your searches, to make the common decision on conducting further search (together with this group or separately). Report your actions and decisions on a handheld transceiver. Keep in mind that Dyatlov/Dyatlov/The Dyatlov group with upper part of Auspiya should leave to Ural Ridge (there returns with Otorten) and to move along ridge to the south to the mountain Oyko-Chakur.

6. Pay special attention to search of the second parking and a food warehouse of Dyatlov/Dyatlov/the Dyatlov group in the area upper part Auspiya. In case of its detection it is necessary to find first of all group traces aside for the purpose of advance it to the south to Oyko-Chakur and to move on them.

7. In case these traces it will be revealed not, find traces of Dyatlov/Dyatlov/the Dyatlov group towards Otorten and rise on them by top. Carefully survey the region of top of the mountain of Otorten for the purpose of detection of a trace of possible failure.

8. 25–26/II – 59 through ridge with upper part Purma's river in riverheads of Vishera jumps out the pass area a landing under the direction of captain Tchernyshov for the purpose of ridge crossing on the pass and detection of traces of Dyatlov/Dyatlov/the Dyatlov group with the subsequent inspection of ridge to the South from this place and a valley of river. Northern Toshemka. Therefore after inspection Auspiya's riverhead of detection of traces of Dyatlov/Dyatlov/the Dyatlov group along ridge in the southern direction continue movement to a meeting with Tchernyshov's group. On the pass to Vishera River upper courses Tchernyshov's group should leave to you replacement. Investigation to finish together with this group in log huts on North Tashemkav's river.

9. At detection of Dyatlov/Dyatlov/the Dyatlov group kindle three big fires with the triangle party in 30 meters and whenever possible wire.

10. For data we report that the UPI saving group is thrown in the mountain area Oyke-Chakur under the direction of O. Grebennik (6 people) besides, systematic air photography of all district of an emergency route is conducted. Head of searches colonel Ortyukov.

Dumped Maslennikov's note when Slobtsov's group already found ski traces in a valley of river of Auspiya a bit later and conducted active search by three links diversely.

E. Maslennikov's note (The original is contributed to by Vadim Brusnitsyn Fond Dyatlov/Dyatlov/teyev in March 2007 г., the Text with скана notes is dumped 26.02.59): To data of group of Slobtsov.

1. By this helicopter we dumped Axelrod and Sogrin's group (5 persons) on Otorten's top for the purpose of its detailed inspection together with all slopes. Therefore to rise once again by Otorten as about it tells a yesterday's task, to you doesn't follow. By the way, further try to leave at emergence of the plane on an open place at the price of loss of 10–15 minutes or instantly kindle a smoky fire (bark(for bonfire) keep in readiness).

And that yesterday we turned more than half an hour while you well considered. On Otorten there will be a good radio station (by the way the radio operator B. Yaburov asks to say hello V. Halizova).

2. Other helicopter threw out group of captain Tchernyshov today in the 1st half of day in 8 km below sources of Vishera, from where it will rise by a watershed, will go down on other party (leaves a note about what you know), then you catch up with it on ridge and further move together.

3. Tomorrow morning to the region of Sampalchakhl with a task to survey it, and also both slopes – to Vishera and Neolsa will be lowered Karelin's group (6 tourists).

4. Along east slope of ridge to the north there are on sledge Bakhtiarova's brothers. On the western slope of ridge there were several points hunters of the river of Komi.

I wish success. With greetings E.Maslennikov.

Down notes: Unfortunately, Muncie Suyevata (from village Suevatpaule – note) only today left Auspiya's mouth. We counted that they will meet you still yesterday, but they were late.

After inspection of a valley of Lozva Slobtsov's group 24.02 turned to the south, rose by a dividing spur and on a short way on February 25 left through a taiga in Auspiya's upper course. Here carried out investigation up and down down the river and in five kilometers found the remains of parking of DyatlovDyatlovthe Dyatlov group below. And on its left coast found hardly appreciable, ski trace swept up by snow which vanished in an upper course. 26.02 carried out investigation already three links up according to Auspiya. One link surveyed transition from a valley to the south, – here DyatlovDyatlovThe Dyatlov group could go after an ascension on Otorten. The second link undertook searches in a valley, – looked for both traces of DyatlovDyatlovthe Dyatlov group and their possible storage of products (warehouse). Slobtsov's third link, having taken an approximate azimuth of a ski track of DyatlovDyatlovetses, went towards top of Holatchakhl and to the pass to a valley of sources of Lozva.

Gora (Mountain) 1097 (and on small-scale charts 1096,7) – in transfer from vogulsky (Muncie) of language the fatal name «Mountain of dead persons» ("Holatsyakh" or "Holat-Syakh") has Gore Holatchakhl. However, according to other accord, the version of its name was not so such ominous: «Auspi-Toomp», or «The bald mountain on Auspiya» (the mountain which has not been covered with the wood). Also there is one more version of an origin of the name without the letter «T»: the mountain «Holo-Chakhl» that in transfer from the mansi meant «The average mountain», – the average mountain of sources of Lozva (this explanation is given by Karelin, – the expert on local toponyms).

There are the hypotheses connecting the name of the mountain of "dead persons" with burials available there, but locals reported nothing about them. There were also the hypotheses connecting the name of the mountain and with death of nine Muncie still during ancient times, and with death of «9 Red Army men» during civil war. These assumptions too aren't confirmed with any exact data yet. Near the mountain Holatchakhl no sacred or ritual places under certificates of locals existed, and isn't present.

Two links in Auspiya's upper courses found nothing. Slobtsov's link moved towards the mountain Holatchakhl to the pass on Lozva's sources, and his search appeared successful.

Slobtsov wanted to see «this Otorten», to see possible options of movement to its top. Assumed that failure of DyatlovDyatlovthe Dyatlov group could occur on Otorten because of a collapse of snow eaves or group falling in «failure», – this hypothesis was stated by forester Pashin ("Ivan"). Whether there are eaves on Otorten, and whether there is there "failure"?

Excerpt from Slobtsov's story:

«... The coordinated search plan assumed regular radial deviations from the main direction by groups of two-three people for the purpose of detection of traces or places of parking of DyatlovDyatlovets. Next day ski traces and some signs of stops and parking which we isn't so sure started to come across to us, but nevertheless carried to DyatlovDyatlovsky group as no other tourists in this area should be at this

time. After the second spending the night in a valley of the river of Auspiya and loss of traces of unknown group, we decided to make radial searches by small groups on two-three persons. Our way with Sharavin and hunter Ivan lay on the pass in a valley of the river of Lozva and further on ridge from which hoped in the field-glass to consider Otorten's mountain. On Sharavin's pass, looking through in the field-glass east slope of ridge, saw on snow the something similar to filled-up tent. Decided to rise there, but without Ivan. He told that not very well feels and will wait for us on the pass (we understood that it is simple afraid). As approaching tent the slope became more abruptly, and the crust is more dense, and we had to leave skis and the last tens meters to go without skis, but with sticks.

At last, rested against tent, we stand, we are silent and we do not know what to do: the tent slope in the center is broken off, inside the snow, any things, skis stick out, at an entrance will thrust during snow an ice axe, people it is not visible, terribly, already horror!. (" Rescue efforts in the The Northern Urals, February, 1959, DyatlovDyatlov's pass», the EKS magaZina, No. 46, 2007).



Group of tourists on a search route in a taiga of a valley of Auspiya: Mikhail Sharavin (at the left), Vladimir Strelnikov, Boris Slobtsov (in the center), Vyacheslav Halizov (on the right with the card). V. Brusnitsin's photo from 25.02.59)

Were after all and suspicions that someone attacked DyatlovDyatlovs. What there, in tent?.. Whether there are in it people, live or lost? The stress and internal tension captured rescuers – all remembered «instructions» undesirability of contacts to strangers and observance of measures of care. Warned that in the area there can be convicts, wild animals. And didn't understand everything, what for trouble, – why DyatlovDyatlovThe Dyatlov group was gone?..

The tent stood in the destroyed condition, covered with snow. Outside stuck out only a corner over the resisted rack from an entrance turned to the pass, fabric scraps in the middle (acting from under snow), pair of skis, an ice axe and separate edges of ski sticks on which

delays fastened. This tent was the long, double, sewed joining of two tents lodges. The back rack failed, – the fallen part of tent behind was closed by a snowdrift. Didn't keep it in the middle and two racks from the skis, thrust at an entrance in tent (according to Sharavin). Rescuers carefully examined tent inside through a rupture of a roof. Furrow snow in and along tent, using an ice axe which stood at its entrance. People inside didn't appear. The external slope of a roof of tent appeared is broken strongly off, large pieces of a roof were absent. The entrance in tent in its gap from a slope had a fur jacket which force pressed into slope snow.



**Slobtsov Boris Efimovich —
Слобцов Борис Ефимович**



**Sharavin Mikhail Petrovich —
Шаравин
Михаил Петрович**



**Brusnitsyn Vadim
Dmitriyevich — Брусницын
Вадим Дмитриевич**



**Axelrod Moisey Abramovich —
Аксельрод Моисей Абрамович**



**Maslennikov Evgeny
Polikarpovich — Масленников
Евгений Поликарпович**



**Ortyukov George Semenovich
— Ортюков Георгий
Семенович
(post-war picture)**



**Karelin Vladislav Georgiyevich
— Карелин Владислав
Георгиевич**



**Atmanaki Georgiy
Vladimirovich —
Атманаки Георгий
Владимирович (was lost
in the Caucasus
15.08.1962)**



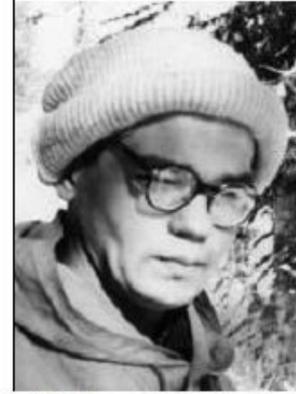
**Nevolin Egor-
Неволин Егор,
radio operator**



**Sogrin Sergey Nikolaevich —
Согрин Сергей
Николаевич**



**Bartolomey Petr Ivanovich
— Бартоломей Петр
Иванович**



**Yakimenko Valentin
Gerasimovich —
Якименко Валентин
Герасимович**



**Kikoyn Abram
Konstantinovich — Кикоин
Абрам Константинович**



**Pashin Ivan, mansi-hunter,
Tcheglakov A.S. — Пашин
Иван, охотник-манси и
Чеглаков А.С.**



**Askinadzi Vladimir
Ivanovich — Аскинадзи
Владимир Иванович**



**Sulman Abram Markovitch -
Сульман Абрам Маркович —
начальник Северной Гео-
логоразведочной экспедиции**



**Rempel Ivan Dmitrievitch -
Ремпель Иван Дмитриевич —
лесничий Вижайского
лесничества**



**Grigoryev Gennadiy
Konstantinovich —
Григорьев Геннадий
Константинович
Correspondent of paper**

Participants and heads of search groups



Participants of searches and consequence. From right to left: Koptelov, Lebedev, Halizov, Tchernyshov, Sogrin, Atmanaki (below), Brusnitsin (behind), Axelrod, Slobtsov, Tipikin (below), Sharavin? (for Sharavin), Cheglakov,? (for Cheglakov), Ivanov (wearing spectacles),? Anyamov

From above in tent the blankets thrown in a disorder which crumpled and have frozen together rolled. On a forward rack in tent Slobodin's jacket-storm from which pocket took a box from under sugar candies fruit drops hung. In a box there were documents, train tickets and money. Traces on snow at tent didn't notice, – traces were visible and began in 15–20 m from tent, and order directly down, to the wood. Attentively these traces Slobtsov and Sharavin didn't begin to study and didn't begin to dig out an entrance, – they hurried up to return on the parking before dark and to manage to report to companions about the find. Searchers felt better, without having found in tent of victims and in the absence of robbery signs as money, alcohol and valuable things were in tent. Having taken a box with documents, a flask with alcohol, an ice axe and the camera as "material evidences", Slobtsov and Sharavin on skis returned to the camp.

Earlier Slobtsov had no radio communication, but at 13.00 26.02 radio operator Egor Nevolin of a northern geological expedition of Sulman approached to Slobtsov's camp (a call sign: «Border», Nevolin's call sign: «Raup», Ortyukov's call sign: "Mole"). Nevolin reported at 13.00 about connection of groups on Auspiya. And about 18.00 Nevolins reported in a search staff on a find of tent of DyatlovDyatlov Slobtsov's group. Already in the dark four Muncie – Kurikova and Nikolay Anyamov with a cervine team too left to camp on Auspiya. On a radio communication session with a staff at 23.00 rescuers specified an arrangement of tent of DyatlovDyatlov and camp of searchers at the mountain Holatchakhl. The staff instructed Slobtsov to prepare a platform for helicopter reception, to choose a place for the equipment of big camp on 50 people and to be since morning on communication.

Decided to celebrate a find in the evening, having drunk on a half-glass of the diluted alcohol. Someone lifted a toast: «For health of DyatlovDyatlovetses!». On what local conductors (Pashin – «Ivan» and Cheglakov – "Alexey") gloomy objected that: «It is necessary to drink "for the peace of" ...» rather. Polytechnicians nearly didn't beat them, – all students

while were sure that anything serious DyatlovDyatlov with group didn't happen, they simply didn't want to trust in it ...



"Star" flight

Participants of group of Karelin told any strange story about flight supervision «a fiery sphere» in seven mornings on February 17 when it was still dark. «Sphere» with an asterisk in stars in the night sky as «the full Moon» within 2–3 minutes with increase of force of light, and then its luminescence began to decrease, didn't go out yet absolutely. They at that time were in a campaign, – they were woken by the persons on duty Atmanaki and Shavkunov who have noticed the extraordinary phenomenon of «sphere» shining in the sky with concentric rings around, the size in 5–6 «moon diameters». The woken tourists jumped out of tent in what slept, – without footwear, in socks, and in ski suits without jaket-storm and padded jackets. Probably, after the first discussions of this phenomenon someone stated a hypothesis about its communication with failure of DyatlovDyatlovthe Dyatlov group. «The riddle of fireballs» so arose. After all DyatlovDyatlovetses too jumped out of tent «in what slept», – in sweaters and ski suits, without jackets and without footwear... This assumption will be supported also soon with indications of other witnesses, and new supervision of «star flight». And the authentic explanation of this phenomenon to us will manage to be found only in February, 2007.

Don't leave me in terrible trouble,
When my strength is coming to the end, —
The person consists of people,
Who give a helping hand in the hour of need!

Y.I. Vizbor

Tragic finds and questions without answers

Having got the message about the found tent, Ortyukov and Maslennikov began to draw up rescue forces to Mount Holatchakhl (1096) for localization of the search zone. The Karelin and Tchernyshov groups were transferred here from Ivdel and upper reaches of the Vishera already on February 27th together with Moiseyev and Mostovoy with guard dogs. After receiving a message with a pendant from the plane, on February 27th the Tchernyshov group made all ready for the journey in the morning and set out for Mount Holatchakhl (it was 25 km away from this place). The flown-up helicopter picked them up and delivered to the outlier on the pass at Mount Holatchakhl. The Grebennik group was given a signal with a pendant from the plane while approaching Mount Oyko-Chakur, and they started descending along the Toshemka in the direction of Vizhay. The next day the helicopter took them off. The Grebennik group also had a “double” tent which looked like the Dyatlov group’s tent.

On all grounds, it was the tent, which the aviators (Karpushin, Patrushev) saw, who spoke of it much later as of the Dyatlov group’s tent, near which “the dead” were lying. However, it was the Grebennik group’s tent, and it was the tourists of the Grebennik group, who were lying in a conventional sign near it, not “the dead”. And it was on February 27th, when the aviators saw the tent, not on 25th, – already after discovering the Dyatlov group’s tent by the Slobtsov group.



The Dyatlov group’s tent after its partial excavation (Yury Koptelov is near the tent, Vladislav Karelin is behind him). A photo by Tcheglakov A.S., February, 27

The Axelrod group was ordered with a pendant from the helicopter to prepare for the departure. Having learned of finding Dyatlov's tent, experienced Axelrod and Sogrin understood that the Dyatlov group was gone. They couldn't go far away from the accident site without skis, and couldn't survive without clothes, provisions and equipment. Accident! All three companions bared the heads and kept silent, remembering the lost friends. The Axelrod group arrived in Ivdel by helicopter on February 28th, and on March 1st they arrived at Holatchakhl.

After February 28th, 1959 the search was officially headed by the regional executive committee led by Pavlov. But the role of Ortyukov and Maslennikov's operative guide wasn't changed, – they continued to work, giving a report to the committee and getting help from it in regard to collecting, providing and changing of search groups at the place of accident. It wasn't the «former» staff (headquarters) in Ivdel any more as all its main organizers constantly moved between the place of accident, Ivdel and Sverdlovsk.

On February 27th in the morning Mikhail Sharavin and Yury Koptelov got over the pass and went down to the woods. The natural slope led to a large cedar, where at the distance of 1,5 km from the tent the searchers found the first victims near the remains of a small fire. Two of them were lying together under a blanket, almost undressed, – only in underwear. The cedar branches were found around and under the bodies, – the tourists got firewood, climbing up the cedar (at the height of about 3 m) and breaking off medium-sized branches at the height of up to 5 m. Thick lower branches were bent down for capturing by the companions from below and broken by joint efforts. From this desperate work there were traces of blood of the frozen hands on the bark. The dead had traces of burns on their hands and feet. After identification it turned out to be «two Yurys», – Doroshenko and Krivonishchenko (At first Doroshenko was taken for Zolotaryov by mistake). The forensic medical examination established that they had died of freezing. Nearby there were found cuts with a knife with demolitions of young firs and cuts on birches. The cut-off tops of firs and the knife weren't found.



Krivonishenko and Doroshenko snowed under the cedar
(photo made by Evgeniy Serditykh, Karelin-s group)



Doroshenko and Krivonishchenko covered with snow under the cedar



Igor Dyatlov's forearm and elbow peeking out of snow



Igor Dyatlov died near a birch



Dead Zina



Dead Rustem Slobodin (a dense structure of snowballs can be seen on the photo)



The helicopter near Mount Holatchakhl

The searchers returned to the pass and found the helicopter which had set down the part of the Karelin group and the guides Moiseyev and Mostovoy with search dogs. The air over the Dyatlov pass shivered with the roar of engines: helicopters arrived and departed one by one. The Tchernyshov group and the rest of the Karelin group «karelintsy» arrived a little bit later. Maslennikov and the

investigation team: the prosecutor of Ivdel Tempalov with the staff reporter of the regional newspaper Yuri Yarov arrived by the evening, – they began their work next day on February 28th.

On February 27th the hunter-Mancie visually discovered the dead Igor Dyatlov whose arm wasn't completely covered with snow. Dyatlov reclined on his back, clasping the trunk of a small birch on the line connecting the tent and the cedar, 300 m away from the cedar (and 1200 m away from the tent). On the same day Moiseyev with a sheep-dog Alma found Zina Kolmogorova, – the dog scented Zina under 10 cm-layer of thick snow. Kolmogorova lay on the right side with her face downward, also on the line connecting the tent and the cedar, 850 m away from the tent on the open area of the slope. Her face was in blood, and there were blood spots from the nosebleed on the snow.

Karelin and the soldier from the Potapov group found Rustem Slobodin on March 5th with iron probes under a 15–20 cm snow layer. Slobodin also lay on the line connecting the cedar and the tent, between Kolmogorova and Dyatlov, approximately 1 km away from the tent. The ice outgrowths at the face (the same as Dyatlov had) showed that before death he had breathed in snow for a long time, and melted it with his breath. Slobodin, as well as Kolmogorova, had symptoms of nosebleed. All the five victims had small injuries in the form of grazes and scratches on the faces, – these injuries were caused by falling on the slope while descending in the dark (though tourists get such injuries in a campaign very rarely).

Kolmogorova, Dyatlov and Slobodin were found dressed in sweaters and ski suits, – without jackets and quilted jackets. Slobodin had a valenok on one foot. Other footwear on the feet of the victims weren't found, – there were only socks. The location of the bodies and their poses showed that they had been dying on the way back from the cedar to the tent.

Young tourists-students were shocked by the death of their friends. Some of them avoided coming to the dead. The tragedy caused a psychic trauma, which all the tourists couldn't overcome immediately, and they couldn't get over the depressed mood at once too. Ortyukov and Maslennikov saw to it that the students of the Slobtsov group, who were the most tired morally and physically, should be replaced in the first place, – they were replaced from 2d of March to 4th.

The dead were lifted onto the pass, to the outlier, near which the helicopter usually landed. On that day there were such strong gusts that Slobtsov was knocked down while carrying the dead, and the ski pole hanging on a loop, was being held in the horizontal position by the wind. Later the helicopter delivered the dead to Ivdel where in the mortuary the Unit «post box N-240» (п/я Н-240) carried their examination and sanitary processing.

Note. The Unit p/b N-240 was management of correctional institutions of the Ministry of Internal Affairs which included 8 offices. Some colonies (work camps of Ivdellag or “Ivdel-camp”) submitted to each office. The team of Tchernyshov's searchers was mainly formed from soldiers and officers of Military Unit M/U-6602 (в/ч 6602), this connection of internal troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs didn't submit to the Unit N-240 (but it was engaged in work camp guarding). According to V.K.Solter.

After it, the post-mortem examination to determine the cause of death was carried out. All the five tourists had died of freezing, – the ice outgrowths and the frozen snow at their faces obviously showed that the victims had breathed in snow for a long time. However, the commission of experts also found out that Slobodin:

«...had the bone crack with the dehiscence of edges to 0,1 cm (the length of this crack is 6 cm) from the leading edge of scales of the left temporal bone in the direction of the front and up the frontal bone. The crack is in 1,5 cm from the sagittal suture. Besides, there is opening of joints in the area of temporoparietal suture on the left, and also on the right (posthumous) ...»

These cracks, invisible from the outside, found only during the internal investigation, were also considered the result of freezing, and weren't attached value.

On March 2, 1959 on Maslennikov's instructions the Slobtsov group and the hunters Muncie carried out the search of the Dyatlov group's warehouse, about which it became known from the

diary of the group, found in the tent. The warehouse (a storehouse of products for lessening the group backpacks on a radial exit) was quickly found near the searchers' camp in the woods. The Dyatlov group dug a hole in the snow, put there 55 kg of products in cardboard boxes and some things (a mandoline, the first-aid kit, Dyatlov's cloth boots and spare ski boots). Above it, they put firewood and covered everything with snow. They placed spare pair of skis nearby and put color gaiters «tags» on them – so that they were easier for noticing.



**Warehouse («сумьях» – «sumjyakhe» – mansiysky) of hunters Mancie in the taiga.
Photo from the cameras found in the Dyatlov group's tent**



Extraction of the Dyatlov group's warehouse contents by the search group

The mass ceremony of farewell in the UPI and the funeral at the Mikhaylovsky cemetery took place on March 9. Krivonishchenko was buried at the Ivanovo cemetery.



Funeral on March 9. Farewell

Despite the localization of the search zone, the search of the other four missing tourists was greatly delayed. A big army tent supplied with an oven was put up for the rescuers in the valley of the Auspiya, and then the second tent. At night, in order to avoid surprises, an armed sentry was exposed near the tents in the first days. All people didn't understand how the Dyatlov group had died. The possibility of criminal attacks or those of wild animals wasn't excluded. Therefore the military personnel – the search participants had the charged service guns. Later, in the middle of April, platforms were constructed in the source of the Lozva and the searchers' camp was moved there, closer to the cedar.

Maslennikov organized urgent search of the other four victims, but in no way could they discover the group. Within several days a wide strip of the slope from the cedar to the tent in the places covered with snow, was probed by a group of rescuers with snow, but it was all in vain. The snow depth wasn't great on stone ridges lower than the tent, but on other areas it was necessary to apply longer 2 m snow sondes to break through all the snow depth. As it turned out later, such sonde length was insufficient. The pass between the Peak 1096 (Mount Holatchakhl, – on old maps it is 1079) and the Peak 905 (on old maps it is 880) and the mountain range in the direction of the Lozva were investigated, as well as the spur of the Peak 1096, the 4th source of the Lozva and its continuation from the river outlet at 4–5 km, the zone “plague” to the north from the place of accident. No traces of people or large animals were found. There were no direct signs of technical or natural disasters. Certainly, not only skilled tourists, everybody already understood that all the Dyatlov group was lost.



Mansiysky «plague» (see the search scheme from Maslennikov's diary)

From February 3 to February 8 the group of Moscow tourist experts composed of K.V.Bardin, S. Baskin and E.E Shuleshko and the chairman of the regional MC V.I.Korolev, who checked the facts and circumstances of the accident, worked at the place of accident trying to understand its causes. The commission tried to find out, why and how the tragedy had happened, made the description of the events and drew some preliminary conclusions concerning the causes of the accident. The commission noted that weather conditions near the pass are usually severe because of frequent strong winds, blizzards, cold and an icing on rigid crust of snow. The experts drew the general preliminary conclusion that (criminal case p. 35): «... the fear of immediate death could be the only reason which

had made the tourists leave the tent. The group started going down the slope in an organized way, but then under the conditions of darkness and a blizzard they were scattered on stone ridges, and the group lost touch with each other and died in a snow-storm ...».



Karelin believed that the placement location of the Dyatlov group's tent was chosen improperly, and it was, probably, one of the causes of the accident. The tent stood on the open slope of the mountain blown through by the wind, and due to its strong rushes the tent could be torn. The wind and lack of fuel for a fire and an oven doomed the group to a very «cold» overnight stay. However, Axelrod and the other tourists of the UPI claimed that in similar conditions they spent the night in a campaign across the Subpolar Ural together with Dyatlov 4 times a year before it. Dyatlov's companions on campaigns protected him from the charges which were put forward unreasonably before finding out the causes of the accident. Nobody made up final conclusions yet.

On February 28 the investigation team (Tempalov, Maslennikov, Summer and other searchers) examined, disassembled the tent and made the inventory of the things. The Dyatlov group put up the tent thoroughly (according to Slobtsov). On the leveled platform they laid 8 pairs of skis with their fastenings down on which the tent was put up. On the bottom of the tent the group laid quilted jackets («under oneself») and empty backpacks which they put at the feet (possibly, they used the known way of warming their feet when they stacked them into the backpack before going to bed). On a layer made of padded jackets and backpacks they spread out 2 or 3 cloth blankets for full length of the tent. The Dyatlov group was covered with other blankets and windbreakers, – these upper blankets lay on top in the crumpled condition. They froze together, as they appeared powdered with snow. One of two fur jackets was pressed in the tent into the slope snow at the entrance, – in this place the tent burst from the side of the slope:«...it was found out at the excavation that the tent batter, turned to the slope, was torn closer to the entrance and a fur jacket was seen in the hole ...» (criminal case p. 34 – description of events)



Participants of the search at the army tent



From left to right: Karelin, Tipikin, Nevolin, Axelrod, Atmanaki

The Dyatlov group had no sleeping bags, therefore for the better warming they formed a kind of «collective sleeping bag», laying down closely and covering themselves with blankets (in 2 layers) and jackets. The group was lying in the tent with their heads from the side of the slope (according

to Axelrod), and the arrangement of things in the tent also indicated such a way of laying. But two pairs of boots were settled down from the other side (from the side of the slope), – on this basis two of them were lying at the entrance with the heads to the slope. The arrangement is cramped enough: 4,5 m tent length for 9 people. It was hardly sufficient to lie down side by side. Such narrowness could make two of them lie with the head towards the other side (as shoulders are usually wider than feet laid together). «Double» tents, similar to Dyatlov's one, then were used in campaigns (see, for example, the image from the book «Tourist equipment», M, «Profizdat», 1968, p. 78). They put on ski suits and sweaters before going to bed.

The Dyatlov group put down large things such as buckets, axes and a saw at the entrance into the tent, turned to the pass. The oven filled with firewood, products, small things of equipment, spare clothes and footwear were found in the tent, – generally at the entrance and along its edges. The tent rack at the entrance and its stay-rods remained intact, and the stay-rods from the back side wall were found broken, the back rack was brought down. Lebedev wrote down in his report, in what condition the back rack of the tent had been found: «...In the tent we found a ski stick from which the top end on an accurate ring cut was cut off and one more cut was made ...».

It was noted in Vadim Brusnitsyn's report: "...A ski stick, cut into several pieces, was on top of all the things, and probably a northern ridge of the tent was fixed on it. Only special circumstances could make the group damage the tent, taking into consideration the fact that they had no spare ones..."

Sure, the circumstances were "exceptional". At that time people didn't pay attention to such important evidence as this ski stick, a jacket pressed into the gap, a ski-post being in the wrong place, a lantern on the tent snow. The searchers didn't know all these facts as the information was desultory. Therefore even the most experienced tourists couldn't give an accurate account of the tragedy.



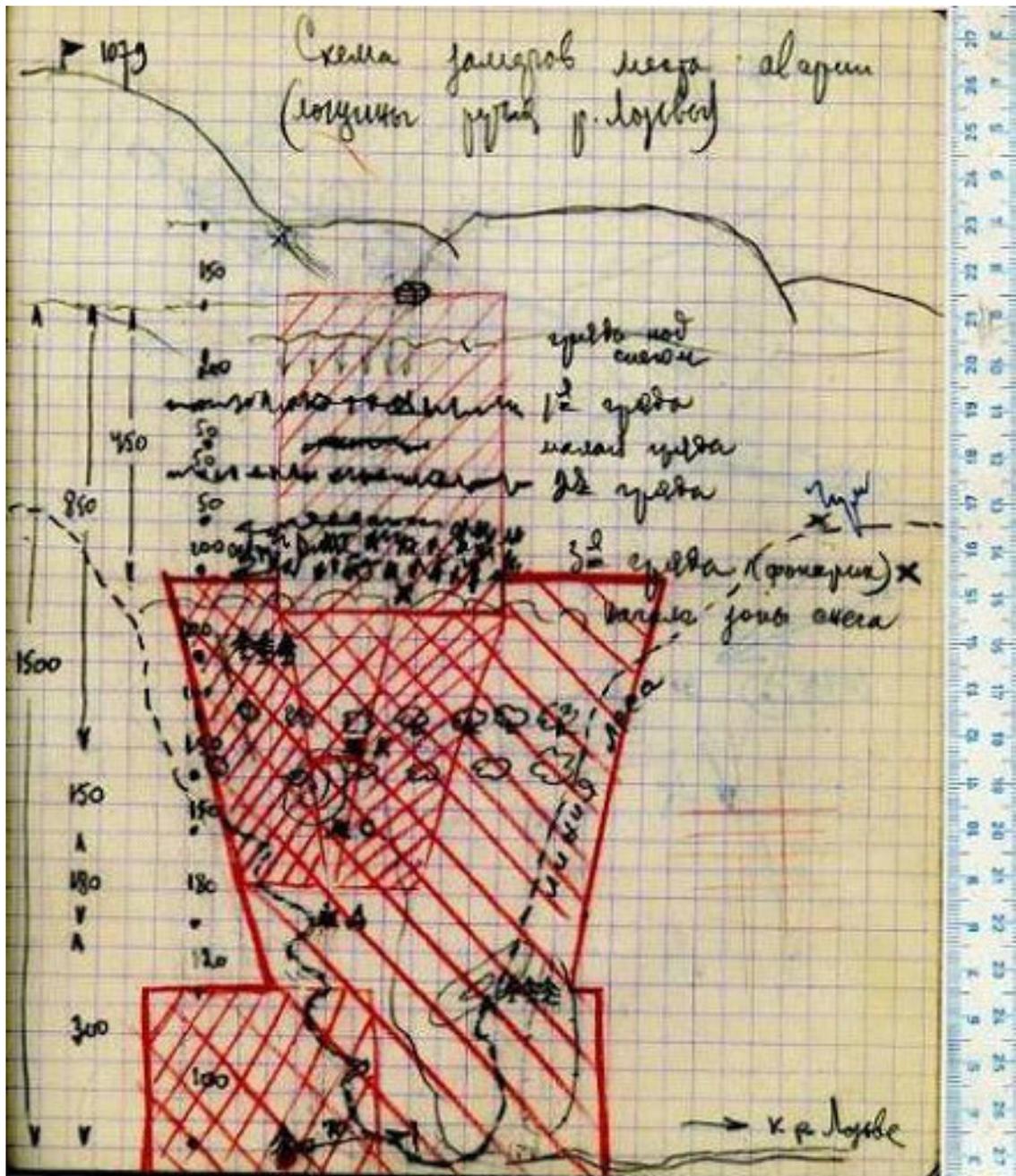
Maslennikov, Tempalov and the group of searchers (below) at the place of the Dyatlov group's tent excavation. The things and skis were taken out, the cloth of the torn tent was moved aside from the platform. The hollow of the Lozva head water, where the Dyatlov group departed and tragically died, is visible below. The distinctive plane of a thick crust in the form of «snowy barkhans» is visible on the slope.



Snow sounding at the wood edge. Mount Holatchakhl, its northern spur, dense snow under feet are seen in the photo, and a vague oval spot on the slope slightly higher than the group of rescuers on the right is a place of the tent excavation.



Snow sounding by the group of rescuers in the light forest zone



The search scheme from Maslennikov's diary (it is handed over by Karelin V. G.)

Note. According to Maslennikov's scheme there were 550 m from the tent to the wood border (the wood border on the scheme: three fir-trees, K – Kolmogorova, C – Slobodin, Д – Dyatlov; below: the cedar, the “plague” is on the right; the place, where the 2d lantern was found, is marked with a cross on the 3d ridge).

Eight pairs of ski boots lay along the tent sides (6 – from the internal side, 2 – from the external side). Seven valenoks lay from the sides closer to the tent center. There were crackers, brisket skin in the tent, and the brisket, partially cut into pieces, was found together with Kolevatov's Finnish knife at the tent side.

Outside the tent 2 lanterns were found, – one of them lay on top of the tent, and there was a snow layer under it. When Slobtsov, who had picked up the lantern, turned it on, it lit. The second lantern was found later on the stone ridge below the tent, – its position is indicated by Maslennikov on the scheme of the slope sounding. The position of the tent, cedars, victims

(D – Dyatlov, C-Slobodin, K – Kolmogorova) are also seen there, as well as the borders of the stone ridges and the wood (three fir-trees and a curve dotted line is the border of the long-boled wood), the position of the mansiysky plague and distances between the main reference points are noted:

A bag with documents (including three running schedules of the group) and their marching diary were found at the tent side closer to the back wall. The notes were broken by «A newspaper sheet «The Evening Otorten» on February 1st, – on these grounds the rescuers understood unequivocally that the tragedy had happened at night on February 2. It was evident from the diary that before a radial exit to Mount Otorten the Dyatlov group had equipped a warehouse (a storage protected from animals and birds) in the Auspiya valley in order to lighten their backpacks for a radial exit (it was noted above about the warehouse detection).

One pair of skis was found outside the tent, – they didn't remember clearly, where it was (Sharavin said that the skis were stuck into snow at the tent entrance). In the picture of the tent excavation these two skis are visible, – they are stuck into snow near the tent. These skis were used as high racks for supporting the medial part of this tent at installation outside the wood zone, – as it is shown in the picture from the campaign of 1958 with I.Dyatlov's participation.

Such a way of fixing let them support the tent by a vertical effort in its centre and increased its wind stability by lateral control rods from the ridge-pole centre:



Installation of the Dyatlov group's double tent in the mountain conditions of the campaign of 1958 along the Subpolar Ural by M.A.Axelrod's group, photo by P.I.Bartolomey.

On March 1 the Axelrod group and inspector Ivanov (who was appointed to plead the case instead of prosecutor Tempalov) arrived from Ivdel, and the helicopter took away the Dyatlov group's things and tent by return flight. The Dyatlov group's traces from the tent weren't studied seriously in the beginning, as at first the victims were being looked for. The investigation team and the searchers examined the traces, took some photos. The line of traces was lost already 50-100 m away below the tent, and only separate traces which had been heavily swept up by snow were found below. The searchers' testimony about the condition of traces supplemented each other. Here is what they wrote down.

Slobtsov (in his report) states that:

«... In immediate proximity to the tent no traces were found. Approximately at the distance of 15–20 m from the tent, in the direction where subsequently the corpses were found, traces of a man, going from the tent, were visible on snow. And it was visible that these were traces of a person without footwear, or in valenoks. The traces stood out over the surrounding snow surface, as snow near the traces was blown out by the wind. Some slippers from different pairs were found near the tent in the wind direction, i.e. in that direction where there were human foot traces at the distance of 0,5–1 m; ski caps and other small subjects were also scattered... traces were left closely at first, side by side, and further the traces dispersed ...»

It is possible that not all the Dyatlov group, but the girls above all used slippers as inlay for warming their ski boots, – writes G.K.Grigoryev, the correspondent of the Newspaper “The Ural worker”, in “Grigoryev’s worksheets” as the witness of search works. These slippers were also used in the tent at overnight stay as it was warmer for feet while setting them against the cold wall of the tent.

Karelin's testimony about the tent place and traces:

«...laying out of the tent above the wood border is the group’s mistake, their unwillingness to go down into the wood and then to rise back in order to go on the crust where movement is considerably facilitated ... we saw clearly the traces of the running people on the mountain slope. At first there were 8–9 of them, then fewer, and soon they disappeared completely...»

Tchernyshov's testimony:

«...Starting from the tent at the distance of 30–40 m ...clear, well distinguishable human foot traces were found. These traces extended by parallel lines close to each other, as though people went, clinging to each other. The lines of traces stretched in some kind of two directions, – we counted 6 or 7 pairs of traces in the direction from the tent downwards, into the hollow, and more left from them, at the distance of 20 m there were 2 more pairs of traces. Then these traces (2 and 6–7 pairs) got together in 30–40 m and didn't disperse any more. The traces disappeared on stone ridges, and below the stones they appeared again, and then were lost. The traces were well distinguishable. It was visible in some traces that a person went either barefooted, or in one cotton sock since toes were left printed. Owing to peculiarities of winds traces are well preserved in mountains, and they are visible not in the form of deepenings, but in the form of eroded columns, – snow under traces is condensed, pressed and not blown, and round the trace snow is blown out. Under the influence of sunshine the snow trace hardens even more and remains intact the whole winter. Below all the traces one trace in a boot was visible. The heel and a sole part were very well printed, and the medium part wasn't printed. All the traces led in the direction of the wood which began on the right in the hollow. There a little bit later the corpses were found...».

Tempalov's testimony:

«Beneath the tent on the slope at the distance of 50–60 m from us I came across 8 pairs of human traces which I carefully examined, but they were deformed in view of winds and temperature fluctuations. I didn’t manage to determine the 9th trace (it is underlined – a comment) and it was lacking. I took photos of them. They went downward from the tent. The traces showed me that people walked at a normal pace down from the mountain. The traces were visible only on the 50th meter site, there were no more traces farther as the lower you go

down from the mountain the more snow there is. At the bottom of the mountain a small river with the depth up to 70 sm flows as though from a ravine in which the snow depth reaches from 2 to 6 meters thick in places.

It is possible to notice that Slobtsov, Sharavin, Karelin Tchernyshev, Tempalov's testimony should be trusted, as they were the first who saw the traces, – their observation isn't distorted by change of the traces the next days (as well as by the «false» traces left by the searchers and disappearance of these traces because of aeration).

The difference in the traces, seen in the pictures, on different parts of the mountain should be also taken into consideration. In many respects the nature of traces was defined by snow depth and its condition, – it is different in different parts of the mountain. In some places snow cover was absolutely thin, – for example, on stone ridges. And in other places the snow depth was considerable – over 2 m. Sometimes, on thick snow, the traces were in the form of «platforms» (columns) made of condensed snow. For formation of such a trace snow should be pressed through on a firm crust with consolidation which also occurs even after load removal. Then deepening of a trace was swept up partially or completely by fresh snow, and later all fresh snow was blown off from the trace on the crust and the «platform» from the condensed snow was bared which looked like a sastrugus on a firm crust. At violation of these conditions the platforms of traces weren't formed or didn't remain on other parts of the mountain. There were traces-holes (dents) in some places. The heavy snowfall could destroy completely all the traces, but it didn't fall out for 25 days before arrival of the rescuers, as it was noted by Maslennikov. Therefore the traces remained. The existence of traces – «platforms» definitely states that before arrival of the rescuers 20–30 sm of fresh snow was blown off by the wind on top parts of the mountain. In the last pictures of the Dyatlov group one cannot see that dense crust on which Slobtsov and Sharavin walked to the tent and which is visible in the photo of the place of tent excavation.



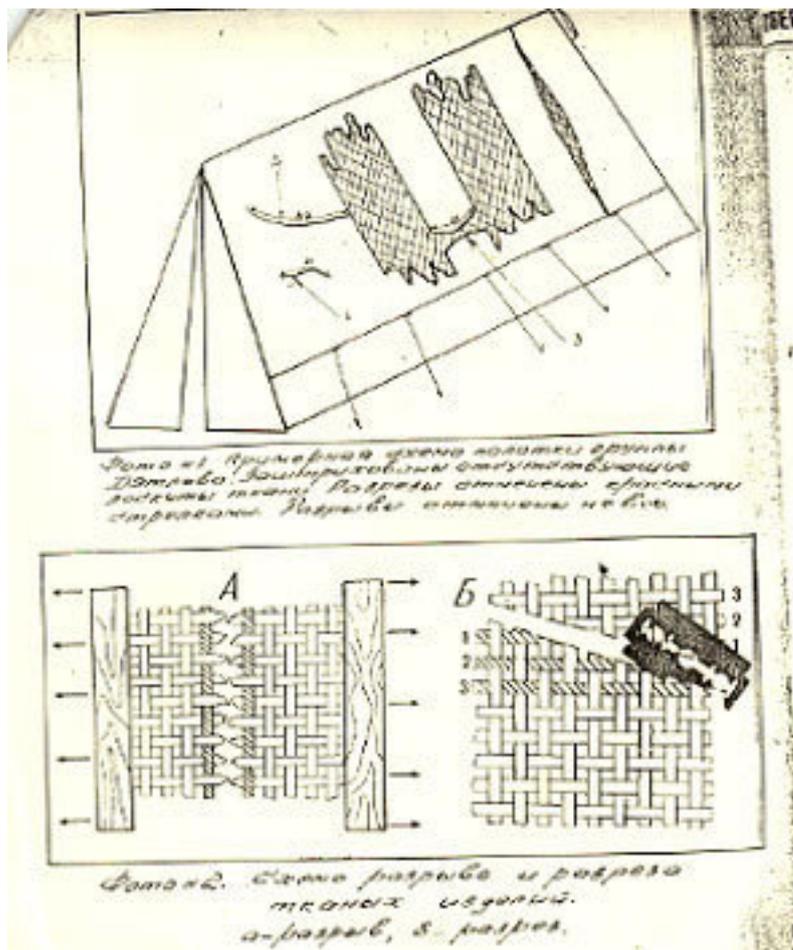
Traces – «platforms» down from the tent



Trace of soce and «trace» of «boot»

It becomes clear from the searchers' statement about the traces that the Dyatlov group after their exit from the tent receded approximately 15–20 m down from it, there they gathered and lost some small things (slippers, hats). Here «the traces were settled down closely». Then 6–7 people went down in a rank. It seems that two of them went down 40 m separately (separately or together) before or after that, and then changed the direction of movement a little and joined the main group. The attentive analysis of the traces shows that there was an organized retreat by a dense group, but in any way it wasn't the Dyatlov group's chaotic «panic» flight from the tent. After all they would run up in different directions, dispersed, or went separately at the «panic», unaccountable flight.

The criminalists looked for the traces of the crime and at first they didn't understand, why the tent was cut and torn. They assumed that the attack was made on it. But the witness, invited by the inspector, – a professional seamstress, – said that three cuts on a slope are made with a knife from within, and not from the outside. After that the tent was given to the skilled expert Churkina who confirmed the seamstress's evidence. Apart from many ruptures, the tent had three knife cuts from within on the external slope, 32, 89 and 42 cm long. It became clear that the tent was cut by the Dyatlov group, not by strangers.



Cuts (No. 1,2,3) and raptures of the tent, – page from the criminal case protocol

After the analysis of rupture arrangement we came to the conclusion that 42-cm-long Cut #3 could be continuation of 89-cm-long Cut № 2, – a piece of fabric was absent between them. On all grounds this long cut passed over a fold of the lateral slope of the tent crushed by snow. A short 32-cm-long cut, probably, was the first unsuccessful attempt to cut the tent. The cut was made with a knife, but the knife was set against the tent folds, then they began to cut along the fold, but further the cut went too low. Therefore they made a new cut along the tent fold, having started it much higher. Two pieces of the slope are obviously pulled out by force, and the medium part of fabric between the extractions remained. The parts of the raptures coming out of snow appeared uncombed, – they were blown about violently by the wind for a long time. The tent also had a roof crack along the back side of the external part of the slope and a crack of the internal slope of the roof at the entrance (where the fur jacket was pressed into the slope).

Unsuccessful searches of four members of the Dyatlov group continued up to the beginning of May until snow melted on most parts of the slope of Mount Holatchakhl. The Moscow tourist-masters Bardin and Shuleshko advised to stop the searches before snow melting, leaving only a small group of searchers at the place of accident. But from above, from the regional executive committee it was ordered not to stop the searches! The groups of mountain-climbers came there to replace the tourists (Kikoin's group arrived on March 6), so did the group of military personnel, and new tourists. The outskirts of the place of accident were unsuccessfully «combed» several times and explored by probes.

From the Dyatlov group's diaries it became clear that a day before the accident they came out to the Lozva and Auspy's watershed (nowadays it is the Dyatlov pass), but met a strong western wind here «just the same as when a plane takes off». For an overnight stop they went approximately 1 km

down in the Auspiya's valley and spent the night in a wood zone, in the heat. They warmed the tent, stoking the furnace. Next day they built a warehouse to lessen the weight of their backpacks at the radial exit towards Mount Otorten. At the beginning of their campaign this load was still considerable, and male backpacks weighed over 30 kg. Discharge for 60 kg allowed the group to reduce this weight by 5–6 kg. After a storage construction in the afternoon the Dyatlov group moved towards Mount Otorten along the slopes of Mount Holatchakhl. But they walked a little, – about 2 km. The group stopped on the slopes of a northern spur of Mount Holatchakhl.

Why did the Dyatlov group stop at the mountainside, instead of going down to the wood, which was nearby? There are some reasons. It must be dark soon, and it took 1,5–2 hours to equip the camp. Dyatlov could decide that it wasn't enough daylight and could refuse to make the same decision, as the day before. It is not excluded that visibility sharply became worse, and in foggy weather conditions the group didn't see the way and didn't see the wood below (the thick forest was at the distance of 1 km). It is possible that Dyatlov didn't want to lose height before transition to Mount Otorten next day and to go down to the zone where snow was not firm, but it was more friable, heavy for the group movement. Perhaps, stone ridges could cause difficulties while passing through them on skis. The group could decide to "be trained" in tent installation on an open slope according to the proposal of the group leader, – after all it was only Dyatlov who had experience of similar lodgings for the night before that. The Dyatlov group took firewood with them, – this fact unequivocally indicates the decision to stop in a treeless zone. The wood was at the distance of less than 1 km, and they wouldn't have taken firewood with them if they had planned to stop in the forest. In general the training to equip camps in unusual places is a normal practice of difficult campaigns, and there is nothing "strange" in such decisions. And Dyatlov could decide that the fate gives him a good chance for such a training. Maslennikov assumed that Dyatlov didn't want to withdraw the group from protection of a mountain spur on the part of ridge more blown out by the wind. Probably, these reasons were the main when Dyatlov decided to stop here, on the slope of a northern spur of Mount Holatchakhl. The decision was made, and the group stayed here, on the eastern slope of the mountain spur.

The films were taken from the found cameras of the Dyatlov group and then developed, – these photos, which were taken the last, were also found on them. In the first picture we figured the most important details to which attention was paid at the thorough examination of the photos. Later, in the course of statement, it will become clear why these circumstances are of great importance. The condition of snow cover, the slope relief, the peculiarities of tent installation on the slope and weather conditions at the night of the accident were the main factors of the critical, and later, emergency situation on Mount Holatchakhl.

The Dyatlov group equipped a platform and put the tent on the upturned skis. Some of them put on slippers apart from warm socks, – the feet froze even in socks as they set against a cold wall of the tent. Everybody understood that such an overnight stop without a furnace will be very cold. On all grounds the group specially underwent such a severe test for getting experience of a cold overnight stop on an open slope of the mountain, blown by the wind.

While the others were equipping the tent, Zina Kolmogorova and Yura Doroshenko sawed firewood and filled the furnace with it. It was supposed (according to Axelrod's testimony) to warm the frozen ski boots on the furnace and to put them on in the morning. And, of course, to heat some drinking water for breakfast. Weather permitting, the group could reach Otorten with light baggage for some hours and come back again. And under unfavorable weather conditions they could approach the mountain closer and climb it after approaching. After the newspaper issue «Evening Otorten», dinner composed of brisket and crackers, and cheerful conversations before falling asleep, the tourists quietly went to bed. The most skilled tourists, Dyatlov and Zolotaryov, might have lain near the tent sides. It being known that Dyatlov or Slobodin lay at the entrance. The jacket with Slobodin's documents covered the entrance from the wind, – they also used additional bedsheet shutters for this purpose. The tent entrance was closed by double boards which were clasped by toggles (wooden

sticks – "buttons"). The place at the entrance, surely, is the coldest, but also the most convenient for the group leader from the point of view of observing the weather conditions in the morning, without disturbing the other participants.

The danger artfully approached the Dyatlov group from both sides.



Last photos of the group. Platform clearing for the tent.

The photos are taken otos by V.D. Brusnitsyn from the Dyatlov group's films

From all evidence the accident occurred at night, in the dark. The results of examination also pointed to it (6–8 hours after the last food intake), as well as the condition of their clothes. They urgently left the tent «dressed in what they slept», – in ski suits and sweaters. The watch found there (according to shutdown time) and the lost lanterns indicated a night-time. And the mode of their activity showed the conditions of low visibility. Some evidence showed that darkness and bad weather interfered with their actions. According to the inspector and experienced tourists, only direct risk of fast death could make the tourists cut, tear up the tent and recede from it into the woods.

The birth of legend

On March 31 at 4 in the morning Sergey Sogrin left the tent and saw in the sky a bright star that had a shining halo of «fiery sphere». He gave a signal to Mesheryakov, a man on duty, and then Mesheryakov passed on the signal to the sleeping searchers who jumped out outside and observed the «star» was slowly moving across the sky. The «star» light became considerably stronger, so everyone thought that it was flying directly towards them. But then the light began to die away, and the «star» disappeared behind the mountain. Silent flight lasted long enough – about 22 minutes and only after the «star» had disappeared behind the mountain slope 905 a short flash, «as if made by electric welding», took place. People were influenced by this phenomenon in different ways: some apprehended it rather quietly and the others were stressed.

Having observed this phenomenon that confirmed the earlier story by Karelin's group, many participants of the search believed that the accident with Dyatlov's group could probably be connected with flights of «fiery spheres». There were plenty similar moments in behavior of Dyatlov's and Karelin's groups and search teams: they ran out from the tent «what they slept in” feeling stress and fear caused by the strange phenomenon. One can reasonably suggest that the similar phenomenon has a stronger impact on Dyatlov's team, and their behavior became clearer. It can be clear why after receiving a signal from their companion outside the tent they cut, tore the tent apart and ran out of it, escaping from danger. And then after instinctive flight in the dark, they have lost, couldn't find their way back to the tent and have been frozen by severe cold without warm clothes. The searchers and investigator Ivanov imagined this accident something like the one described above. But the absence of four victims prevented any final conclusions. That's why the searchers were looking for them and missing evidences: the Finnish knife by which the tent was torn apart and the young firs were cut off. Everyone believed that discovery of all victims and missing evidences will allow us to reconstruct the accident as it happened.

The searching operation was being held in difficult conditions of winter in taiga. The working hour were limited by a short winter day and moreover before their camp was relocated to the valley of the Lozva's head the researchers had to take more than 2 hours to get the site and back to the camp at Auspia river. As the wind was getting stronger the works had to be stopped: it was common when one working day was followed by the day of waiting and sometimes bad weather made it very difficult landing of helicopters which arrived to supply works and change the members of search teams. Due to the strong wind helicopters often couldn't land on the mountain pass and had to fly back without landing and the cargo has to be either dropped at a speed or taken back. The helicopter was sometimes drifted aside by a strong crossing wind with power around 1 ton – this drift could provoke heavy touchdown and damage of gear legs. In many cases such kind of damages can be accompanied by the vehicle falling aside and the rotor coming against the earth. In this case the accident could lead to the complete vehicle wrack with possible injuries and victims among people. The helicopter pilots were fully aware of this fact and didn't risk unduly and followed the flight instructions. As a consequence during searching operation there weren't any plane crashes (the accident described in the film by REN-TV about the crash of helicopter carrying the bodies of the victims is not true).

The morale of new searchers was not always in line with the conditions of the rescue operation and the nature of performed tasks. One part of young students who were inspired by the romantic side and came to “see” and become a “searcher” were about to go back home when they have been faced with the first difficulties of living and working in taiga. Not everyone was ready to perform this day-to-day hard, routine and dangerous work in difficult conditions. Arising from that “excursion atmosphere” some conflicts between several searchers and teams leaders took place. Grigoryev, a staff writer (in his “Notebooks”) mentions how Ortyukov was indignant with the behavior of one of the UPI turns (Ural State technical university) who were preparing to leave for home soon after

arrival. One can understand that in difficult situations not many people can act like heroes. In big companies you can meet different people including those who are just emotionally and physically unprepared for such specific kind of activities like rescue operation. In fact, at that time the emergency rescue services have not yet existed, professional rescuers were not trained and not all tourists with little expeditions experience had enough morale and strength to be a true rescuer.

Searching works have taken place during all April – the taiga and slopes of the Holatchakhl mountain began to release from snow, and the circle of search was getting narrower. At the site where the tent was located they found some small objects, in particular, a textolite sheath from a knife. But victims have not been found yet. Monotonous unsuccessful work began to fatigue and affect the rescuers, the discipline changed for the worse, their interest became dull. People started to look for "entertainments" – not only "innocent" but also for idle ones (unfortunately sometimes it happens).

Finally due to the snow melting separate pieces of clothes have been discovered from under the snow (Krivonishenko's burned trousers and a jacket). As well as scrapings of firs branches and its needles let the rescuers define a proper direction of search. They led them into a stream hollow approximately 70 m from a cedar. The hollow has been strongly snowed under so it was necessary to lengthen avalanche probes to 3 m. Only after that it became possible to seize the new findings under snow 15 m from discovered earlier pieces of clothes. The excavation of the suspicious places allowed rescuers at a depth of 3 m to detect flooring consisted of 14 trunks of small firs and one birch 2 m in length. There were fir twigs and some pieces of clothes on the flooring. According to A.G. Mokhov the positions of these objects on the flooring showed four spots which have been made like «seats» for four persons. The missing tourists haven't been found there. A new riddle they had! But the searchers were close to succeed.



The place called “cut fir woods”: cut firs’ tops (marked by five triangles). In the background one can be seen two cedars where the victims have been found

Victims have been found with probes in 4–6 m below and slightly away from a flooring at a depth of 1,5–2 m. A searcher Vladimir Askinadzi has found Luda Dubinina's remains – she was stiffened kneeling with her face turned to the slope by the falls of the stream. The other three victims were found next to this place – their heads were situated over 1 sq.m. area. Kolevatov and Zolotaryov were embracing each other in the position «breast to back» by the stream edge, probably trying to warm each other till the end. Thibaut-Brinyol was below than the rest of the team in the stream water. The bodies had decomposition signs but other visible damages haven't been seen when inspecting on the death spot, making decontamination and detailed examination in Ivdel. They found small wounds on the Kolevatov's head and scorch marks on his hands and sleeves. Some of the victims didn't have eyeballs, and Luda Dubinina didn't have a tongue – later this «detail» caused mystical horror and numerous incorrect guesses about the reasons of such «strangeness» (which was explained later). During transportation at first the helicopter pilots rejected to accept this «cargo» saying that it didn't comply with their job instructions and Ortyukov argued with them. After receiving special bags the victims were packed «properly» and sent to Ivdel.

The most tragic and unclear riddles arose after forensic medical examination of last four bodies conducted by the forensic scientist Vozrojdenniy and pathologist Hans. They discovered that Kolevatov as well as previous five people died from freezing. But the other three victims had severe internal injuries which have not been identified during the external examination. Nicolay Thibaut-Brinyol had «...the depressed fracture of the right parietotemporal area in the site 9x7 cm in size... with dehiscence of the bone edges from 0,1 to 0,4 cm...». They have also found a crack in the base of skull 17 cm in size, as a result of a compression fracture (as concluded by the examination). Nicolay's death was caused by these fractures having lifetime origin under cold weather conditions (they couldn't discover the main reason because of tissues decomposition). In the right shoulder there was a diffuse bruise 10 by 12 cm in size on the anterior-internal surface against middle lower third of the shoulder.



Flooring excavation in a stream hollow (B.E. Suvorov is standing by the flooring)



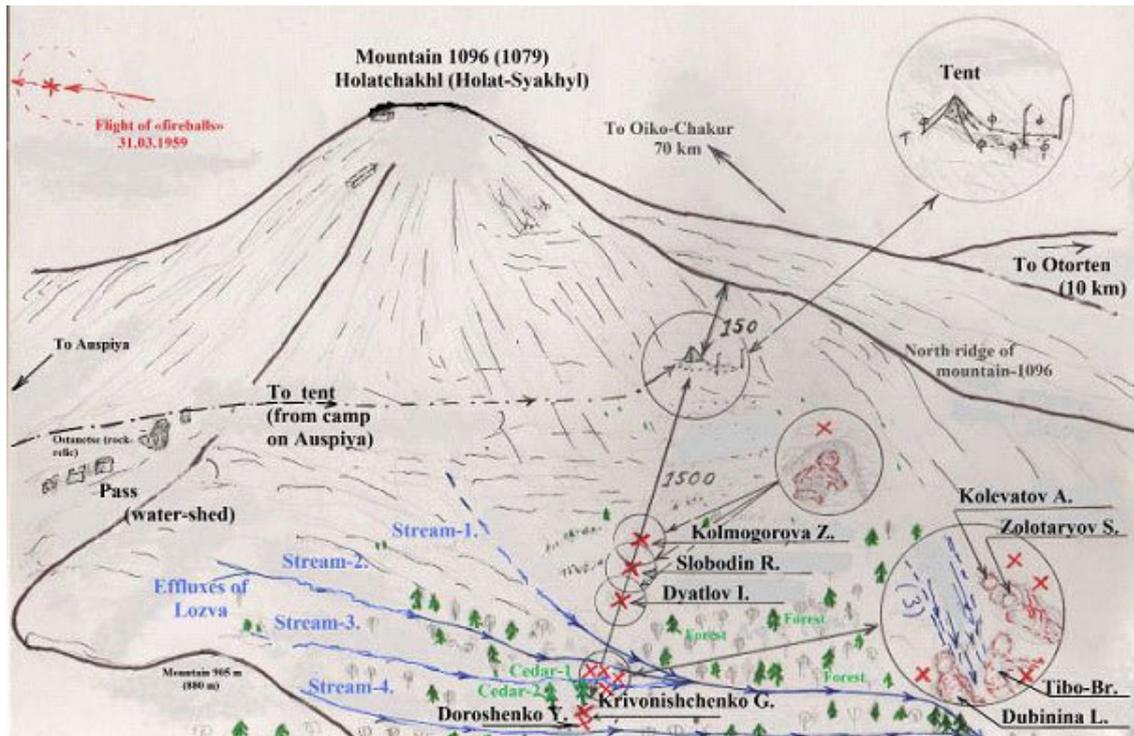
The excavation in the site where the victims have been found (the flooring excavation can be seen in the hollow above)

From Zolotaryov: «... the fracture of II, III, IV, V, VI ribs is determined along the absteral and middle axillary line together with hemorrhage into the adjacent intercostal muscles... The death was caused by a multiple fracture of ribs on the right side with internal bleeding into pleural cavity in the presence of cold weather... The above mentioned multiple ribs fractures ... were life-time and resulted from strong exposure on Zolotaryov's thorax at the moment he was falling, was being squeezed or thrown back...»

And from Dubinina: «... On an external and anterior surface of the left hip in the middle third there is a diffuse bruise of cyanotic-lilac colour in the site 10(5 cm in size... with hemorrhage of thickness skin integuments... The size of the heart is 12(4(5. The right ventricle has the wrong oval hemorrhage 4(4 cm in size along with a diffusive impregnation of the right ventricle muscle... at the right there is a bilateral fracture of ribs II, III, IV, V along mid- clavicular and middle axillary lines, at the left there is a fracture of II, III, IV, V, VI, VII ribs along mid-clavicular line. There are diffuse hemorrhages intercostal muscles in the site of ribs fracture. The right presternum has a diffuse hemorrhage... Dubinina's death was caused by extensive hemorrhage in the right ventricle of heart, multiple bilateral ribs fracture, excessive internal chest hemorrhage. The described injuries could possibly result from strong exposure which has caused a heavy closed fatal injury of Dubinina's chest. And life-time injuries are also a result of severe impact after which Dubinina fell, threw herself or injured her chest».

And as a result, all three victims had severe injuries: «Death of [surname] is violent».

The investigation was puzzled by the information provided by forensic medical examination. There was no explanation how these internal injuries have been done without any visible external damages in the load points. Prutkov, a skilled surgeon, didn't find these injuries when he conducted the external examination and palpated victims in Ivdel. One cannot understand how these injuries could arise from falling because the slope they went along didn't have any abrupt faults and large stones. And falling from your own height cannot cause injuries of that kind. «Squeezing» or "throwing back"?.. What, why and how?..



The positions of victims on the slope of 1096 Kholatchal mountain

There were other questions which the investigation didn't find answers to. At first investigation was conducted by the district prosecutor's office in Ivdel, and then by the regional one in Sverdlovsk. The police didn't take part in it. «Parallel» investigations at that time didn't exist. Before 1961 the police didn't have a legal mechanism of preliminary investigations; they carried out only operational search actions but did not investigate. KGB could take the case away from prosecutor's office but it didn't happen.

Initially the investigators from the prosecutor's office were looking for traces of criminal offense, but could not find them. They didn't find any credible evidences confirming the presence of any strangers in the accident site before arrival of search groups. The investigators interrogated all people who were near to the place of the accident, first of all, hunters and locals. According to these evidences the investigation followed the track of Dyatlov's group on their way to the Second Northern mine.

The investigators quickly came to the conclusion that locals and hunters weren't involved in the tragedy. As well as there were no «strangers» next to the accident site. The hunters Anyamov and Sheshkin who saw the traces of «narrow» skis of Dyatlov's group on the Auspia definitely said that they would know if there was someone. According to the evidences of hunters (in particular, Cheglakov and Pashin) when Dyatlov's group went along Auspia river they were following a hunter-mansi footprints who was trailing an elk. But then approximately at a distance of 10 km from the place of the accident they went separate ways – the hunter went aside following the elk's trace and Dyatlov's group went further along the river.

Hunters and locals couldn't tell anything certain regarding the causes of the group death. But everyone pointed to the danger of strong winds on an open woodless top of mountain ridges. They noticed that on the ridge hurricane force wind is capable to freeze a person for a very short time if one cannot take a shelter in woods, in a hollow, i.e. in the place protected from wind. A forester Pashin said that when such winds were blowing he had to wait in the hollows up to 6 days being warmed by the fire. The hunters mentioned that the hurricane force wind could blow within 10 days and more

atop, and some old residents noted that they knew the cases when people died from a strong wind in the local mountains. Ryazhnev, Dryakhlykh, Popov and others witnessed that at the beginning of February they observed unusually strong winds and frosts under 30 degrees. Therefore according to evidences of the locals wind played a fatal role in this accident especially taking into account visible causes of Dyatlov's team death from freezing.

The investigation hasn't found any objects by which Dyatlov's group has been injured in such a strange way; nothing in particular didn't help to identify their cause. They failed to discover the place where the injuries have been made: atop, near the tent, on the slope or down in the woods. Vozrojdenniy has concluded that Dubinina could live no more than 10–20 minutes having her heart injured and this seemed to exclude the possibility of receiving any injuries in the tent zone. In fact, 8 or 9 pairs of footprints going down have been found, but it seemed obvious that Thibaut, Dubinina and Zolotaryov couldn't walk down injured like this. They also didn't find if the wounded were being carried or transported. The slope near the tent was not steep, from 15 to 20 degrees, by different estimates, and a snow like a hard crust didn't suggest that there was a possibility of avalanche descending on the tent. Well, no trace of an avalanche on the slope was found. Although anyone was not looking for this trace thinking that the slope is insufficiently abrupt.

In addition the investigation found that members of Dyatlov's team died approximately 6–8 hours after the last meal. Three watches out of four on their wrists showed close time: Slobodin-8.45, Thibaut – 8.14 and 8.39 (he had two watches), and Dyatlov's watch showed 5.31. According to the practice of rescue operations the watches usually stop on a hard frost approximately one hour after the death of the person. But it doesn't always happen. Nevertheless the watches stop time showed that Dyatlov's team were lost about 7.00-8.00 in the morning on February, 2th.

The funerals of three victims took place on May 12 on the Mikhaylovskoye cemetery and Zolotaryov was buried later on the Ivanovskoye cemetery next to Krivonishenko.

Lev Nikitich Ivanov, the investigator of the prosecutor's office who conducted the case of Dyatlov's group couldn't find an explanation for the causes of the accident. He could not overcome contradictions, connect the known facts and construct a scene of the accident.

In the case one can certainly notice a few «lines» that the investigators developed in order to make up different versions based on different assumptions. Such was a line checking absence or presence of outsiders on the Tragedy place, including, first of all, local residents. Such was a line checking actions of the leader relating to compliance of expedition arrangement and actions en route. As well as checking of absence of some nonlegal and conflict behaviour of Dyatlov's group that could result in the accident during expedition. It is important to understand that all these lines have been checked but they gave a negative result, that is why assumptions that created them didn't become «working drafts» of Dyatlov's accident. At the same time other «lines» of the investigation were not «completed» because of lack of information that the investigators didn't have access to or couldn't find. For example, there was incomplete data about meteorological situation on the Tragedy day, launches of missiles and nuclear tests on Novaya Zemlya. Of course, considerable part of information was not available and it was very difficult or impossible to obtain it those years.

Having studied the evidences of several witnesses (of meteorologist Tokareva about «fiery sphere» flight observed on February 17, the evidences of Atmanaki, Karelin, militaries Savkin, Anisimov, Malik, Novikov, witness Skorykh and evidences of other searchers about viewing of «fiery spheres» on March 31) Ivanov started to assume that the accident with Dyatlov's group could be connected with some kind of «experiments». He tried to understand the nature of those «experiments», visited the place of the accident once again and investigated the woods. In one place he noticed that branches of fir-trees were scorched. A strange skin color of the victims also evoked some suspicion. That's why Ivanov decided to make an expert examination and investigate bodies and belongings of victims for radiation. These are his words written down by the journalist Bogomolov for the article «Secret of fiery spheres», a newspaper "Lenin way", Kustanai, of November 22 and 24,

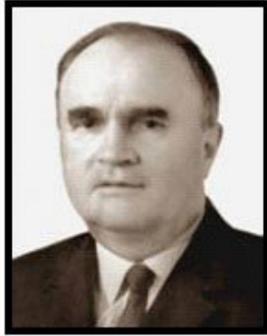
1990: «...Having agreed with the scientists of UFAN (Ural branch of Academy of Sciences of the USSR) I carried out very extensive research of clothes and different body organs of the victims for the presence of «radiation». Besides we made the comparison with clothes and internal of the people who were killed in the car accidents or died a natural death. The results turned out to be surprising. The non-specialists will not be able to understand the analysis results but I will mention only the following ones: the brown jersey of one tourist who had bodily injuries showed 9900 disintegrations per minute, and after the sample has been washed – 5200 disintegrations, i.e. these data point to the radioactive «mud» which could be washed off. It has to be said that before these corpses were found they were intensely washed by meltwater under the snow – actually there were rivers. Therefore at the moment the tourist has died the radioactive «mud» was many times more...". "...When I reported Eshtokin on my findings, fiery spheres and radioactivity, he gave me absolutely explicit instruction: everything to be classified, sealed up, and handed over to a special service and for me to forget about it all. It is needless to say that I executed this order to the letter...»

As a result of all these actions the case was closed by date of resolution on its extension till May 28, 1959. After having been checked in Moscow by the USSR prosecutor's office the criminal case was returned on July 11, 1959, and according to the order of Klinov, the prosecutor of Sverdlovsk, for some time it was kept in the confidential archives (pages 370–378 of the "criminal case" were handed over to the top secret archive). But then it was declassified and handed over to the archives of Sverdlovsk region. There were all indications that Klinov's instructions to Lukin, a head of investigation department in the prosecutor's office, and to Ivanov, the subordinate of Lukin, to classify the case, were a direct consequence of that Eshtokin's order Ivanov mentioned (and in the beginning of investigation A.P. Kirilenko's instructions not to disclose the facts). After all it is clear that Ivanov reported about progress of the case both to Klinov and Eshtokin. He couldn't «ignore» Eshtokin's and Kirilenko's instructions as well as he couldn't hand over them to Klinov as they were orders both for Ivanov and for Klinov. And Klinov followed the order of the second secretary of regional committee to classify the case. It is evident that Eshtokin's decision was based on the information provided by Ivanov. Obviously he had no other information. After having checked the case the prosecutor's office of RSFSR (the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic) didn't report any new information and didn't give any instructions to classify the case.

Trying to classify the materials of the case the authorities wanted to hide the information which could be a source of various gossips and, first of all, to suppress the facts about «fiery spheres» and results of radiation analysis. After all such gossips somehow accused authorities that the causes of the accident weren't still found. The main argument for case was lack of elements of crime. The investigation hasn't found any direct evidences of crime and they also couldn't make any certain conclusions on causes of death of the tourists. The results of investigation were limited by the description of events of the accident and represented an ambiguous statement that «death of tourists was caused by force majeure circumstances». But in the description the investigation didn't specify what kind of «force» it could be and the course of events of the accident.

For some years the authorities didn't allow the organized tourist groups to visit the accident site. But several tourists without official route request visited the place of accident trying to find new evidences and a key to an accident. The first organized group (Valya and Toma Yakovenko, Yura Yudin, Zhora Kuntsevich, Sasha Danilin, Volodya Andrushechkin, Olya Khvatkova, Ira Tkachenko) visited the place of Tragedy in August 1963 and on the island hill fixed up a memorial gravestone made by a sculptor A.F. Karas upon the project of Gennadiy Ptitsyn and Yakov Ruvimov.

And right at the beginning of the article Ivanov made a conclusion: «...True causes of death were kept from people, just a few persons knew about them: the former first secretary of regional committee A.P. Kirilenko, the second secretary of regional committee A.F. Eshtokin, prosecutor of the region N.I. Klinov and the author of these lines, who were engaged in a legal investigation. At the moment neither Kirilenko nor Eshtoknn nor Klinov are not alive...».

		
<p>Korotayev Vladimir Ivanovich — Коротаяев Владимир Иванович — an assistant of Tempalov (for 3 days) over the case of the death of Dyatlov's group (photo 01.02.2008)</p>	<p>Ivanov Lev Nikitich, — Иванов Лев Никитич — an investigator of prosecutor's office over the case of the death of Dyatlov's group</p>	<p>Vozrojdenniy Boris Alekseevich — Возрожденный Борис Алексеевич — a forensic scientist over the case of the death of Dyatlov's group</p>
		
<p>Tempalov Vasily Ivanovich - Темпалов Василий Иванович - prosecutor of Ivdel town</p>	<p>Lukin Stepan Petrovitch- Лукин Степан Петрович - chief of department of prosecutor's office of Sverdlovsk's region</p>	<p>Klinov Nikolai Ivanovich Клинов Николай Иванович - prosecutor of Sverdlovsk's region</p>
		
<p>Kirilenko Andrey Pavlovich First Secretary of Sverdlovskiy region committee of CPSU (8.09.09-12.05.1990)</p>	<p>Eshtokin Afanasy Fjodorovich Second Secretary of Sverdlovskiy region committee of CPSU (19.06.1913-1974)</p>	<p>Churkina (Makushkina) Genrietta Vasilyevna 1930-1999 Expert-criminalist of Sverdlovsk's region</p>

Pictures from cameras and belongings of Dyatlov's team made it through to the investigator Ivanov, and after their studying Ivanov allowed Vadim Brusnitsin and Yury Yudin assisted by Boris Bychkov and Evgeny Chubarev to make photos for victims relatives. So there were "photo albums"

about Dyatlov's group which belonged to the families, searchers and case investigators. Over time they were also «added» by pictures from the previous campaigns of Dyatlov's group and pictures of participants of the search. The photos in the albums were mixed as for time and place. There was no «privacy» in procedures regarding pictures. In 2009 L.N. Ivanov's daughter handed over the films she kept to the «Dyatlov's group Fund» (Fund of Dyatlovtsev) to the investigation volunteers Yu.K. Kuntsevich and A.A. Koskin. Some of these pictures can be seen here. In the belongings of Dyatlov's group there were found 4 cameras which were given back to the relatives of victims, but numbers of all cameras and their owners are known from materials of volume 2 of the case.



A. Mokhov and Buyanov are standing at the memorial gravestone in the island hill of Dyatlov pass in August 2008

25 years after termination the case of Dyatlov's group death could be erased "under the normal procedure" according to retention period. But the prosecutor of the region Tuykov instructed not to erase a case like "socially significant". Therefore it was kept safe in the archives of Sverdlovsk region and remained intact.

A chronology of searching works (? – the dates cannot be defined exactly):

23.02–05.03 – Slobtsov's group (from 27.03 – master of sports Maslennikov, a leader of composite group of Slobtsov-Karelin-Chernyshov+Moiseev and Mostovoy with dogs);

27.02–10.03 – Karelin's group

1.03.59 – (12.03?) – Akselrod-Sogrin's group.

3.03 – 8.03 – a group of masters Bardin, Baskin and Shuleshko from Moscow (Shuleshko left on March, 9).

7.03 – (17.03?) – A.K. Kikoin's group (alpinists from UPI)

12.03 (?) – 23.03 – the first group of Martushev.

? .03 — ? .03 – a group of military students from Ivdellag NCO school under the direction of senior lieutenant Potapov – 10 students.

? .03 — ? .03 – a group of sappers with mine detectors under the direction of lieutenant Shestopalov – 7 sappers.

? .03 — ? .04 – a group of sappers of railway troops under the direction of lieutenant Avenburg;

25.03–06.04 – Sogrin's group;

06.04–17.04 – the second group of Martushev;

17.04–25.04 – Blinov's group (the relocation of the camp from Auspia to Lozva from April 19 till 22.04.59);

25.04–07.05 – a group of Askinadzi and Nicolay Kuznetsov (till the end of the rescue operation and camp evacuation).

Assumptions and versions: a mix from the truth and misconceptions

Different people had numerous assumptions, gossips and misconceptions about the reasons of the accident and the accident itself. They came from the incomplete information, uncertainty of conclusions of the investigation and the general misunderstanding of specific nature of camping trips including environmental conditions.

Dozens of various «versions» are thought up. But in fact most of them were only assumptions which tried to explain some facts and events, but contradicted to other facts and events. These contradictions didn't allow to put all known facts together in an integral scene of events and to explain all unclear facts. To think up your own «version» of events turned out to be rather easy but it was much more difficult to prove it and to connect with known facts. Researchers didn't succeed in it and the accident was still covered with veil of secrets.

Among numerous «versions» there were also «absurd» ones which reflected the opinion of some citizens, authorities and even investigators. Before Dyatlov's group has been found there were suggestions that the tourists could «run away abroad». "Such versions" could only belong to those who haven't travelled even one kilometer through taiga with a backpack (to reach the sea Dyatlov's group would have to cover the distance 4 times more than all their route). There was also an «internal» criminal «version» according to which the accident could happen because of some intragroup conflict, drunken brawl or fight «for girls». Such «assumptions» were met with indignation and resolute rebuff from the experts who knew very well the true worth of these statements.

There were «versions» mocking at obvious nonsense. For example, «Aktrida dwarfs» «versions» which said about «kidnapping of tourists by malicious «Aktrida dwarfs» living underground as well as the «Aryan version». «Aktrida dwarfs» version probably came from the legends about «the people «sikcherty» (сикхерти) who lived in Yamal in dwellings like «dugouts» or originated from stone dolmens a few hundreds of which had been found in the north of Sverdlovsk region and described by regional ethnographers, according to Alexey Slepukhin. These «versions-parodies» are barely laughing at those who take them seriously. Serious «versions» arise from the following statements:

1 – the accident was a «natural» accident caused by strong natural environmental influence and some actions of group on a route in the conditions of environmental pressure.

2 – the accident was a consequence of «technogenic» factors («technogenic accident») resulting from some technical impact from weapon tests – missile, vacuum, radioactive or technogenic actions in the process of mining or from factories activities (explosions, poison or combustible gases, etc.).

3 – the accident was caused by a criminal action ("criminal" accident) such as attack of criminals or a crime committed by authorities which killed the tourist group having mistaken them for a gang or in order to keep some «secrets» or to carry out criminal «experiments». All versions anyhow related to criminal or secrets keeping are «conspiracy» assumptions which connect the tragedy with some «plot» aiming to commit a crime and hide evidences and traces. This is a conspiracy theory.

A conspiracy theory is effective if the «plot» to commit a crime and to hide evidences can be proved by facts but in this case the question is who devised a plot and why. But without these facts the conspiracy versions are baseless and have to be avoided because trying to prove such version one has to give validity facts, i.e. names of conspirators and their motivation. If the elements and motives of crime cannot be proved a conspiracy theory becomes harmful because it distracts from true reasons of the accidents and disturbs to prevent them in future. And sometimes it becomes even dangerous because in this case it gives way to slanderous attacks.

4 – the accident was «abnormal», i.e. caused by the «unusual» event which has not been connected neither with «usual» natural, nor technical nor «criminal» events. The "UFO version", «versions» about the unusual (paranormal) natural phenomena ("infrasound", «fireball», «cold plasma») or the accidental poisoning «version» are considered to be these ambiguous and unsupported assumptions.

But ambiguous versions have not been proved by specific explanation about the cause of the accident and whether «UFO» or a "toxic substance» or an «anomaly» took place as well as under what circumstances it happened. As long as neither UFO traces nor any traces of poisoning, nor the evidence of the abnormal phenomena have not been found. The belongings, food and the first-aid kit of the lost group didn't contain any chemicals which could «stir up their minds».

Since then the opinions of many (but not all) researchers about causes of accident divided into two main directions: natural accident or "technogenic and criminal" accident (conspiracy version). Supporters of natural accident said that Dyatlov's group accident is a failure usual for tourists and it wasn't connected with secret weapons tests or any crimes. There were attempts to unite «natural» and «technogenic» versions but such attempts didn't succeed. Supporters of «natural» accident also didn't come to complete agreement.

The master of sports on tourism Moisey Abramovich Axelrod proposed a version about an avalanche being a main cause of accident. He has built a connected scene of events and pointed to many peculiarities in behavior of Dyatlov's team and details of events. His «avalanche version» also included the steps describing loss of equipment and subsequent freezing of Dyatlov's group under the conditions of cold weather, wind and snowstorm. Axelrod thought that after descent of an avalanche and having been injured Dyatlov's group were rescuing the wounded and tried to return to the camp but lost their way because of the dark and snowstorm. Their attempts to come back to the tent on the mountain opened to wind appeared to be doomed. Axelrod didn't refuse the «technogenic» causes of the accident believing that the descent of an avalanche could be externally stimulated by weapons tests or military maneuvers.

But some aspects of his «avalanche» version met questions and objections which had no answers. There were objections according to which the mountain slope was not rather steep and there was no trace of avalanche. Evidences of searchers and tourists also showed that there were no signs of the avalanche in this part of the mountain. They said that Northern Ural is a region that is not known for avalanches and there were no accidents caused by avalanches. It seemed that the «avalanche» version obviously didn't correspond to the conclusions of forensic examination. After all, it looked like Dyatlov's team was so heavily injured that couldn't go down. And the presence of 8–9 pairs of footprints on the slope proved that all group or almost everyone were going down in a file joining hands.

All in all Axelrod was not able to overcome all objections and explain all events of the accident up to the end and his «avalanche» version with avalanche and snowstorm hasn't had any supporters among skilled tourists for a long time. The theory appeared in 1991 (was written and then published in 1993 in the article of the book by N.A. Rundkvist «Hundred days in the Urals», 1993), much later criminal case had been closed and wasn't considered like an «official version» of the investigation. This version didn't have sufficient evidences and strong protection against attacks of opponents that's why it was necessary to work on it to strengthen it or to give up.

The versions about «infrasound» influence or attack of a rogue bear were put forward as «natural» versions. Actually these natural versions are versions about some «unusual», abnormal phenomena. And even now in TV programmes they try to explain that the accident was caused by «cold plasma» and some special type of «fireball», «infrasound» or other anomalies. These «versions» have always been and remain only assumptions which have no evidences and direct influence. The same can be said about «criminal» causes of accident, while there are no evidences

there is no subject matter. After all, it is possible to think up everything. But it is necessary to prove only what actually took place and what is based on reliable facts and evidences.

So a number of natural and «criminal» versions got hung up without support because they failed any evidences and didn't have any confirming facts. Criminal «versions» fell into this «hopeless» group: «mansiyaskaya», «household quarrel» (a conflict in the team). And also acute alcoholism or any other substances poisoning, including toxic «gases» and «propellant fuel». As well as assumptions about «death squads or escaped convicts» along with attack of "special forces" or criminals and all kinds of such options. Obvious weakness of all «criminal» versions consisted in absence of motives of crime. All things belonging to Dyatlov's group have been found, there were no irrelevant things at the place of the accident and nothing of Dyatlov's group belongings, including valuable ones, disappeared from the Tragedy scene.

Many searchers of Dyatlov's group and a lot of skilled tourists supported the «technogenic» versions (including «UFO version»). It seemed that they had solid validation by way of facts about «fiery spheres» flight and the fact of radiation found on clothes of Dyatlov's group. But these facts were weak because they lacked any explanation: what kind of phenomenon these «fiery spheres» were and where this «radiation» came from. There was no explanation how these strange phenomena affected the accident, whether there was a direct link or any influence and its importance. At the place of the accident there were no signs of these influences: neither traces of falling «rocket» nor increased radiation have been found. Therefore in order to analyze the role of these facts in the accident they were to be checked and explained. Below we give these explanations and they show the real worth of these facts and how they were connected with the accident and with legends about it.

To explain the accident «technogenic» and «criminal» versions were trying to be united. These attempts have resulted in «elimination» and «imitation» versions. The «elimination» version means intended extermination of Dyatlov's group to keep «privacy» of some «tests», what participants of group witnessed accidentally. The «elimination» was also suggested as a result of mistaken extermination of escaped criminals. Except that the elimination was quite strange without any evidences of weapon impact. This difference was eliminated by «imitation» versions. The «imitation» was described as a special murder with evidences fabrication on the crime scene which led to that uncertain picture at the place of the accident. But all arguments about «elimination» and «imitation» nevertheless were unconvincing because of the absence of motive for the crime. They became solid and valid only together with «technogenic» version. Otherwise there were no explanations for authorities' cruelty towards ordinary group of tourists and for the presence of criminals in this god-forsaken place. It is impossible even to reach this place without necessary winter equipment and marching skills, products and terrain knowledge saying nothing of surviving there. To prove «elimination» and «imitation» versions there were also different «arguments» and «evidences» which reduced to the proof of presence of outsiders in the zone of the accident. All these «additional» facts didn't pass the verification that is told in the article «Destruction of unchecked facts and misconceptions. Why and how the accident traces have been lost».

For the correct understanding of the accident we had to collect all relating to the investigation information with the unchecked and false facts and to explain these facts in a proper way. It was necessary to remove all «dust» of misconceptions collected for 49 years which didn't let to understand the accident correctly. And then to explain the accident on the basis of the verified facts, evidences of witnesses and the conclusions of skilled experts.

When building a working version of events it must be kept in mind that the major events of the accident always have their logic and integrity, their cause and effect. If cause-and-effect relations cannot be put together that means the absence of the version and there is only unconfirmed assumption. And in fact, there is no «version» if it is based on the unchecked facts. The working version cannot be based on gossips. When building the authentic version of events external factors proving «possibility of events» should be enforced by the facts from the accident scene proving that

the «accident» really took place. And the authentic version should also give a consistent explanation to all accompanying facts. Every accident is developing according to the same scenario with only one cause and effect chain. That is what the authentic version should explain. If the investigation pretends to be complete there cannot be any «parallel chain» and any «other» explanations. Some facts certainly can contain some kind of ambiguity and blind spots. But all major events of the accident and the causes of group death should be definitely explained by the authentic version. Any «polysemy» and break of cause-and-effect relations means that investigation has just begun and tries to make up a working «version» and this «version» is rather ambiguous.

Besides, in the process of any investigation a «version» is considered to be valid only if it was found to be corresponding to the similar versions and explanations from investigative practice. In this particular case it was necessary to find analogies to some other «tourists' accidents» or «crimes» if there were any crimes. As well as analogies to the accidents caused by some «other» reasons (e.g., technogenic or anomaly) similar to the reasons of this Tragedy.

A statement: «All versions have the right to exist» can be true only at the beginning of investigation. Those «versions» which are not based on established facts, don't explain a course of events and don't have similarities with other tragedies should be rejected as doubtful. Only people who understood almost nothing and made no certain conclusions can speak about «equality of versions». Only having proved by reliable facts a «version» can have the «right to exist». The process of investigation is rather deep and developed only when the main version resolutely «presses» all the rest versions or uses them to explain some fragments of events. And the «non-specific» position means incompleteness and misunderstanding of events. We believe people are mistaken if they think that the version of serious accident can be based only on one «occasional» fact. There should be a lot of such facts which have to explain a course of accident as a whole. And first of them just «puts on the right track» of the accident. Injuries of Dyatlov's team and damage of their tent are becoming «suggestive» and «key» facts in Dyatlov's accident. Any «version» doesn't cost anything if it cannot reasonably explain an origin of injuries and a cause of death.

Our way to Dyatlov's accident (digression by Evgeny Buyanov)

Active studying and investigation of the tragedy of Dyatlov's group for us (for me and for the experts who helped me) began at the end of December 2005 when being at the meeting of climbers in St. Petersburg I have accidentally bought a book «Dyatlov's Pass» by Anna Matveeva. The book was both a «harlequin novel» and a nonfictional narration of Dyatlov's group story containing a lot of details which I hadn't known before. But I knew very well the other book that I've already read in the 70s – this is a novella «The difficulties of highest degree» written by Yuri Yarovoy. I was surprised that a story about search of Igor Dyatlov's group gave rise to this novella. The summary (synopsis) of this novella is given in the appendix B; it is possible to read it and a full text can be found on the Internet (see Appendix A). Unfortunately, Yarovoy and his wife were lost in the car accident in 1980, – at night driving at great speed he ran into the sand dune on the road and lost control of the car Volga.



Yuri Yarovoy and his book



Anna Matveeva and her book

Note: Yuri Evgenievitch Yarovoy (born Kosobryukhov). He was born on April 11th, 1932 in the Far East (a station Mezha in Far East Region), his father was a railway worker (his brother Oleg Evgenievitch was born in 1936). Before war a family lived in Aktyubinsk When he was a schoolboy he finished part-time courses of junior geologists and during summer vacations worked as a collector in Mugodjarsk geological gold mining expedition. From 1949 till 1956 he has been a student of power plant faculty of Leningrad polytechnic institute named after M.I. Kalinin (graduated with a degree of mechanical engineer in «Combustion engines»). In November 1955 he changed his last name having married with Zoya Alekseevna Yarovaya, a student of Moscow Aviation Institute. After graduation he worked in many factories in Sverdlovsk, then took up another job in Komsomol (as a work-free secretary of plant All-Union Lenininst Young Communist League (VLKSM committee) and then went to journalism: worked as a head of department in the newspaper «Let's take over!», an executive editor in the newspaper «The young of Altay», a special correspondent of Sverdlovsk television and radio broadcasting committee, a head of department in the newspaper «Ural searcher». In 1959 he became a member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (KPSS). He was keen on tourism, took part in mountain and water tours around Ural and Altay. In 1959 he was a participant of one of the searching teams which were created as a result of Dyatlov's group lost. Stanislav Meshavkin, Vitaliy Bugrov and Yuri Yarovoy were one of the fathers of Russian science fiction festival «Aelita». «Aelita» award is designed from Yarovoy's scratch. Since 1979 he had been a member of the USSR Union of writers, he was also a member of a board in Sverdlovsk regional writers' organization. On August 7th, 1980 he was lost in the car accident in Dagestan, together with his wife Svetlana Leonidovna, a teacher of Journalism faculty in Ural University. Their son Nikita Yurievitch Yarovoy suffered a serious craniocerebral injury. Yuri Yarovoy and his wife were buried in Dagestan village Kochubei. In this village there is a monument made and transported at the expense of family's friends. Yarovoy had published his works since 1959: his first novella «Down Volga river» was published in the

newspaper «Let's take over!». His first book «The difficulties of highest degree» came out in 1966 in Sverdlovsk and was based on the story about Dyatlov's group death and the searching operation (in 1971 the book was published in Perm). The first science fiction short novel «A crystal house» was published in 1978 in the yearbook «Science fiction». Yuri Yarovoy has written novels, novellas, short and feature stories, science fiction stories. In 1986 his novella «A special case» was scenarized and filmed by Odessa film studio, a film «Wingspread». The science fiction works include: «Snow smell» (novella), «A crystal house» (short story), «Green blood» (novella), «A town for a present» (novella), «Your passion» (novella). Popular scientific and fiction works include: «No wrath and passion» (novella), «Varka's pit» (short story). «Helicopter pilots» (short story), «The difficulties of highest degree» (novella), «A house built on dogs' bones» (short story), «A road accident» (novella), «Steep banks» (short story), «A reindeer stone» (short stories), «A special case» (novella), «Reporting from the Training Centre», «Pankratov's heart» (short story), «Tagil metals», «Coloured eyes of the earth».

After reading Matveeva's book I was overcome with a desire to investigate a cause of the accident in order to prevent similar cases in the future. The book of Yarovoy encouraged us to begin an investigation of this accident. I also had an experience in expeditions, rescuing operations in mountains and in destroyed Leninakan in 1988. I also investigated several accidents and I still have pain for the lost companions from my last mountain tours. In 1990 on Elbrus a group of 5 tourists was died from cold. Among them there were my companions Sergey Levin and Sergey Farbstein. Being skilled tourists they couldn't escape «cold death» that is a bit similar to Dyatlov's accident. Seven years of thoughts and studying documents made me understand its reasons and facts. But it was impossible to answer only one question. I can't say whether I was also lost together with them in that accident or not. There is no answer because such serious initial changes in group structure bring us back to initial uncertainty of the situation as a whole.

Matveeva's book gave me a large volume of documentary materials concerning Dyatlov's accident and I was able to begin my research based on them. Later I have found many facts on the Internet, in June 2007 I obtained a part of the closed criminal case over investigation of Dyatlov's group accident and according to reports of evidence and results of examinations I specified with the experts the facts of the accident. I tried to receive an access to the file of «closed criminal case over tourists death near mountain Otorten, Ivdel, Sverdlovsk region». For this purpose at the beginning of August 2008 I sent to prosecutor's office of Sverdlovsk region a letter of inquiry asking to give me an access to the case. The letter also contained the first printed edition of this book. The letter was declined as happened earlier with other visitors' inquiries including relatives of victims. But a year later in October 2009 suddenly a prosecutor office gave me permission: a first deputy prosecutor of Sverdlovsk region V.P. Vekshin has read my book and ordered to give me an access to the case. In November 2009 I managed to obtain prosecutor's office permit, to study the whole case in the archives of prosecutor's office of Sverdlovsk region and to copy missing files of volume 1 of the case for the analysis. It turned out that visitors could review only a copy of the case but I have also seen an original of Volume 1. In February 2010 I was able to study and copy the original of volume 2 of the case after what I became the owner of a complete copy of the case. I found that the case was kept by the prosecutor's office in full. In comparison with the original a copy of Volume 1 failed several odd-sized sheets with schemes on pages 76–80. A copy of Volume 2 differs from the original in that the copy fails 70 sheets of secondary documents: first of all, notices confirming receipt of several belongings of Dyatlov's group by their relatives and some photos of searching operation. Besides two volumes of the case there are 13 envelopes with photos of searching operation and their legends which were kept in the archives of Sverdlovsk region separately from the case. The sheets in the envelopes are numbered. I have studied all these documents; I had all photos except several unimportant pictures

of the upper reaches of the Auspia. But I handed a written warranty over the prosecutor's office that I shall not use the documents for commercial purposes and shall not cause moral and material damage to the victims' families.

In the process of the accident analysis I had to meet a number of unclear facts, explanation of which involved experts with unique knowledges. First of all, for verifying conclusions we invited a skilled skier (and a "mountaineer ") Valentin Nekrasov: master of sports, the USSR champion and medalist in camping tours of various complexity and for 28 years he has been occupying the position as chairman of the ski commission of Leningrad and St. Petersburg Federation of tourism. He became the first strict «examiner» of our version. Without his approval I wouldn't be so confident in conclusions: it was not only «mine» conclusions but «ours». The conclusions of Axelrod, Popov, Nazarov, Buyanov, Nekrasov who definitely pointed to «avalanche» as a «trigger mechanism» of Dyatlov's accident. But it was still necessary to find out what kind of avalanche it was, why and what happened, in details.

Slobtsov B. E., master of sports in climbing, joined our investigation in September 2006. He and his friends Sharavin and Brusnitsin helped to reconstruct the events of the accident. With time he has understood and accepted our version. If to evaluate his real contribution to the book, he is its co-author. Though, all experts who really helped us in an investigation can be called «co-authors» in certain issues.

Initially we looked at all «versions» of Dyatlov's accident. But we rejected all versions which could not be proved by reliable facts. In order to verify versions we were looking for checked facts, clarified conditions of camping tours and rescue operation events. As well as we analyzed the actions of the team in an emergency. We saw that nature of injuries of Dyatlov's group definitely indicated their avalanche origin. But we also checked carefully other possibilities of course of events according to the conclusions of the experts. While we work creatively trying to build and describe a scene of events we had also to destroy all doubtful facts and versions.



It is necessary to understand that all publications and films which contain numbers of versions of the tragedy don't answer questions. A complex investigation leads only to one version of the tragedy which shows the most objective scene of events. An objective scene of events doesn't allow any ambiguity because all these events were moving according to the same cause-and-time chain. We could and should specify separate details of the objective version changing into the description of events if the events are explained from beginning to end. And on the road to understanding of events you should avoid «haughty» judgements and «disapprovals»; you should «put yourself into these events skin», not only understand them, but also try to experience. In particular, one should understand

and experience all the weight of current situation. If you don't understand the seriousness of the situation and events you will not be able to see the real reasons of the accident. Among other things it would not be possible to understand why the group had to abandon a tent if you didn't realize the real power of nature at this accident.

Later on the book follow the «lines» of investigation each of which led to complete summaries and conclusions regarding the facts of Dyatlov's accident. These conclusions allowed us to build up a base for the version, to offer an explanation to the unclear facts and to give up false ideas, i.e. misconceptions that prevented to understand it.

Our way to understanding of the facts and events was not a highway. We had to struggle against mistakes. The way of investigation follows. For a better understanding we offer our readers to conduct an investigation with us because if to present only the «heart» of the case would be dry, boring and obscure.

At first we will briefly tell about solving a «mystery of fiery spheres», probably, the most fascinating mystery of this story that gives the answer whether these phenomena were connected with the Tragedy of Dyatlov's group.

The key to a mystery of the «fiery spheres» (Retold by Evgeniy Buyanov)

Without a solution of this phenomenon's nature it was almost impossible to discover the secret of Dyatlov's accident. These events curved into the minds of those who were connected with both facts. At first it was necessary to find out what this phenomenon meant and then to determine if it took place in the night of the accident, how it was connected with the accident's events and how it affected the course of events.

What was it? The answers for when, where and what they saw during the flight of the «fiery spheres» were given by the testimony of the witnesses. Tokareva, the meteorologist: *«On the 17th of February at 6.50 a.m. an unusual phenomenon – a moving star with a train- appeared in the sky. The train looked like thunderstorm cirrus. Then this star had disengaged the train, became even brighter and gradually flew inflating and forming a big sphere shrouded by gauze. Then a star ignited inside the sphere; afterwards a small and not so bright orb appeared from this star. The sphere began to slowly descent and became like a blurred spot. At 7.05 a.m. the big sphere disappeared at all. It was moving from south to northeast».*

The «fiery sphere» was seen by the eyewitness Skoryh G.I. in Karaul settlement of Sverdlovsk area and by the militaries Savkin A.D., Malik I.N., Novikov A.S. and Anisimov A.L. near Ivdel; they were in the line duty in the night and told almost same details. The Savkin's evidence: *«On the 17th of February, 1959 at 6. 40 a.m. during duty performances I observed the dazzling-white sphere that appeared from the southern direction. Sometimes it was covered with mist; there was a bright point-star inside the sphere. It went northward and was visible during 8-10 minutes».*

Here is the note called «The Unusual heavenly phenomenon» of February 18, 1959 from the newspaper «The Tagilsky worker» (signed by the deputy of the telegraph superintendent of Vysokogorsky mine n.a. A.Kisselya): *«Yesterday at 6.55a.m. local time a shining sphere appeared in the east – southeast at the height of 20 degrees above the horizon and had the size of a moon visual diameter. The sphere head out to northeast. Maybe at seven o'clock a.m. there was a flash near the sphere and the sphere's very bright core was seen. The sphere began to shine more intensively; a glowing cloud aroused near it, then it was repulsed towards south. The cloud enlarged upon all eastern part of the firmament. Soon after that there was the second flash, it looked like a crescent. The cloud gradually increased; in the center of it there was a shining point (the force of the luminescence was different). The sphere went east-northeast. The maximum altitude above the horizon – 30 degrees – was reached approximately at 7.05.a.m. Moving on, this unusual phenomenon weakened and got fuzzy. Thinking that it was somehow connected with sputnik, we had switched on the receiving set; however there was no signal receipt».*

Here is the certificate from George Atmanaki's report who was in Karelin's group:

«... on the 17th of February I and Vladimir Shavkunov got up at 6.00 a.m. to make breakfast for our group. Having lit the fire and made all necessary things, we began to wait for the meals to be ready. The sky was grey; there were no clouds only thin mist that usually lifted at sunrise. Sitting face to the north and casually having turned a head on the east, I had seen in the sky the milky-white blurred spot with dimensions of about 5–6 moon visual diameters at the height of 30 degrees, consisting from several concentric circles. Its form looked like a halo that surrounded the moon in the fair chilled weather. I told my companion to look at this painted moon. He thought for a while and replied that, firstly, there was no moon and, secondly, that it might be at the other part of the sky. Since the moment we had noticed this phenomenon 1–2 minutes passed but I don't know how long it lasted before this moment and how did it look initially. At this moment in the center of this spot the star burst that had the same form during several seconds, then it began to

grow abruptly in size and high-tailing westward. Within several seconds it increased rapidly and it was as big as the moon then, having torn a smoke-cloud or the clouds, it came into a view and looked like an enormous fiery opaline disk of the size of 2–2, 5 lunar diameters surrounded with the same pale corona. After that, remaining the same size, the sphere began to fade until it had merged with the halo surrounding it. The halo in turn sprawled above the sky and went out. The dawn began. The clock showed 6.57 a.m., the phenomenon lasted not more than one and a half minute and impressed us a lot...».

This is how Karelin describes the seen phenomenon in the report: *«I had jumped out of a sleeping bag and from a tent without boots, only in the woolen socks and, standing on the branches, saw the big light spot. It was expanding. In the center of the spot a small star appeared and also started to increase. This spot was moving from northeast to southwest and was falling to the ground. Then it disappeared behind the ridge and the forest, having left a light strip in the sky. This phenomenon influenced people in different way: Atmanaki claimed that it seemed that the earth was going to explode because of the crash against some planet; Shavkunov thought that this phenomenon «isn't so terrific»; I was unimpressed – it was only a meteoritic fall and nothing more. Hardly this phenomenon lasted more than a minute».*



Mr. Atmanaki G. V and Mr. Karelin V. G. in Vizhay settlement.

The case also had interesting evidence – the scouts' telegram containing the information about the observation of *the «fiery sphere's flight» on the 31st of March: «To Mr. Prodanov, Mr. Vishnevsky. On 31.03.59 at 9.30 a.m. local time, on 31.03 at 4.00 a.m. the person on duty Meshcheryakov had noticed a big fiery circle in the southeast direction that was moving toward us during 20 minutes and disappeared behind the high ground 880. Before its' dipping below the horizon a star appeared in the center of the circle and gradually increased till it became the size of the moon; then the star began to fall down separating from the circle. The unusual phenomenon was observed by many alarmed people. We ask to explain this phenomenon and its safety as under our conditions it makes disturbing impression. Mr. Avenburg, Mr. Potapov, Mr. Sogrin)».*

We also know about one more evidence of Mr. Shtrauh that was taken from the article of S. Bogomolov in the newspaper «*The Ural worker*» of October 31, 1990 and tells about the sighting of a «fiery sphere» that happened in twenty years after the accident with Dyatlov's group: «On 16.02.79 at 8. 15 p.m. in the northwest part of the horizon there was a bright bluish white flash; it turned into a quickly growing circle of the dazzling light which then formed an ellipse. There was a purple smoky sphere in the center of the flash of size of the full moon, it promptly lifted up and dissolved, not having reached the zenith. The luminous spot-ellipse fell to pieces like the segments of an orange and gradually died away, having left in the sky a gleaming trace. It lasted 6-10 minutes and then it became dark...».

This is interesting. Here are «the segments of an orange» in the sky that were falling!

Finally, the sightings of the «fiery spheres» are known because of the evidences of the taiga hunters (including Mansi ones) hunting in the north of Ural.

Firstly, there was a hypothesis that the «fiery spheres» could be the flights of the surface-to-air missiles. At that time in Ural there already were air defense missile battalions of C-75 complex; in a year, on May 1, 1960 the battalion of major Voronov misguided F. Pauers's air scout near Sverdlovsk. It was reported that near the Chistop Mountain there was an early-warning radar station (in 1972–1986 yy.). Therefore on this location an air defense missile battalion could be based before these years. I wasn't sure in these conclusions as the sighting time of the «fiery spheres» (about 10–22 minutes) didn't correspond with the flight time of the surface-to-air missiles. The attempts to explain this discrepancy as a result of the errors of the timing made by the witnesses, as it was found out later, were incorrect.

The hypothesis about the surface-to-air missile raised a question: «And why to rocket? On what targets»? Indeed this type of fire was a very expensive thing. Allegedly the scouting sondes that the Americans launched to our territory using radio and photo equipment for «espionage» purposes could be the targets. The sondes mostly flied on the western winds of a stratosphere at the height of about 20–30 km and only the rocket could misguide them in those years. The burning of the sphere filled with hydrogen after it was hit by the rocket, in my opinion, could increase some time of the «star's» sighting and «lessen» the visible contradiction of my «theory».

I didn't post an article on the web-sites because of some doubts, I only post it on a tourist club's forum «Romantic» of USTU and sent to my acquaintances over the Internet. At the beginning of 2007y.) on the forum Igor Shelemetyev immediately began to retort me. He denied my position almost about all questions, following the «human and criminal» version of Dyatlov's accident, and asserted in his letter on the 17th of February that a whizbang (a guided missile) «Burya» was fired from the aeroballistic range in Vladimirovka (it was situated approximately in 50 km from Kapustin Yar range).



«Burya» on Vladimirovka aeroballistic range.

The Muscovite Vladimir Borzenkov also objected to me – he, the assistant professor of MAI and the skilled tourist skier, argued that at that time they didn't manage to prelocate the air defense missile battalion on-station and referred to the Tsisar's memoirs on the Internet. Therefore the flights of the surface-to-air missile couldn't take place. The memoirs of Tsisar (Цисаря) were found and read by me. But it was difficult to draw certain conclusions on the basis of this book and to decide when and where battalions acted and what alert status each battalion had.

I reported to Borzenkov about Shelemetyev's objections and conveyed the fact about «Burya». Borzenkov answered that according to his information «Burya» was fired not on the 17th of February but on the 17th of April – in the day when the «fiery spheres» weren't seen. I was all at sea with these contradictions, they made me to stumble at the correctness of both my and opponents' conclusions. Having reflected for a while I decided to check the fact of «Burya»'s launch and to find the third source of information that would help me to decide who is right – Shelemetyev or Borzenkov.

In my library I found the accidentally bought book written by A.B.Zheleznyakov «The rocket fell flying up» (S-Pb, «System», 2003), the «polytechnician» colleague, the historian and the pundit on the rocketry. I checked the chronology of the emergency space shots according to the book but there were no information about the missile launchings on 17.02 and 31.03. I decided to find Zheleznyakov and to know his opinion both about my article and the fact that «Burya» was fired. It was simple to find his website, as well as an e-mail address. Zheleznyakov quickly answered on my inquiry and, having talked with him over the phone, I revealed the new interesting facts. He reported that from 1953 till 1960 the Americans launched more than 12 thousand scouting sondes to our territory! The sondes were launched from Western Europe, Scandinavia and the North Sea from the ships and planes and were set down and caught over the territory of the Russian Far East. The sondes had a complex cellular structure and it was very difficult to misguide them from the plane as far as one perforation due to a shell or a bullet impact didn't cause the sonde's fall. Of course a large number of the sondes flew away in the wrong places and many of them were lost but certain examples got information. The sondes were filled with helium and they couldn't be on fire like the one filled with hydrogen.



**Zheleznyakov Alexander Borisovich,
The academician of the Russian academy
of Astronautical Sciences n.a.
K.E.Tsiolkovsky**



**Gerstein Mikhail Borisovich
The ufologist, the geographer, the
chairman of the ufologic committee of
Russian Geographical Society**

Zheleznyakov objected to the surface-to-air missile theory, having specified that the time of flight didn't correspond to the time of its observation. I understood «the killing moment» of this

argument and for some time I had a heavy heart. Perhaps it was «not a rocket» but different sorts of things?

Zheleznyakov told that no whizbangs were fired (including the «Burya» ones) on 01–02.02.59 y. He indicated the following dates and details of the «Burya» whizbangs that were fired from Vladimirovka range:

20.02.1959, middle 2/5, the whizbang wasn't fired due to technical difficulties (the failure occurred during the start).

29.03.1959, middle 3/4, the flight lasted for 25. 33 minutes. Because of the power generator failure on-speed wasn't achieved. The air range of the intercontinental cruise missile was 1315 km.

19.04.1959, middle. 2/5, endurance – 33. 5 minutes. The air range – 1766 km. The maximum speed – 3. 15 M.

02.10.1959, middle 2/4, the mission design is executed. The time of flight – 10 minutes 17 s.

My guess about «Burya» was wrong, the surface-to-air missile theory became irrelevant and I again was all at sea. Perhaps all these «rockets» have nothing to do with this. Perhaps absolutely different phenomenon was observed. After thinking for a while, I called Gerstein and asked: «You are ufologist, what is your opinion about the origin of the «fiery spheres?» Mikhail answered: «The only reason of their appearance is caused by a rocket!». And again he threw off the word about the launch from Tjuratam range on 17.02.59; we discussed it in March, 2006 at our first meeting in RGS. But at that I time didn't believe it- after all Baikonur (Tjuratam) outlied at a very big distance from the north of Ural – it was more than 1700 km. This place seemed to be too distant and it was impossible to observe the launch because the missile was ascending to the level of only 200–300 km, moreover it was 30 degrees above the horizon as the witnesses said. The simple estimate excluded such variant.

But now the secondary reminder about the launch on the 17th of February raised my suspicions. Everything again came to this «stubborn» date. I decided to check this launch. Meditating I once again browsed Zheleznyakov's book and read the. Maybe these R-7 launchings weren't a «space» one or an «emergency» one and for these reason there were no information about them in the chronology of the emergency launches. And what about that «fiery sphere» which was observed by Shtraukh? If there is any mention of it in Zheleznyakov's book? Having opened the book on page 179 I found a suspicious record from 16.02.79:

«16.02.79. From the 41st pad of the Plesetsk spaceport a rocket vehicle «Soyuz – U» was fired that should place into orbit the next camera-carrying satellite «Zenith-2M» type. Because of RV failure the launching ended unsuccessfully».

I had a feeling that I was very close to the solution. During the launch from Plesetsk spaceport the rocket vehicle flid closer to the north of Ural than the one from Tjuratam range. It could be visible for people but this launch didn't explain other ones. Generally these data made my suspicions about the launch on the 17th of February stronger. I decided to ask Zheleznyakov about this and at the same time to know about other launches that were made on 31.03.59 and 16.02.79. I carefully thought over the matter and the possible versions of the answers.

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