

INEXPLICATA
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Editor

Scott Corrales

Assistant Editor

(all article submissions and letters)

Juan Carlos Mallory

P.O. Box 228

Derrick City, PA 16727

Contributing Editors

Manuel Carballal (Spain)

Willie Durand Urbina (Puerto Rico)

Dr. Rafael Lara Palmeros (Mexico)

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Welcome to INEXPLICATA!

In 1997, the Vatican upgraded its official Latin dictionary to include a certain number of neologisms. Among the various terms was the delightful and surprising "*res inexplicata volans*" for Unidentified Flying Object. Taking this as a good omen, *Inexplicata* has taken its name from the second word of that Vatican-provided definition.

INEXPLICATA hopes to showcase the work of the Spanish (and Portuguese) - speaking world's most important and active UFO and paranormal researchers as their quest for knowledge takes them to a myriad fields which at first may appear to have no connection to traditional ufology: here you will read about Manuel Carballeda's fascinating foray into manmade saucers and the possibility that Spain was the home for such artifacts; Dr. Rafael Lara Palmeros, Mexico's most distinguished Fortean investigator, will lead us to the enigmatic Zone of Silence in Ceballos, Durango; Willie Durand Urbina will share his ufological knowledge about that hotbed of paranormal activity which is Puerto Rico, and many other authors will fill the pages of this journal with engrossing accounts from their respective countries.

Is INEXPLICATA really necessary in the age of the Internet? After all, at the click of a button one can access the tens of dozens of UFO homepages featuring up-to-the-moment information about ufology, forteana, cryptozoology, etc. from countries all over the world. We would like to believe that despite the fact that INEXPLICATA is not "timely" (no journal ever is), we will furnish a venue for longer, in-depth pieces that may not be featured on the Internet, or which lack the shock value of as-it-happens material found elsewhere.

Editorials like this one can go on forever, particularly during the maiden issue of any publication. But we feel its time to let INEXPLICATA speak for itself now. Enjoy!

Scott Corrales
Editor
INEXPLICATA

Mystery Animals Yesterday and Today *by Scott Corrales*

In October 1996, a curious news story was circulated by the Reuters World Service. Elements of the Egyptian police had allegedly shot and captured two strange savage animals of a pack that had terrorized the small Egyptian town of Armant, a community in the Nile Valley some three hundred miles south of Cairo, killing three villagers and wounding dozens in a series of nocturnal raids against the population.

The news item went on to say that the bloodthirsty creatures resembled "large hyenas or wild dogs." Known to the locals as *salaawwa*, the beasts allegedly belong to no known species of canids. Egypt's Ministry of the Interior offered the theory that the animals had been driven northward from the Sudan in search of new hunting grounds. Armed villagers joined the gendarmes in efforts to ensnare the bizarre animals, ultimately managing to wound a specimen as it emerged from the farmland bent on attacking individual homes. Another such creature had been shot dead, and no further information was available on the beasts.

In a world in which new species are added to the roster every year, the news of hyena offshoots attacking humans in the Nile should simply be chalked up to animal reactions resulting from changes in the environment. But the Egyptian news story has a curious ring of familiarity to it.

In the year 774 A.D., during the reign of Emperor Leo IV, called "the Khazar", the Eastern Roman Empire was swept by a plague of quasi-biblical proportions which was followed by the appearance of bizarre carnivorous animals which could be dead-ringers for the one in the Reuters item. A Syriac priest and chronicler of the time, Denys de Tell-Mahre, describes the creatures as having no fear of humans and resembling wolves, but with smaller and narrower muzzles and horse-like ears. "The skin on their dorsal spine resembled the bristles of pigs," adds the medieval chronicler.

Swarms of these strange canids fanned out across Anatolia, devouring dozens of farmers and villagers. The animals fought their human attackers fiercely, unafraid of weapons, brazenly carrying off children out of homes and fields.

Soon, however, we begin to encounter clearly paranormal overtones emerging from this Syriac chronicle: the nameless beasts were able to "abduct children from their beds" and dogs refused to bark at their appearance. Entire herds of cattle were destroyed, and "when one of them attacked a herd of goats, or flock of sheep, it took away several at a time," adds the chronicle.

In a medieval fairy-tale of the same period, a paladin would doubtlessly have appeared to redress the situation, but what happened in real life was far more prosaic: the monstrous creatures simply moved on to a new hunting ground, apparently what is today northern Iraq. No mention of the creatures is made in subsequent Middle Eastern annals.

Paranormal creatures of every shape and size conceivable appear and disappear around the world, causing physical damage and

preying on domesticated animals. The same pattern has repeated itself over the centuries well into the twentieth century.

The Moca Vampire -- Deja Vu All Over Again

On February 25, 1975, a Puerto Rican newspaper ran one of the very first headlines concerning the wave of mysterious animal deaths to occur in the vicinity of the small town of Moca, on the island's western side.

The creature, christened "The Moca Vampire" by the press, began its activities in Moca's Barrio Rocha, where it killed a number of animals in a grisly fashion never seen before. Fifteen cows, three goats, two geese and a pig were found dead with strange puncture marks on their hides, indicating that some sharp object --natural or artificial-- had been inserted into the hapless bovines. Autopsy reports invariably showed that not a single drop of blood remained within the animals, as if it had been consumed by some predator. Police officers were adamant about ascribing the deaths to dogs, since they correctly believed that not even the wildest of feral dogs could climb some of the fences surrounding the dead animals' pens.

On March 7, 1975, a cow belonging to Rey Jiménez was found dead in Moca's Barrio Cruz, presenting deep, penetrating wounds on its skull and a number of scratches around the wounds on its body. Jiménez's cow was added to the growing list of victims, which now totalled well over thirty.

As the number of victims grew exponentially, the Moca Vampire acquired an identity of its own, much in the same way that the Chupacabras would twenty years later. Speculation as to its nature was rife: many believed it was a supernatural "bird", like the one seen by María Acevedo, a Moca resident who noticed that a strange animal had landed on her home's zinc rooftop in the middle of the night. According to Acevedo's testimony, the bird pecked at the rusty rooftop and at the windows before taking flight, issuing a terrifying scream.

The UFO phenomenon did not wait excessively long before manifesting itself in the dark skies over Moca: on March 12, 1975, Luis Torres, together with his son and daughter-in-law, witnessed an object which resembled "the lights on a police cruiser" spinning in the night on the outskirts of town. Torres and his family estimated that the object had been engaged in an overflight of the fields in which mutilated animals were being found. A few days later, on March 15, farmer Cecilio Hernández notified authorities that the elusive Moca Vampire had slain thirty-four chickens on his property at some point during the night. The supernatural entity was by now responsible for ninety animal deaths in a two week period.

A false moment of hope marked this critical period in the Moca crisis: Luis Torres, the same farmer who had reported seeing a UFO over Moca's outlying regions, became the man of the hour after slaying two enormous snakes (Puerto Rican boas) measuring an unheard-of six-foot length. Torres had captured the creatures as they stood ready to attack a 600-pound heifer. The media hailed this act of heroism as the "solution to the mutilation riddle"; citizens could finally issue a collective sigh of relief.

However, the Moca Vampire had its own agenda. On March 18,

1975, two goats belonging to Hector Vega, a resident of Moca's Barrio Pueblo, were found drained of blood. Puncture marks on the goats' necks were the unmistakable sign that the strange creature causing the deaths was still at large and hungrier than ever: it returned to Vega's farm the following night to finish off ten more goats and wound another seven. The horrified farmer also discovered that ten additional goats had gone missing.

It was this last spree of vampiristic activity that finally prompted official action in the form of a visit from the Senate Agricultural Commission, led by Senator Miguel A. Deynes, Police colonel Samuel López and a number of functionaries. After talking to the affected parties and to local law enforcement officials, Senator Deynes requested that Astol Toledo, the Superintendent of Police "redouble his efforts in getting to the bottom of the situation," as there was no doubt in his mind that no animal could cause so many deaths. (In yet another curious parallel between the Moca Vampire and the Chupacabras of the nineties, the Superintendent of Police 20 years later would be Pedro Toledo).

Supporters of the "killer snake" theory which had gained adherents in the wake of Luis Torres' exploits had their hopes dashed yet again by Dr. Juan Rivero, a Mayagüez-based herpetologist who stated in no uncertain terms that the Puerto Rican boa, a non-poisonous reptile, was physically incapable of killing animals as large as a goat, much less a cow. The herpetologist added that snakes' mouths were not adapted to suck blood.

Felix Badillo could not believe his eyes when, on the morning of March 23, 1975, he found a ten pound piglet dead in its pen. The tiny porker was missing an ear and had a sizeable hole on the side of its head. Badillo was haunted by the fact that such a thing could have happened to one of his animals, since his fierce watchdog had neither barked nor growled during the night and there was no sign of a struggle. The pig farmer was hardly comforted by the expert opinion of Dr. Angel de la Sierra, a specialist with the University of Puerto Rico, who noted that the cut on the piglet's ear stump was similar to certain incisions made in experimental surgery to study deafness.

The Moca Vampire had apparently tired of its diet and was ready for a new treat. At ten o'clock at night on March 25, laborer Juan Muñiz was allegedly attacked by a "horrible creature covered in feathers," as he would later describe it. Muñiz was returning home to Moca's Barrio Pulido when he saw the unsightly entity. The laborer threw stones at the creature to frighten it away, but only managed to provoke its anger: the creature flew toward him, prompting Muñiz to seek shelter behind some bushes before running to a neighbor's house. An armed group of locals sought to find the strange being, but no trace was found.

By April 1975, the "vampire" had transcended the narrow confines of Moca, embarking on an island-wide spree of animal killings. Among its first depredations outside the San Juan metropolitan area was the slaying of a pig on a farm belonging to one Benigno Lozada in Guaynabo, P.R.. Meanwhile, an all-out effort to apprehend the suspected human element behind the mutilations had been set into motion by the police, while on the other hand,

the media bent over backward to find a "rational" or "scientific" explanation that would dismiss the strong supernatural air surrounding the unknown predator. When some "odd bats" were discovered in a limestone cave near Moca, hope welled in newsrooms throughout the island. However, it was soon pointed out that the bats were in fact of the ordinary kind, who live on fruit and do not attack animals.

On April 2, the predator paid a visit to a farm owned by Isauro Melgar in Corozal's Barrio Negro. The Moca Vampire killed eight goats and a dozen rabbits on the property. This loss was particularly painful for the small farmer, since the breeding rabbits had been quite valuable.

Fearing that the unknown creature would stage a return on the following evening, Melgar mounted a watch all night, spreading poison on the ground to eliminate whatever it was seemed interested in his bunnies. Joined by a group of armed neighbors, Melgar kept watch until three in the morning. The moment the men disbanded, whatever it was returned with a vengeance to slay more animals. This only strengthened the farmers' determination to remain awake all night, if need be.

At half past midnight on April 5th, Isauro Melgar and his companions were startled by a deafening sound which suddenly blanketed the otherwise silent countryside. Amid the unearthly din, the farmers saw a shadowy figure running swiftly through the trees, away from an open pasture. They would later discover that four more goats had been slain. Stoical despite of his losses, Melgar told the press that "whatever killed my goats was definitely not human. I don't believe in vampires, of course, but I really can't say what kind of creature killed my animals."

Two months into the Moca Vampire scare, official declarations began appearing in the media and in government communiqués. Dr. Benedicto Negrón, a veterinarian for the Puerto Rico Department of Agriculture, noted that "the situation was a concern" to his agency, expressing a fear that the uncanny events might unleash hysteria among the population. In an April 9th editorial, the now-defunct *El Mundo* ran an editorial requesting greater leadership from the government in solving the bizarre mutilations.

As was the case during the Chupacabras events in 1995, it would take more than an exhortation from the media to prompt official action, so the killing spree continued. A variety of ducks, chickens and other poultry were drained of blood at locations as disparate as Aguadilla (on the island's western shore) and Guaynabo (a suburb of San Juan). Heavy UFO activity was reported over the metropolitan suburbs of Santa Rosa and Cerro Gordo, while a massive cigar-shaped UFO, emitting strong yellow lights through rectangular portholes, hovered some 1500 feet over a family home in the suburb of Cupey, giving the homeowners and their neighbors a leisurely, 45 minute-long look. Researchers found scorched vegetation the following morning, presumably at the location where the unknown vehicle had made a furtive landing.

On May 13, 1975, José Santos, of Corozal's Palo Blanco sector, reportedly encountered a round-headed, hairy-tailed and large-eyed creature which issued growls similar to those made by a small dog. Santos believed that whatever the small creature was,

it was definitely not native to the island. Back in Moca, however, three roosters, a rabbit and five goats belonging to the municipal treasurer met untimely ends at the hands (fangs?) of an unknown intruder.

UFO activity had increased to a record high during May 1975, paralleling the rise in animal mutilations. A group of three objects, two of them resembling stars, flew over Fajardo, P.R. with impunity. Among the witnesses were an astronomer and a Ph.D in psychology, who were absolutely positive in classifying the objects as neither natural nor of human manufacture.

At nine thirty p.m. on May 17th, a UFO flew low over a home in Park Gardens, Rio Piedras. Three women who had been engaged in conversation on the front porch were startled to see a large ball of powerful yellow light engage in a series of complex maneuvers overhead. Simultaneous sightings were taking place elsewhere over San Juan: three witnesses were surprised to see a house-sized luminous craft spinning in the night skies over a historic landmark -- Fort San Cristóbal -- in the city's old section. An object surmounted by a red light flew in front of an apartment building facing the Condado Lagoon. According to the professional couple who witnessed its maneuvers, the object turned its light off as it flew by, remaining a dark mass against the sky.

The Moca Vampire's activity persisted well into the summer: On June 25th, it killed 25 farm animals outside of Isabela, P.R.. Fourteen fighting cocks were later exanguinated by the same predator, this time in Yauco, P.R.. As the summer wore on, the "vampire", its appetite seemingly sated, diminished its activity before vanishing altogether in August 1975.

UFO researcher and journalist John Keel, in his landmark book The Eighth Tower (Dutton, 1975), makes several observations which can be applied to the paranormal events which occurred in the Caribbean during the '70s and which would repeat themselves years later. One of the reasons for the apparent imperviousness of these so-called monsters to bladed weapons or bullets (the reader will recall the number of Bigfoot cases in the U.S. in which high-power rifles apparently have no effect on these entities) is due to the fact that they are composed of "highly condensed atoms" such as those in plutonium.

Keel goes on to theorize that if dense, probably radioactive, atoms account for these creature's composition, it would explain why these manifestations have such brief existences in our material world. When first materialized, Keel suggests, these creatures pose no threat to humans, but as their atomic integrity deteriorates, they might easily project lethal radiation. Investigators following the trail of the Chupacabras in 1995, both in Puerto Rico and Central America, reportedly found considerably high radiation readings at the locations in which the entity staged its attacks.

Across the Mona Passage

Another puzzling streak of animal mutilations occurred in the Dominican Republic -- separated from Puerto Rico by the narrow body of water known as the Mona Passage -- three years after the Moca Vampire entered into legend. The killings took place on the Dominican Republic's border with Haiti, near the sugar-producing

region on the Bay of Ocoa, between late 1977 and early 1978. The grisly events were almost a replay of the Puerto Rican scenario: mutilations, accompanied by strange lights and bizarre creatures, tormented the cane-cutters of the town of Barahona, who claimed that a "gigantic dog" was slaying and eating domestic animals in the dead of the night. This monstrous canine possessed above average intelligence, being apparently able to enter locked pens and cages to extract the last drop of blood from its victims, which consisted largely of cats, hens and rabbits. Dominican officials scorned any extraterrestrial or paranormal suggestions, stating that the mutilations were merely "a joke in the poorest of taste" perpetrated by the poor inhabitants of this agricultural area. The fact that the locals could ill afford sacrificing their animals for the sake of a prank was deemed irrelevant.

The Dominican newspaper *El Caribe* reported in its December 18, 1978 issue that a strange animal with canine characteristics was devouring chickens, roosters, rabbits and other domestic animals: "According to the locals' beliefs, the *baca* or *dundun* (Voodoo entities) of some local merchant is responsible for the carnage. They say that it might also be an "evil spirit" sent by a rural warlock, or a witch who broke her covenant with the Dark Powers and is roaming through the night."

A ghostly entity was in fact reported in the wake of the Barahona mutilations. Eyewitnesses to its activities described it as having the body of a long-haired woman clad in black, but with her mouth, eyes and nose appeared to be covered "by something resembling cotton" (ectoplasm?).

The mutilations were closely followed by a number of "occupant" sightings as the flap reached its peak: Cone-shaped beings were seen in November 1978 by five women in Santo Domingo, the island-nation's capital. Three creatures, twice the height of the tallest human, carrying lanterns on their abdomens, descended a steep hillside to surround an automobile that braked to a screeching halt. The automobile's headlights died as the witnesses heard sounds which they assumed were blows being inflicted upon the vehicle by the conical trio. Their terrified screams attracted the attention of neighbors, who came to their aid. Not a trace was found of the bizarre creatures, nor of the automobile they had apparently surrounded.

Wings over Miami

The city of Miami is generally associated with events of a worldlier nature. After all, we hardly need to be reminded of "Miami Vice" and its attendant fashion statements. But even the Sunshine State's largest city has not been immune to paranormal events involving strange creatures.

One such event took place on January 9, 1976: Sergio Cervera and his teenage daughter Mercedes had been driving along Miami's 9th Street at two o'clock in the afternoon when a shadow fell over their car. Thinking at first that it was merely another cloud, Cervera suddenly became aware that the shadow had a distinctly bird-like configuration, measuring between 16 and 20 feet across. Experiencing a moment of confusion, he turned to his daughter and

asked her if she had noticed anything unusual. Mercedes, rather frightened, said that she'd noticed the ghostly form of an enormous bird flying over their vehicle, and even heard the beating of its unearthly wings.

Neither Cervera nor his daughter ever saw the phenomenon again, but the former was suddenly reminded of a series of strange experiences he had undergone earlier that same week: he had been followed everywhere he went by a strange-looking man dressed in black, whom he at first thought to be a priest but without the white clerical collar. The mysterious MIB kept his distance, and quit following him precisely the day before the phantom bird incident.

Wings Across the Water

Did the Moca Vampire -- whatever it was -- migrate from country to country spreading havoc, much in the same way that its successor, the Chupacabras, would do twenty years later? No one can say for sure, but the apparition of the "Owlman" in the United Kingdom lends a certain credence to this assumption.

On April 17, 1976, June Melling, 12, and her sister Vicki, 9, saw a thoroughly strange creature flying over a church spire in Mawnan, Cornwall. June's sketch of the unusual phenomenon shows a feathered humanoid figure with a sinister face. This experience would have probably been written off as youthful imagining had it not repeated itself three months later, when teenagers Barbara Perry and Sally Chapman encountered a similar creature while camping in the woods. Sally Chapman's sketch of what she saw on the evening of July 3, 1976 became a classic of cryptozoology. The following note accompanied Ms. Chapman's description: "I saw this monster bird last night. It stood like a man, then it flew up through the trees. It is as big as a man. Its eyes are red and shine brightly."

When originally confronted with the improbable creature, both teenagers laughed, thinking someone had dressed up in an owl costume to give them a fright. All levity was dispelled when the beast flew straight up into the air, and the young women were able to see its clawed feet. The Owlman did not stage a reappearance until 1978, when an anonymous witness claimed having seen "a monster flying through the trees near Mawnan Church."

The Owlman apparently did not leave behind the same bloody trail as the phenomenon which had taken place a year earlier in Puerto Rico, but its avian quality nonetheless suggests some sort of connection with the mystery.

Conclusions

In many respects, apparitions of unknown predatory creatures appear to follow a sort of pattern which defies our understanding. As exemplified by the enigmatic hyena-like beasts seen in Egypt, it appears to be a slightly modified replay of events which can be traced as far back as medieval times. The points of contact between the Moca Vampire and the Chupacabras are too numerous to mention, but foremost among them are the unknown predator's dietary habits and the almost identical response to it by officialdom and the press. Not only were there curious coincidences (such as the similarity of surnames among the police

superintendents), but the very cyclical nature of the mutilations appeared to repeat itself twenty years later.

Both in the 1970s and 1990s, the phenomenon transcended the island of Puerto Rico to manifest itself in other countries (although descriptions of the entity, always contradictory, varied from one nation to the other) before extinguishing itself altogether. Does it then follow that in as the vernal equinox of 2015 rolls around, we will be treated to another "bout" of strange bloodsucking mutilators?

An Aeronautical History of Flying Saucers

by Manuel Carballal

[Excerpted from his book "Saucers Unveiled!", 1995]

The concept of "flying saucers" has become synonymous with that of UFO, and by logical extension, to "extraterrestrial spacecraft." The truth is that these concepts are not necessarily related.

Long before Kenneth Arnold initiated the modern age of the societal phenomenon known as UFO, there were already "flying saucers" that had little in common with spacecraft from other planets.

Any enthusiast of aviation history will have encountered sketches of "flying saucers" and discoidal aircraft more than once in aviation catalogues and publications. In his own day, Leonardo Da Vinci had already sketched the outlines of circular vehicles: war wagons, movable fortresses, and other artifacts which, had they been endowed with the power of flight, would be the perfect ancestors of our "flying saucers."

Later on, in 19th century Germany, as a foreshadowing of the Nazi saucers which have given modern ufologists such migraines, mathematician and aviation theoretician August Wilhelm Zachariae, nowadays forgotten by aeronautical history, experimented with circular wing prototypes. In 1922, Lee Richards, an Englishman, developed a circular wing aircraft in Britain which should have been able to attain speeds of 130 KMH and a taxiing speed of some 35 KMH.

During the 1930's, a number of circular wing aircraft were built in the United States, some of which would eventually confuse ufologists, who took them as evidence of UFOs which had crashed on American soil. On one hand, H. Zimmerman conducted several tests in 1932 with a variety of circular wing aircraft inside a wind tunnel in order to prove the lesser degree of distension in their extremities. The results of these tests were published in "Technical Report 431," issued by NACA (known today as NASA), producing a genuine sensation and leading to the creation of US patent 2,108,093. A practical use for them would be found later on in the "Chance Vought 173" whose maiden flight occurred in 1942.

Another of these designs, which according to German aeronautical magazines, "should have been endowed with good short-landing characteristics," was the first of the Caldwell aircraft.

A former carpenter, Jonathan E. Caldwell had learned aeronautical engineering on his own. His natural aptitude for that

discipline was such that he managed to create his very own aircraft manufacturing company. The Gray Goose Company--Caldwell's enterprise--had designed at least two kinds of circular wing aircraft. One of them was a small helicopter featuring a conventional fuselage, but mounted over the cockpit was a tripod which held a large disk, four meters in diameter, with protruding gyrating blades.

The other prototype, which was by far more sophisticated, boasted a structure closely resembling that of a spool, composed of two steel-reinforced plywood frames, which resembled large cheese boxes. Both sections--designed to rotate in opposite directions and equipped with a short-bladed rotor that protruded around the edges--were separated by the pilot's cockpit, which was located near the engine bracket.

In spite of the fact that Caldwell's circular-wing aircraft test flights began in 1935, I have references from the University of Miami that indicate the same design of aircraft at least a year earlier.

In May 1949, officers of the U.S. Air Force assigned to the collection and study of UFO reports received a letter from a Maryland citizen who claimed having purchased stock in the Gray Goose Company, a small local firm engaged in building odd aircraft similar to the "flying saucers" bandied about by the press in those days. We must keep in mind that two years earlier, the psychosocial phenomenon known as UFO had kicked off on June 24, 1947.

Following up on the Marylander's claims, an Air Force team, accompanied by the Maryland Police, visited a old farm in Glen Burnie which had doubled as a hangar for Caldwell's local aeronautics firm. The remains of a pair of Jonathan Caldwell's circular-wing aircraft were discovered inside a ramshackle hut located in this suburb of Baltimore.

Apparently, his skill with aircraft did not match his business sense, and this led him to bankruptcy. The resourceful Caldwell had no problem with selling stock in his company whenever he had financial difficulties, and such disintegration led him to ruination. Around 1940, when the Maryland tax authorities began to take an interest in the engineer's file, he disappeared, leaving behind the remains of his earliest "flying saucers."

In time, researchers managed to find a man who had allegedly piloted one of Caldwell's circular-wing aircraft over Washington, D.C. ten years earlier. Based on the date of the presumptive flight and in the pilot's description, who stated that the Caldwell airplane had not risen above a few tens of meters during the span of a few minutes, the Air Force concluded that those prototypes could not be responsible for the "flying saucer" reports that were being received from all around the country. Nonetheless, the photographs of the remains found in the Gray Goose Corporation's shed, the early American prototypes of circular-wing craft, have frequently appeared in UFO books and magazines related to alleged "crashed" saucers.

The Reich's Flying Saucers

In its February 1989 issue, the German magazine Flugzeug

published the following report made by a German aviation official who, allegedly, been the protagonist of the astonishing sighting involving a "flying saucer" at the Prag-Gbell (formerly Praha-Kbely) aerodrome in 1943. The controversial report follows:

"Place of Sighting: C 14 Flight School at the Prag-Gbell aerodrome. Date of Event: August/September 1943, supposedly on a Sunday (I seem to recall there were no services on that day. The weather was good, dry and sunny. Kind of Observation: "I was with my flight comrades on the air strip, more precisely, near the school buildings, some 2000 meters away from the arsenal (located to the extreme left). See adjoining diagram.

The device was inside the hangar: a disk some 5-6 meters in diameter. Its body is relatively large at the center. Underneath, it has four tall, thin legs. Color: Aluminum. Height: Almost as tall as a man. Thickness: some 30 - 40 cm., with an rim of external rods, perhaps square orifices.

The upper part of the body (almost a third of the total height) was shrunken over the upper half of the disk. It was flat and rounded. See the attached sketch for the lower half.

Along with my friends, I saw the device emerge from the hangar. It was then that we heard the roar of the engines, we saw the external side of the disk begin to rotate, and the vehicle began moving slowly and in a straight line toward the southern end of the field. It then rose almost 1 meter into the air. After moving around some 300 meters at that altitude, it stopped again. Its landing was rather rough.

We had to leave the area while some custodians pushed the vehicles toward the hangar. Later on, the "thing" took off again, managing to reach the end of the aerodrome this time.

Afterwards, I made a note in my flight log of the members of the FFS C14 who were present at the moment: Gruppenfluglehrer (group flight instructor) Ofw. Michelsen; Fluglehrer Uffz. Kolh und Buhler; Flugschüler (flight students): Ogefr, Klassmann, Kleiner, Müller, Pfaffle, Schenk, Seifert, Seibert, Squarr, Stahn, Weinberger, Zoebeler, Gefr, Hering, Koza, Sitzwohl, Voss, and Waluda."

Certainly, even Flugzeug's editors treat the report cautiously: "the device described by these observers is antithetical to those described by Schreiber, Habermohl, Miethe, and Bellonzo with their vast basic dimensions." And these German experts cannot be mistaken, since it is known to all of those who are well-versed in aeronautics that during the history of Nazi aviation at least two circular-wing aircraft were built, and fifteen others were designed, although there remains the possibility that the object supposedly tested at Prag-Gbell was one of the prototypes destroyed by the Nazis in order to keep it from falling into Allied hands after the fall of the Third Reich.

The history of German "flying saucers," unmindful of previously mentioned antecedents such as the designs of August Wilhelm Zachariae, begins with Alexander Lippisch, who developed his Delta-winged rocket-fighter, the Me-163, since early 1939 for Augsburg's Messerschmitt, and which was later produced in a series. Lippisch also researched the circular-wing endeavors of 1940-41 in AVA's wind tunnel at Gottingen, although without

obtaining spectacular results.

Toward the late '30s, another German was also designing circular aircraft, even more interesting than the ones by Zachariae. His name was Arthur Sack, a farmer from Machern (near Leipzig). A fan of model aviation, Sack decided to put aside the speculation about "flying saucers" and get working on one such model. Although aeronautical publications such as Luftfahrht International, Air International, and RAF Flying Review published photos of this "Nazi UFO", we have no idea what inspired Sack, yet his saucer exists: It is a flat, circular aircraft, sporting the colors of the German Luftwaffe. Only two photographs with no additional details have been preserved.

The "saucer", with its impeccable military aspect, has a canopy reminiscent of the old M-109, the star of World War II fighters. The existence of a wooden propeller and a rigid spur can lead one to speculate that this vehicle was intended as a worthy opponent to the Mustangs, Thunderbolts, and popular Spitfires of the Allies.

AS6, The Story of a Nazi "UFO"

The public presentation of Sack's flying saucer took place during the celebration of the First National Contest for Air Models With Combustion Motors, held on the 27 and 28 of June, 1939 in Leipzig-Mockau (Germany).

Arthur Sack's model measured 1,250 mm and weighed 4,500 grams, powered by a built-in Kratmo-30 motor, 0.65 V and 4,500 RPM with a propeller measuring 600mm in diameter.

Those participating in the event, which was wisely held behind closed doors, had to cover a round-trip flight utilizing the simplest guidance mechanism available. Nonetheless, this early attempt at using small models for tactical reconnaissance purposes proved to be a resounding failure. Most of the models, fitted with the so-called "self-guidance device" and their respective motors, displayed their worst qualities.

The only truly remotely guided model, built by Sinn, broke down at the starting line, while another, equipped with a steam turbine built by Soll, caught fire. It was a veritable disaster.

Sack didn't escape the rash of bad luck. His "flying saucer" was unable to lift off the ground, and finally, Sack had to throw it into the air himself. After this "assisted takeoff", the model managed to perform 100 meters of stable flight, just barely reaching the finish line. Sack fine-tuned his designed following this experience in order to achieve longer, quicker flights. In spite of it all, Arthur Sack was extremely fortunate, since among the spectators to the event was General-Air Minister Udet, who was deeply impressed by the concept.

Udet became a strong supporter of the military use of "flying saucers," assigning them the role hitherto developed for barrage balloons. He promised Sack that he would "smooth the road for further research."

No sooner said than done: Arthur Sack built some additional "flying saucer" models prior to beginning the construction of a manned aircraft in the midst of the war years at the MIMO plant (Mitteldeutsche Motorwerke) in Leipzig. The final design, which

received the nomenclature of AS6, was completed at the Brandis flight shop (Flugplatz-Werkstatt) in early 1944.

The very first AS6 prototype was equipped with an Argus 10cc, 140 HP engine, and a 6.40 meters thick circular wing with a Gottinger profile. For a flight weight estimated at some 750 - 800 kgs., the wing load must have been some 25 to 30 kilos per square meter. Therefore, it almost fit within the measurement parameters of a Klemm 25D.

Finally, with the prototype already in the hangar, all that was needed was to find a pilot--which Sack was not--and begin testing.

Baltabol, the very same flight leader of the ATG (formerly known as DFW) began to work on the AS6 in April, 1944. He remarked upon seeing the saucer: "The aircraft makes a very positive impression, and its external aspect is very good. However, it cannot be categorically described as a clean piece of work, taking into consideration the resources available at Brandis for its utilization."

Baltabol's statement turned out to be prophetic, as the first experiments with the "flying saucer" were burdened with complications. During the prototype's initial roll-out, both the shape and an unfortunate pedal adjustment caused the rudder and the brake to fail. A crack in the spur put a premature end to this early attempt.

In the April 1979 issue, Lufthart International, the German aeronautical magazine, detailed the first test flights by the Nazi flying saucer.

"The spur was strengthened later on by a steel rail in the fashion of a faired beam, and as soon as the pedal was relocated to a more convenient position, the test flight took place. Baltabol attempted five takeoffs from the 1.2 Km runway at Brandis, but the rudder was extremely hard. The right strut on the landing gear cracked during the final effort."

Upon examination of this problem, the pilot's advice regarding the transference of the landing gear some 20 cm. to the rear was implemented, a move that required reinforcement of the aircraft's rear. But in the end, the measure would be redoubled, since the builders believed that the landing gear should be moved back by 40 cm., which would cause the prototype's nose to tip forward, and Baltabol refused to accept the responsibility for a takeoff under such conditions, particularly considering the subsequent changes effected to the rudder and the braking pedals.

In spite of these and other modifications, the AS6 did not take off on its following test: after rolling down the runway some 600 meters, the aircraft's nose showed no inclination whatsoever to lift off the ground.

New modifications were made and a new attempt was executed. This time, the saucer would roll to the runway's maximum length of 700 meters in total calm (there was no wind). When Baltabol accelerated, the AS6 picked up speed and after 500 meters down the runway, its landing gear lifted off the ground. The Nazi saucer had made its first leap into space.

However, the illusion was as brief as the leap itself. The aircraft touched down once more, and after several pilot-

controlled bounces, Baltabol decided to forgo the takeoff attempt upon seeing the end of the runway grow dangerously near. For the following test, Baltabol took advantage of lift forces, causing the machine to roll at a greater angle, thus obtaining a longer--but not higher--skyward jump. A sequel to the test, conducted the same day, did not meet greater success, since the propeller gave the vehicle a strong inclination which interfered with its movement.

According to Lufthart, Baltabol suggested that a new series of wind-tunnel experiments be performed in order to calibrate the vehicle's exact flight and takeoff characteristics. Later on, it would be another pilot, Franz Rosle, who would test Sack's flying saucer in the summer of 1994, although he too would experience certain difficulties, such as a new crack in the landing gear.

The harried final month of the war surprised the Brandis field, interrupting testing on the AS6. From that moment onward, the prototype's story is lost amid the confusion of the armed conflict. Nonetheless, Lufthart points out that in the fall of that very same year, a flying saucer was sighted over the Neubiderg aerodrome, near Munich. There exists the possibility that this UFO was proof that the AS6 had finally overcome all its technical setbacks.

In any case, the AS6's complex history, from a model imagined by a German farmer to its manufacture as a Nazi military prototype, constitutes a fine example of the existence of "flying saucers" half a century ago, which bore no relation whatsoever with alien spacecraft...and it wasn't the only one.

The Myth of the Wonder Machines

In 1959, German publishing house J.F. Lehmanns Verlag, based in Munich, was publishing the third edition of Die Deutschen waffen und geimwaffen en des 2 Weltkriegs und ihre Weiterentwicklung (Germany's Weapons and Secret Weapons of the Second World War and their Later Development). The author of this German manual was Major Rudolf Luser, who devoted a section of the chapter entitled "Special Devices" to Nazi saucer designs.

Among other things, Luser declared: "German scientists and researchers took the first steps toward such flying saucers during the last war, and even built and tested such flying devices, which border on the fantastic. According to information confirmed by experts and collaborators, the first projects involving "flying discs" began in 1941. The blueprints for these projects were furnished by German experts Schriever, Habermohl, Miethe, and the Italian expert Bellonzo.

"Habermohl and Schriever chose a flat hoop which spun around a fixed pilot's cabin in the shape of a dome. It consisted of steerable disc wings which enabled, according to the direction of their placement, in horizontal takeoff or flight. Miethe developed a kind of disk 42 meters in diameter, to which steerable nozzles had been attached. Schriever and Habermohl, who had worked together in Prague, took off on 14 February 1945 in the first "flying disc." They attained a height of 12,400 meters in three minutes and a horizontal flight speed of 2000 KMH. It had been expected to reach speeds of up to 4000 KMH.

"Massive initial tests and research work were involved prior to undertaking the manufacture of the project. Due to the high rate of speed and the extraordinary heat demands, it was necessary to find particular materials in order to resist the effects of the high temperatures. Project development, which had run into the millions, was practically concluded by the final days of the war. All existing models were destroyed at the end of the conflict, but the factory at Breslau in which Miethe had worked fell into the hands of the Soviets, who seized all the material and technical personnel and shipped them to Siberia, where successful work on "flying saucers" is still being conducted.

"Schreiber was able to leave Prague on time, but Habermohl must be in the Soviet Union, since nothing more is known concerning his whereabouts. The aged German builder, Miethe, is in the United States developing, it is said, "flying saucers" for the A.V. Roe Company in the U.S.A. and in Canada..."

These daring and questionable statements by Major Lusar, which were written in the midst of the European flying saucer craze of the Fifties, have fired the imaginations of many ufologists. However, it is our duty to point out that experts in aeronautical history have severely criticized these paragraphs, such as the critique which appeared in the May-June 1975 issue of Luftfahrt International.

The myth about Schreiber's "flying top" and the other fantastic discoidal aircraft designs quoted by Lusar would have no currency whatsoever, were it not for the large number of journalistic references from that time which allude to such vehicles. While it the "magical" technology of the "flying tops" described by Lusar is incompatible with the fits and starts to get the AS6 airborne, it would be absurd to utterly deny their existence as a result of contradictory names and dates of the different journalists who dealt with the matter. It is enough to read a chronicle of a given modern event in five different newspapers to find an endless number of contradictions.

W.A. Harbison, author of Genesis, documented his tale with personal research in West German archives and periodical libraries, discovering large amounts of press and magazine clippings, all dating to the Fifties, concerning Rudolf Schriever and his astonishing discoidal designs.

To this end, we questioned Justo Miranda, an aviation historian and model-maker with 20 years' experience, founder of the A Escala modelling magazine and an expert on terrestrial UFOs.

Miranda confirms the fact that the Germans indeed built several saucers. "The first one among them to fly was a conventional vehicle (the AS6 V 1 described earlier), which was powered by a propeller motor, and taxied up and down the runway without ever taking off in April 1944. This low level of performance shouldn't surprise us, since Professor Alexander Lippisch, in cooperation with Messerschmitt, demonstrated in 1941 that circular wings (profile K 1253) had very low aerodynamic performance. On the other hand, Johnson and Caldwell, in the United States, unsuccessfully built similar devices in 1935-36 (they went bankrupt).

"They tried again during wartime with the U.S. Navy's Chance

Vought XF5U-1, which was rejected for active service in spite of the addition of all kinds of rudders which shattered the circular wing principle. Aerodynamically speaking, circular wings aren't efficient. A half-moon or capital "D" shape, with the flat part toward the back, is much better. There can be no doubt about it.

"But there exists another path. The Germans discovered through the use of the rotating wing vehicle, which is in essence an autogiro with a multibladed propeller, some of them touching others, forming a perfect circle and linked together by an outer ring and a fixed central dome.

"The tube that emerges from the lower part is the jet exhaust, which could be moved to maneuver in mid flight (like squid do). Blade rotation was accelerated and aimed upward for take-off. Upon acquiring speed--and tremendous inertia--the blade angle was changed from -3 to +3 degrees, and the device would take off all of a sudden. There was no need for a system to maintain the cockpit stationary, since the blades rotated independently, with no torsion factor as is the case with autogiros.

"The prototype flew in the Prague aerodrome in 1943. It was a very promising design and its only flaw was its flight control. It seems that the final version had two engines: one with a steerable double exhaust over the disc itself and another underneath it.

"I believe they would have managed to control the differential flow of the four jets to obtain some rudimentary form of control, but without the use of computers, they would have not managed this before the war's end.

" Closing the blades with an angle of zero to form a continuous surface, the device would have been able to attain "high subsonic speeds" (about 0.8 Mach) and a considerable altitude. In a preliminary computation, a wing 30 meters in diameter with two HeSO11 jets would reach a height of 25,000 meters without any loss of control. An impressive reconnaissance craft, and a long range bomber as well! But not the wonder machine that ufologists would have at be...

Justo Miranda's expert analysis lead to a variety of paths of reflection. To Miranda and other aeronautical experts, putting aside the exaggeration and mystifications of conspiracy-minded ufologists, it is a fact that the Germans indeed built "flying saucers" and other surprising aircraft destined to change the course of history.

After the Nazi capitulation, the allies made off with documentation enabling them to reconstruct scientifically, and even technologically construct, revolutionary aviation prototypes designed by the German air force during World War II with the intention of changing the aircraft concept. The "Miracle Fighter", for example.

The Miracle Fighter

The fantastic Focke-Wulf "miracle fighter" is one of the few German secret designs which was developed into publicly acknowledged military airplanes.

Its story begins in 1942. German aeronautical research records for that year include a report by the Aerodynamic Testing Center in Gottingen, entitled "The Flying Wing". In this report,

authors E. Von Holst, D. Küchermann and K. Solf examined the possibility of conceiving an aircraft that would combine the propulsion and lifting bodies, based on the flight of dragonflies as a source of inspiration. The original idea called for a powerful, fuselage-mounted propulsion engine to power two wide-diameter, inverse-rotation propellers. The lightweight and simple turboprop engine had not yet been developed. As Carlos Simó correctly points out in the Encyclopedia Más Allá de los Ovnis, such a vertical take-off device could revolutionize German aeronautics.

In the fall of 1944, the "miracle fighter" project had been calculated with great detail, and when compared to other fighters from the same time period, it should have had extraordinary flight performance: 1000 KMH had been calculated as its maximum ground speed, and some 840 KMH at an altitude of 11,000 m.. The initial elevation speed would be 25 meters per second, which would be reduced to 20 meters per second at cruising altitude.

Setbacks in the development of the propellers, according to Sengfelder, and the utter defeat of the Germans, kept this most interesting aircraft from ever making it off the drawing board. The blueprints fell into American hands, who realized in June 1945 that an advanced fighter was about to be born. These documents were stamped SECRET and the ramjet-powered wing was never officially built.

Nonetheless, in spite of the belief that the miracle fighter was never officially developed, the fact is that the U.S.--ultimate destination of the information liberated from the Nazis--built at least two aircraft suspiciously similar to the revolutionary German project.

These were the Lockheed XFV-1 "Tailsitter" and the Convair XFY-1 "Pogo", both equipped with fixed wings. In either case, propulsion was provided by means of a 5,850 HP Allison YT40-A-14 turbine, and two reverse propellers 4.8 meters in diameter. Although test flights could be completed with relatively favorable results, the U.S. Navy was not interested in "tail take-off" and the project was abandoned. This is, at least, the official story.

UFOs or Prototypes?

On December 13, 1944, the South Wales Argus published a surprising article which read: *"The Germans have built a secret weapon coinciding with the holiday season. The new device, which appears to be an aerial defense weapon, resembles the glass ornaments used to decorate Christmas trees. They have been seen suspended in the air over German territory, sometimes alone, and sometimes in groups. They are silver in color and appear to be transparent."*

Soon after, on January 2, 1945, it was the New York Herald Tribune who stated the following: *"It seems the Nazis have sent a novelty into the night skies over Germany. These are the strange and enigmatic spheres known as Foo Fighters, which run along the wings of Beaufighter aircraft and secretly fly over Germany. For more than a month now, pilots have encountered these seemingly-unknown wonder weapons in their nocturnal flights. The fireballs appear all of sudden, follow airplanes for kilometers at a time,*

and according to official reports, appear to be guided from the ground by radio."

These fireballs described by the news media of the time are known to ufologists as "Foo-Fighters," and Allied pilots considered them to be, at the time, some sort of Nazi secret weapon.

In 1968, Italian author Renato Vesco published his classic Intercept-But Don't Shoot, in which he states the theory that UFOs are secret earthbound weapons. In his book, Vesco also takes on the tricky "Foo-Fighters," presenting several sightings and developing his theory concerning secret weapons: "On November 27, 1944, in the vicinity of the German city of Speier, pilots Giblin and Clerry ran across an enormous, glowing orange light which flew, at a speed of nearly 500 miles an hour, just scant meters over their fighter..."

"At 0600 hours on December 22, at an altitude of ten thousand feet, near Hagenau, two very large and glowing orange lights rose quickly from the ground and straight toward us. Once airborne, they followed our airplane under perfect control (by ground controllers). Their fire seemed to extinguish as they headed off." The remainder of this report is censored. Evidently, it discussed the unforeseen "illness" of the on-board radar.

Two nights later, the same pilots crossed the Rhine and were surprised by a flaming red ball that suddenly "turned into a sort of airplane whose upper half was built like a wing. It then glided away and vanished." Other censored paragraphs follow.

Based on the report of flight officers like these, and the fact that the Allies discovered components of the Feuerball, Vesco believes that such cases are no way natural phenomena, electrostatic or atmospheric (St. Elmo's Fire, globe lightning, etc.) Kicking off from this premise, Renato Vesco identifies the Foo Fighters with secret antiradar weapons.

"In the fall of 1944, an experimental center sponsored by the Luftwaffe at Oberammergau, in the Bavarian Alps, should have finished research on electrical devices capable of interfering with running engines at a maximum distance of 30 meters by means of intense electromagnetic fields. Damaging the ignition circuits of an airplane engine would have caused the vehicle to fall from the sky. To make the invention efficient and practical, German technicians hoped to at least triple the useful radius of the weapon, but by the time the war was over, experiments to this end were barely even on the drawing boards.

"Meanwhile, as a subproduct of this research for immediate military use, another center under the joint control of the Speer Ministry and the S.S. Technical High Command had adopted the concept of "radio proximity disturbances" of interference on the much more delicate and vulnerable electronic devices found on American fighter planes.

"This, a round, shielded flying machine was born, more or less similar to the shell of a large turtle. It flew by means of a special jet engine, also flattened and circular, reminiscent of Hiero's Aeolipile, and generating a great halo of luminous flame. It was both unmanned and unarmed. Radio-controlled up until takeoff, the device would then automatically follow enemy

aircraft, attracted by their exhaust fumes and approaching them without colliding, which was enough to throw their radar equipment into disarray.

"The flaming peripheral halo was obtained by means of a very "rich" combustion and chemical additives which intensely ionized the atmosphere near the airplane, subjecting on-board radar to powerful static fields, generated by large shielded klystron radio tubes which provided special anti-collision and anti-thermal protection.

"A metallic arc flowing with alternating current in the proper frequency (in other words, equal to those used by the radar station) can block the blips--the return signals appearing on the screen. The Feuerballs, while visible at night, practically eluded the reach of the most powerful American tracking devices of the time.

"The device's builders hoped that Allied aviators, once the "harmlessness" of the luminous globes had been determined, would abstain from opening fire on them out of fear of being engulfed in the aftermath of an explosion. In fact, on more than one occasion, American pilots believed that there was some German technician on the ground with his finger poised on a button, ready to make the Foo Fighter blow up.

"The Feuerball project was originally started at the Wiener Neustadt aeronautical installations, with the collaboration of Flugfunk Forschungsanstalt (FFO) in Oberpfaffenhoffen for missile guidance (*but was it really a missile?*). The first witnesses of the device's early test flights, not yet equipped with its electronic gadgetry, stated that "...by day, it resembled a luminous disc spinning around its own axis, and looked like a burning balloon at night."

"Hermann Goering inspected the project several time, because he expected--as indeed happened--that the mechanical principle could result in an offensive weapon capable of revolutionizing the field of aerial warfare.

"When the Russians began advancing into Austria, construction of the first Feuerballs was apparently continued at underground workshops in the Black Forest, operating under Zeppelin Werke. The klystron tubes were provided by the Forschungsanstalt der Deutschen Reichpost (FDRP) division of Aach b. Radolfzell on Lake Constance, and later, also by Gehlberg. These latter products would be of a lower quality than the previous ones, which demanded the simultaneous use of more "Feuerballs" operating in formations."

Vesco's information on the Feuerballs is obviously disconcerting, particularly if we keep in mind that some pilots stated the balls of fire were capable of piercing through the fuselage and the cockpits of their airplanes. And more so if we consider that this same phenomenon (fire balls) has occurred in many other paranormal contexts.

While there are at least two well-know photographs of Foo Fighters taken by aviators, there also exist photos of identical "fireballs" taken during spiritist sessions at the turn of the century, during alleged Marian apparitions, in parapsychic contexts, etc. On the other hand, and according to a number of

authors, when the Allied seized Berlin they discovered that the very same Foo Fighters they considered to be Nazi secret weapons, were taken by German flyers to be American or British secret weapons, which they had also seen and photographed...

The Foo Fighter mystery, therefore, persists up to this very day, since pilots continue being assaulted by strange balls of flame. One of the most important modern cases was the one involving a commercial flight of the Spantax airline between Tenerife and Las Palmas (Canary Islands) on September 17, 1968, piloted by Cmdr. Julián Rodríguez Bustamante.

The official files on this case, which the Spanish Ministry of Defense considered Top Secret for over 25 years, were recently declassified. It is surprising to see that the phenomenon witnessed by Cmdr. Rodríguez and his co-pilot Ibáñez Rubia is described as a Foo Fighter by the Air Operations Command, when it is immediately and incorrectly related with the controversial phenomenon of ball lightning (the identification of Foo Fighters with ball lightning stems from the cooperation of two civilian ufologists with the Spanish Air Force. Their tendentious evaluations and arguments regarding this case are utterly groundless).

At the time, Cmdr. Rodríguez told me, after recounting his encounter in great detail, that he rejected the "secret weapon" explanation of his UFO sighting. Of course, I agree it's highly unlikely that secret Nazi weapons would have been tested in 1968, and over Spanish skies yet.

It seems that if Project Feuerball really existed, those wonderful secret guided weapons would have been one thing, and the Foo Fighters seen before the Second World War, and which still pursue our pilots today, would have been something else.

Postwar Flying Saucers

Some modern authors have fashioned a fantastic "conspiranoid" theory out of some myths concerning Nazi secrets, such as the building of extremely sophisticated flying saucers, the Third Reich's highly symbolic content, Hitler's esoteric education and devotions, and the legend about the Nazi Empire's reemergence after its reorganization in some other part of the world.

W.A. Habinson, mentioned earlier, wrote that: "In May 1978, at Stand 111 of a scientific expo at the Hannover Messe Hall, some gentlemen were handing out what could at first glance be construed as a conventional scientific magazine of condensed news articles, entitled "Brisant." It contained two seemingly related articles. One of them dealt with the scientific future of the Antarctic, and another discussed Germany's WWII flying saucers. The saucer article stressed all the aforementioned information (on Schreiber's "Flying Top", Miethe's vehicle, etc.), but added that the research centers for "Project Saucer" had been located in the Bohemia and Mahren regions.

"In regards to this, it should be noted that Prague is in Bohemia (it seems one of the first trial flights of these craft took place in Prague), which is more or less surrounded by the

Harz, Thuringia, and Mahren mountains. Vast subterranean research complexes existed in this region, only a few hundred kilometers from Prague.

"The article also included reproductions of detailed designs of a characteristic WWII saucer, making no mention of the designer, and claiming that they had been altered by the West German government in order to make their publication "innocuous"...added to this explanation, the anonymous author pointed out later that during WWII, such devices, whether civilian or military, had been submitted to the nearest patent office, where they were automatically considered secret (in compliance with lines 30a and 99 of the *Patent-und Strafgesetsbuch*) and taken from their owners by the research agencies of Himmler's SS. According to the article, some of these patents disappeared into secret Russian archives at the war's end. Others did the same into equally secret American and British archives. The remainder were lost along with several members of the Waffen SS and German scientists.

"Since neither the British, nor the Americans, nor the Russians will ever reveal what they discovered in Nazi Germany's secret factories, it is worth noting that in 1945, Sir Roy Feddon, one of the heads of the German tactical mission for the Aeronautical Production Ministry reported: "I have seen enough of their designs and production plans to understand that if they had managed to protract the war only by a matter of months, we would have been faced with a number of deadly elements from an entirely new form of aerial warfare." Around 1956, Captain Edward J. Ruppelt, then in charge of Project Blue Book, had stated: At the end of World War II, Germany had developed several types of airplanes and guided missiles, mostly still in the planning stages, but they were the only devices similar to the UFO phenomenon in their behavior."

One of these circular aircraft was the V-173, better known by its nickname--the Flying Flapjack.

The V-173 had already been tested in 1942 based on the ideas of Charles Zimmerman (mentioned earlier). When the saucer psychosis broke out in the U.S. in 1947, the V-173 (perfected as the XF5 U-1 later on) was blamed on all the UFO sightings made over American skies. However, the XF5U-1 prototype crashed during a test flight in 1948, and the V-173 was consigned to oblivion at the U.S. Navy Air Station in Norfolk, Virginia.

It is important to bear in mind that the UFO phenomenon kicks off in 1947, in the form we now recognize, as a result of observations made by Kenneth Arnold over Mount Rainier. Paradoxically, Arnold didn't see "flying saucers," rather, he witnessed a formation of nine boomerang-like devices, or "D"-shaped with the straight section aimed backward (the reader will recall the comments made by Justo Miranda regarding this most aerodynamic shape). It was a journalistic error that assigned Arnold the term "flying saucer." What really matters is that the saucer myth spread quickly across the U.S., and then throughout the rest of the world.

Arnold, along with subsequent authors, believed that he had witnessed some secret weapon being tested, rather than alien

spacecraft. The years following the Mount Rainier sighting were filled with scorn toward UFO witnesses and the suspicion that the U.S. government was developing new secret military aircraft.

A few years ago, a former American federal agent stationed at the Spanish-American air base in Zaragoza, provided us a video "for military use only" depicting the test flights of one of these saucer-shaped vehicles. But the story of the Canadian-American saucer had begun much earlier.

Other Postwar Saucers

Shortly after Arnold unleashed America's saucer psychosis, a former aviation official who was also a member of the 7th Air Army's intelligence service at the end of the war, told the New York press corps: "Nothing is easier to believe than that flying saucers are the later development of a psychological anti-aircraft weapon that had already been used by the Germans. During nocturnal missions over Germany, I was sometimes lucky enough to see discs or luminous globes following our formations. It was known that German nighttime fighters were equipped with powerful strobe lights on their bows or within the propeller housing (strokes which would suddenly bring their lights to bear upon the target, partly to make more visible, but more than anything, to blind the tailgunners on the bombers). Due to this, there were often alarms which caused continuous nervous tension among the crews, affecting their performance in combat. During the final year of the war, the Germans sent a certain number of guided objects (the Feuerballs or "foos") to tamper with the ignition systems on our engines and the on-board radar. American scientists have probably adapted the invention and are probably developing it to the new measures of aerial attack and defense."

This testimony in favor of the origin of UFOs as a postwar development of secret weapons was far from being the only one. On the other hand, the allusion to the concept of a "psychological weapon" is very interesting. This very same notion is featured in a memorandum from the CIA's director, released from official secrecy by FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) and the legal initiatives undertaken by Ground Saucer Watch in their lawsuit against the CIA during the '70s, seeking to obtain the agency's confidential UFO information.

On the other hand, Andreas Epp, a theoretician of vertical flight and a designer of flying saucers during World War II, and who is still alive, told a German television producer that his design had been "expropriated" and developed by Nazi engineers. Furthermore, it had managed to fly prior to the war's conclusion. Epp has two photos of his "flying saucer" in flight, taken in Vienna near the end of the war. The fact is that Epp's photographs are identical to those of any discoidal UFO seen today. Like many others, he has no doubt that flying saucers exist, but are built here on Earth.

Naturally, there is an unsoundable chasm between military saucer designs, held under the strictest secrecy, and those which were subsequently developed by civilian aeronautics.

July 9, 1953, witnessed the maiden flight of the Rolls-Royce

Thrust Testbed. The "Flying Bedstead", which provided invaluable data for the VTOL program, lifted its 3000 kg. weight vertically off the ground by means of the raw thrust provided by its escape gases. Two 427 liter tanks gave it an endurance of only 10 minutes.

Yet another example appeared in the scientific press, in 1961. It was the XR-62 Rotoplane, a VTOL aircraft (vertical take-off and landing) capable of attaining speeds of 282 KMH and as its very name indicates, depended on the rotation of its large 4-meter circular wing. The Rotoplane had a rising speed of 180 miles a minute, thanks to a 260 hp Lycoming engine permanently connected to a variable-tilt propeller. Like any helicopter, the strange circular airplane could hover in the air, and its promoter, aeronautical engineer Ben Kaufman, was hoping to develop an entire fleet for military and civilian applications in the future. The circular airplane's original design was 7 meters long, 6.7 meters wide, and 2.4 meters tall. With two engines and a cargo capacity of 50 kg., it had an overall weight of 840 kilograms. Its ceiling was of 1300 meters.

On the other hand, among the stack of papers that GSW manage to retrieve from CIA archives after the judicial process based upon the Freedom of Information Act, there were numerous references to prototypes and designs for earthly UFOs. According to these documents, Dr. Edward Ludwig told a Chilean journalist on July 13, 1950, that the "flying saucers" being seen in the U.S. reminded him of an entirely different kind of aircraft that was being developed during the years in which he worked at Professor Junker's research plant in Dessau. Needless to say, these were discoidal craft.

Another document makes reference to a patent for a "flying saucer" presented in the former West Germany in 1952 by Rudolf Schreiber (creator of the controversial "flying top"). In this instance, there is mention of a test flight made over Prague in 1942. The "Nazi saucer" would have reached an altitude of 12,400 meters in 3 minutes, and a speed of 2,200 KMH.

Mention must also be made of the disc-shaped vehicles--up to 20 meters in diameter--built in 1955 by John Searl, a British engineer, or the antigravitational technology applied to discoidal craft by Italian researcher Marcel Pages.

There are many other examples. Many of them, still experimental in the 1960's, are currently available in the commercial market: these are the "domestic saucers". But before moving on to them, and even at the risk of altering the chronological order of this synthesis of the flying saucer's aeronautical history, I think it's only fitting to return for a moment to the myth of Nazi high-technology saucers and the legends which originated the UFO phenomenon in the 1940's-1950's, as we sift through the myth itself.

Voyage to the Land of the Living Dead

By Manuel Carballal

The scene could have been derived from any suspense film. Manuel Delgado instinctively held on tightly to his television

camera as we clutched our machetes. Our vehicle was being surrounded by a dozen ebony-skinned Haitians. The *blancs*, as they derisively call Europeans, are not welcome in Haiti and we had been warned that under no circumstances should we venture into the shanty towns outside Port-au-Prince where, we were told, "there exists a 90 per cent chance of being mugged." We ignored this sage advice, of course.

After endless minutes of waiting, our guide allowed us to emerge from the car. Monsieur Balaguer, an important *bokor* -- a voodoo high priest -- would allow us to visit his *hounfor* or temple. The *hounfor* consisted in a humble wooden shack whose center contained the peristyle, the indispensable central column of every voodoo ritual, by means of which the gods or *loas* descend to earth. A filthy light bulb and seven candles enabled us to see the disquieting form of Monsieur Balaguer, a tall man with sparkling black eyes, who covered his head with a Stetson.

While our guide stated all the arguments at his disposal in order to have Monsieur Balaguer allow us to film his "she-devil" and his "zombie", we were startled by a sudden blackout. The dirty light bulb was extinguished, plunging us into the shadows, illuminated only by the seven candles around the peristyle. Balaguer greeted his "she-devil" -- supposedly located behind a mysterious metal door -- by rapping on it a few times. From the other side, "something" responded with brutal blows against the door, causing the entire temple to shake. Suddenly we were told that the *bokor* had to consult the *loas*: we looked on as Monsieur Balaguer fell into a sort of trance, being "ridden" or possessed by Bravo, one of the *loas* who shares the lordship over death and cemeteries with Baron Samedi and Baron La Croix. Subjecting us to a sort of "trial," exchanging a curious combinations of handshakes to which we instinctively responded to, Balaguer drank rum through an ear as he smoked a cigarette through one nostril.

The fact of the matter is that in Haiti, Western patterns of logic become fragile in the face of the unpredictable, incomprehensible and irrational voodoo cult -- *vodú* in the native tongue -- which originates from the *Fon* language of Dahomey, meaning "deity" or "spirit." This is the precise nature of voodoo: a spirit that envelops Haiti, influencing each and every cultural or social manifestation of this small country, the poorest of the Americas.

Voodoo Reaches the Presidency

No single cultural manifestation is longer-lasting or more influential than a country's religion. In Haiti's case, this influence becomes particularly apparent. In late 1995, when President Bill Clinton visited Haiti to supervise the "changing of the guard" -- American troops being replaced by UN peacekeepers, more than four thousand Haitians converged upon the square in front of the Presidential Palace in Port-au-Prince to witness the event. President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, restored to power thanks to the intervention of twenty thousand U.S. troops in October 1994, would preside over the event.

Bill Clinton had barely finished his conciliatory speech concerning military intervention in Haiti when a white dove landed next to his microphone. Immediately, thousands of Haitians roared

their approval and applauded in the light of such an unequivocal "sign of approval" from the gods. The Voodoo *loas* had accepted Clinton. This "innocent coincidence" made thousands of Haitians--and more importantly, secret societies like *Bizango*, who had promised to protect the country against foreigners through magic--put aside their anger against the new white invaders, respecting the wishes of the gods. Voodoo is the main power in Haiti: no one would dare contradict the wishes of the *loas*, or what is interpreted as their wishes.

From the days of Macandal, the pioneer of independence in the 18th century to the times of General Raoul Cédras, no Haitian ruler has forgotten to acknowledge the all-powerful influence of voodoo in Haiti. President Aristide was no exception. In spite of having been a Catholic priest, after an interview with several *houngans* (priests) and *mambos* (priestesses) on July 19, 1995, Aristide officially announced the construction of a great Voodoo temple within the capital. In this manner, the president equated the Voodoo religion with other "accepted" religions, granting Voodoo practitioners a "cathedral" similar to the Baptist churches, Masonic temples or Catholic parishes which are so numerous in Haiti.

Warlocks in Charge

But there was one Haitian ruler who knew how to make use of Voodoo as a political tool: the mythical and shadowy "Papa Doc," François Duvalier. In 1954, the legendary "Papa Doc" published (with Lorimer Denis) a monograph entitled *L'Evolution graduelle du vaudou* (The Gradual Evolution of Voodoo). The knowledge of Voodoo displayed in this book was evidently utilized during his political career.

As a young man, along with other Haitian intellectuals, Duvalier published a nationalist newspaper called *Les Griots*. At a time when the government torched the sacred Voodoo drums and other objects of worship as a sign of loyalty to the Catholic church, *Les Griots* revindicated Voodoo as a religion and as rebellion against American colonizers. It isn't surprising that "Papa Doc" gained the support of the traditional secret societies, and that during his 1957 campaign, the *hounfour* or Voodoo temples were utilized as his local party headquarters.

Immediately after rising to the presidency of Haiti, Duvalier named the feared *bokor* of Gonaives, Zacharie Delva, as commander-in-chief of the army, and began to revindicate Voodoo as the official religion. His personal bodyguard, a sort of "esoteric police," were the Volunteers for National Security (VSN), the feared *Tontons Macoutes* who spread terror throughout the island (the name *Tontons Macoutes* refers to an old Haitian folk tale of the "men with the sack". Misbehaving children were warned that their *tonton* -- uncle -- would take them away inside a *macoute*, a sack). All the *hounfor* who were not aligned with the Duvalier regime were locked up and rebels were persecuted. According to his biographers, "Papa Doc" ordered a special airplane to bring him the head of former rebel captain Blucher Philgènes. The man was decapitated and his head was placed in a bucket of ice. According to the rumors filtering out of the Presidential Palace, Duvalier would spend hours contemplating the head and consulting its spirit

in secret rituals.

"Man speaks, but doesn't act. God acts, but doesn't speak. Duvalier is a god." This was the thought echoing through the streets of Haiti. Papa Doc had woven around himself a terrible magical legend thanks to his knowledge of Voodoo, a legend that none dare question, and which allowed his dictatorship to flourish for decades. In fact, many peasants believed that "Papa Doc" was an incarnation of the dreaded Baron Samedi, lord of cemeteries. "They cannot have me. I am an immaterial being," Duvalier said during one of his speeches in 1963. The fact is that his legend exists to this day, and many believe that Duvalier has become a *loa*, a spirit of the *Gede* family that can still manifest itself in certain rituals...

Blood, Rhythm and Possession

We were engulfed by frantic drumbeats. The convulsive dancing of the *hounsí* --Voodoo initiates--bewitched us, and the markedly African chants and litanies overwhelmed us. The entire montage of the Voodoo ritual we were witnessing in Cachimán, near the border with the Dominican Republic, created an almost dreamlike atmosphere within the confines of Voodoo priest Manuel Sánchez Elie. Without a scrap of hesitation, one of the *houngan's* assistants delivered a powerful blade-stroke on the neck of a ram, abruptly decapitating the animal while its blood showered everyone present. The ram's head was torn from its body and offered to the gods, while two acolytes stripped the body, which would be served to the participants later. Voodoo religion is an imprecise mixture of blood, music and esthetics.

Voodoo, like Santería, Umbanda, Candomblé or Palo Mayombe, is the product of syncretism between African religions and Christianity. The ancestral beliefs brought by African slaves to the New World as their only treasure was forcibly mimetized with the saints of the Catholic onomasticon. The *orishas* and African *loas* were disguised as saints, mystics and martyrs in order that their worship could survive in a hostile world, which was that of slave-owning whites. This abstract mixture of witchcraft, paganism and christianity survives to this day.

It is said that on July 16, 1843, the Blessed Virgin materialized on top of a palm tree near the town of Ville Bonheur. The palm tree was very close to the precipices in which the Tombe River dissolves into the mist in a cascade known as Saut d'Eau, a sacred site for generations of voodooists. The Catholic Church recognized the location as a site of Marian worship, but to the Haitian people, it was really Erzulie Freda, goddess of love and beauty, who had materialized there. Since then, every July 16th, thousands of pilgrims visit Saut d'Eau to pay homage to the goddess Erzulie, although christian priests and pastors would rather believe that the pilgrimage is a form of Marian worship. The fact remains that Haiti may be 85 per cent christian, but it is 110 per cent voodooist.

In Saut d'Eau, as in any other Voodoo celebration, there is an indispensable element: possession.

A sociological study conducted on 486 societies around the world revealed that 360 of them believe in some form of possession. Haiti is a prime example. In the words of

ethnobiologist Wade Davis, "Voodoo is a democratic faith par excellence. Each believer not only has direct contact with the spirits, but really receives them within his own body." Unlike other religions, the Afrocaribbean ones do not require intermediaries between gods and believers. When the gods introduce themselves into the devotees' bodies, anything can happen: voice changes, attacks of hysteria, walking on hot coals, eating broken glass...

Haitian voodoo admits three kinds of possession: *rada*, *gede* and *petro*. The last two are the most spectacular. Petro Voodoo is the most brutal, violent and dangerous kind. The violence of such possessions has even caused the death of some worshippers who have been "ridden" or possessed by the powerful *loas* of petro Voodoo. This kind of ritual, among the least accessible in Haiti, reflect the rage, the pain and humiliation of the people, who for generations were subjected to the indescribable cruelty of slaveowners.

Haiti's Secret Societies

"A fellow diplomat was named as a witness in a trial against one of the secret societies that proliferate in the country. When he reached the courthouse to testify, there was an exhibit table upon which he could see a cauldron brimming over with the head and arm of a girl sacrificed in a magical rite by the society. My friend had to run out of the courtroom to vomit." This was the story told to us by Juan Blázquez, Spain's consul in Port-au-Prince for five years and a scholar of voodoo. Throughout his years in Haiti he had heard of many secret societies, but had also learn that penetrating them is almost impossible.

The study of Haitian secret societies represents an arduous task for anthropologists and sociologists alike. In the summer of 1976, Haitian anthropologist Michel Laguerra met several peasants who had belonged to different secret societies, but who had later converted to Protestantism and were now willing to divulge certain information. According to his sources, there are secret societies running the length and breadth of the country, each controlling a given region.

Some of these secret societies are especially feared and respected in Haiti. The Zobop terrorized the population by kidnapping in the dark of night anyone considered a traitor to the community in order to "bring them to justice" in a cruel fashion. Others, like the Bizango, uphold a sorcerous tradition that goes back to the dawn of time. Its rituals mix ceremonies extracted from old texts on witchcraft, such as the Petit Albert or the Red Dragon (which reached Haiti during the colonial period), Masonic ritual and African magical practices.

Its rules are strict, and those who betray them are harshly punished. The Bizango society, for instance, has a taboo known as "the Seven Crimes": ambition, excessive material wealth gained at the expense of relatives or subordinates, disrespect toward fellow members, seducing another man's wife, slandering others or affecting their well-being, harming the members of someone's family, and any action that impedes others from tilling the soil. An infraction of any of these could cost a Bizango member his

life...a particularly cruel and painful death by means of the poisons known for ages by Voodoo houngans and bokors.

Poisons and the Living Dead

The discussion was becoming more heated by the moment. We were trying to convince an important Voodoo priestess to let us record a *gede* Voodoo ritual in her temple. We knew that we were not welcome and the haggling about the price was adding heat to the surroundings. On another occasion, a similar discussion at another temple almost cost us our lives when nearly a hundred Haitians barricaded the door to the *hounfour*, warning us that we would not get out alive unless we paid them a thousand dollars.

While one of us argued with the *mambo*, a tall, fierce looking young man toyed with a rubber glove. He would put it on and take it off his hand with a smile on his lips. We knew exactly what he meant: at any moment, a yellowish powder could appear on his right hand, to be blown in our direction. It would represent a terrible doom--zombification. As a measure against this fate, we had drawn up a special policy which stated that in the event of dying in Haiti, no autopsies were permitted and that our bodies should be returned to Spain immediately. Death in Haiti can be far more perilous than anywhere else on earth.

Anthropologists, missionaries and industrialists who have come into contact with traditional African medicine have discovered its wonders. The knowledge of herbs, plants and jungle poisons possessed by witches, sorcerers and shamans is surprising, and this fascinating wisdom reached Haiti on the slave ships. Ethnologists and biologists who have analyzed the "magical recipes" employed by Voodoo houngans and bokors have discovered fascinating aspects, such as the substances created based upon the root of *albizzia versicolor*, used in Africa to create *ibok usiak owo* ("medicine to make people talk"), a sort of native truth serum. Or Zawda dust, employed to cause marital discord; Yoyo dust, used for the "Evil Eye"; Patchouli dust, used to cause infidelity and wreck marriages, and a hundred other "magical powders" with a number of uses and functions. But among them all, one is particularly fascinating: *Pudre* or "zombie dust."

Zombie Dust

It is impossible to discuss the mystery of zombie dust without mentioning the pioneering book by Harvard anthropologist, ethnobotanist and biologist Wade Davis, entitled *The Zombie Enigma*, a project that earned Davis his Ph.D and inspired the film *The Serpent and The Rainbow*, describing a scientist's quest for the living dead. Wade Davis began his own search for zombies in April 1982. In spite of the skepticism and even repugnance which scientists, even Haitian doctors, expressed for the myth of the "living dead", Davis and his sponsors were able to fathom a truth of great scientific interest concealed behind the veil of mystery and superstition. It wasn't the first time that a case of zombification was medically documented, but on certain earlier occasions, pretentious scientific despotism had quelled interest in such cases with derisive qualifiers such as "trickery" and "popular hogwash." If a death certificate was found for a person

walking through the streets of Port-au-Prince, it was always attributed to confusion, hoaxing or medical error. After all, everyone knows that it's impossible to return from the grave...

But the clinical histories and death certificates were not the only items in existence. Relatives and neighbors recognized the zombies. After making contact with Haitian houngans and bokors, Davis obtained access to certain Voodoo secrets, among them the making of zombie powder.

Far from being the product of strange esoteric ritual, zombification is the result of an exceptional application of natural chemistry on the bokor's part. Zombie dust is a compound based on a number of vegetable, animal and human material, which combined in the right amounts produces the most fascinating poison of Afroamerican witchery. Extracts from plants, human bones, tarantulas, poisonous toads, worms and other no less picturesque ingredients form part of the dust whose main active ingredient is the tetrodotoxine found in the Haitian blowfish, which we were able to localize and photograph with underwater cameras after various dives into Caribbean waters. The substance is a masterpiece of chemical artistry --- if improperly mixed, it will have no effect whatsoever or will cause instant death.

Once prepared, the powder is deposited on the floor of the victim's home, so that it will penetrate his skin upon stepping on it with bare skin. Otherwise, the bokor will blow it into the hapless victim's face. Shortly after, the future zombie "dies" and the bokor "steals its soul," containing it in a bottle. After burial, the bokor and his assistants go to the graveyard and retrieve the zombie from the tomb in order to sell him as a slave on the other side of the island.

Our travels took us all over Haiti -- a hellish voyage between the Dominican border and Lake Peligros that took over twelve hours by motorcycle, crossing rivers and mudholes. We were thus able to prove the horror of the possibility of being zombified, a fear that forces the decapitation of corpses, or else the nailing of corpses to the casket to impede their removal. On the road to Lake Peligros, we found that many tombs and family crypts were built directly across from the relatives' homes, in order to keep the bokor from tampering with the deceased's body and soul.

In Haiti, death is not final. Death isn't even an antonym for life. In Voodoo, both death and the dead form part of daily life, of religion, and of society. Death itself is another form of life.

Sighting at Mexico's Chiquihuite Hill

by Roberto S. Contreras

For some time now, the vicinity of Chiquihuite Hill to the north of Mexico City and its environs have been frequented by lights of bright color and metallic hues which appear to scan the ground in search of something unknown and incomprehensible to local residents. To some of these locals, these events are nothing new, since they have occurred periodically over a number of years and have even been featured in defunct publications such as *Reporte OVNI*. We recently investigated a number of object sightings in the

area which show what is probably being seen in that part of the country. This is the story.

Toward the end of November 1995, on the slopes of Chiquihuite Hill, Cuauhtepac Barrio Alto, Mr. Rodrigo Gonzales was visiting with his sister when around 5 p.m., he and his brother in law climbed up to the roof to take photos of hogs in an adjacent pen in order to show them off to potential buyers. This task was carried out without any complications and the remainder of the day proceeded as normal. It was not until the day that Mr. Rodrigo Gonzalez received his photos back from the lab that he found an object that attracted his attention: one photo showed a golden object suspended in mid-air -- an object he had never seen.

The unknown presence appears in the photo hovering over the place where the hogs are kept, a location with trees growing beside it. Gonzalez remarked that he had not seen a thing, possibly because they were thinking about other things at the moment and not in the strange objects frequently seen in the area. Fortunately, it was possible to enlarge the object in question, which has probably been seen by other residents who may provide details regarding its curious origin.

When making inquiries among people concerning these possible UFOs, we learned that small brilliant fireballs have also been reported in the area. These objects appear to be fire, and remain static for seconds or minutes prior to making sudden and incredible changes in direction. On other occasions, the objects seem to be looking for something, only to disappear as suddenly as they appeared.

All these events have been taking place for a number of years in the vicinity of Chiquihuite where a growing number of witnesses have had encounters with these probable or possible extraterrestrial objects.

During the course of another investigation carried out in the area, we managed to interview Mr. Jaime Espinoza, who photographed what could well be another of these unusual objects pursuing unknown activities in the aforementioned hill. This is how the witness managed to take the photograph in question: in February 1996, Mr. Espinoza was on his rooftop. It was around noon and his purpose for being there was to test a new reflex lens he had acquired for his camera, hoping to photograph a number of objects at a distance from his present location. It is important to note that Mr. Espinoza is not a professional photographer, although he is a shutterbug, and while he is well versed in the UFO phenomenon, nothing having to do with that subject even crossed his mind at the time.

Using an Olympus SLR camera with a 70-210mm zoom lens, and a 3X teleconverter (which triples the focal distance, he proceeded to take a number of photos of certain objects, varying the f-stops and speed of his shots. One of these test shots included the Chiquihuite Hill, whose slopes can be seen from his home. Just as he took his maximum close-up shot, he managed to capture "a strange object" at its summit. This putative UFO was flying over

the treeline in broad daylight, and parabolic antennae are even visible at one end of the photo. Unfortunately, photographs taken with this procedure diminish the quality and clarity of the images taken, but the object was nonetheless recorded in Mr. Espinoza's film. He told us that he had no idea what the object could be, but it puzzled him that such an thing would appear at that precise moment in a location in which UFO's are frequently seen.

We are merely presenting the investigation of these sightings and are not qualified, nor do we feel qualified, to confirm or deny that UFO's were in fact photographed here (as certain researchers haughtily do, categorically confirming or rejecting cases, as the great authorities of space related matters that they are). You, friend reader, compare, analyze, research, and of course, doubt. Do it openmindedly and without bias. Perhaps that way we shall reach a logical answer leading us to believe that we are not alone in this vast universe.

The UFO Phenomenon in China

by Salvador Freixedo

As was the case in Russia following Perestroika and Glasnost, there is a similar process underfoot in China since that country's opening to the West: more information has been known about this country's UFO activity over the past two years than for the past fifty. While writing openly about such a sensitive subject is still not possible, the fact is that the number of publications and influential persons discussing the subject candidly is on the rise.

Sightings of strange objects over Beijing have been the strongest motivator of public interest in China and have to some degree forced official interest in the subject. One afternoon in 1965, the eight million inhabitants of the Chinese capital witnessed two shiny discoidal objects fly over the city. Military authorities were alarmed to see their airspace invaded by a device resembling a luminous red balloon issuing rhythmic red flashes. The orb flew over the capital city at a prodigious speed before making a sudden stop and remaining motionless for a spell. It then resumed its trajectory, vanishing into the horizon. After this second incursion, public conjectures died down, since everyone agreed that the objects must surely be espionage devices belonging to another country. To quell these rumors, the government was forced to admit that it had created a UFO Study Group. Aside from the Beijing sightings, other events were taking place in a variety of provinces. Due to a lack of photographs, which were virtually nonexistent in a land where cameras were until recently considered "a bourgeois object worthy of decadent societies," there exist a number of drawings which show the numerous sightings which ahve occured in that locale.

While the barriers which separate us from China are even greater than those which separated us from the USSR, there is always someone willing to cross them: in this event, the person in question is Moon Wai, whose activity is aimed at making Chinese

ufologica better known in the West. He was born in Canton in 1928 and currently resides in Oakland (California) where he has adopted the name of Paul Dong.

Here are some cases:

Autumn 1947. When Long Guangda was twelve years old, he managed to see, in the company of his father, a spiral shaped object moving through the air and issuing an orange glow.

July 25, 1957. Five workers at the Huangshi blast furnace witnessed a glowing discoidal object which crossed the sky slowly at five o'clock in the morning.

July 1977. Mr. Lu Jiaju, an employee of the Puxing tank farm, was the astonished witness to a circular object composed of concentric rings, oscillating slowly over the facility.

August 1977. Wang Zen witnessed a strange object along with many others while waiting in a theatre queue. "It issued light smoke rings toward the ground and rotated very slowly."

October 23, 1977. Taken from Liu Qinchuan's written report: "We saw an object spinning like a ball in mid-air and moving at considerable speed. Everyone was looking at it."

Fall 1978. Xiao Ying, of Yuanlong, Jianxi Province, told authorities the following: "While walking with my family along a mountain near my home, we saw a huge disk shaped object which passed right over us, spinning and giving off a bluish glow."

October 1978. Several dozen military pilots and hundreds of employees at Gansu airport were surprised by the sudden appearance of an immense cylindrical object over an open-air theatre, flying over their heads at a low altitude. A powerful beam of light shot out of its bow and a similar one issued from its stern.

December 1979. On the Lanxi highway, Zeijiang Province, Wang Jianming and Wang Dingyuan, driving separate trucks, ran into two diminutive beings illuminated by a cone of light. When one of the drivers got out of his vehicle, wielding an iron bar and willing to confront the entities, these suddenly vanished and the cone of light disappeared.

June 1980. Zao Baovez and several professors at the Electronics Institute on the outskirts of Beijing witnessed an object some ten meters in diameter, which left a small wake and travelled at the speed of an airplane.

July 30, 1980. Several students at Nanking's Yanjiajing Institute witnessed a triangular object that emitted a blue light and travelled silently.

August 26, 1980. The crew of the cargo ship "Quin Fen" saw an unusual celestial phenomenon while cruising the China Sea east of the port of Lian Yun Gang.

September 9, 1980. Luo Xuezhi, political secretary at a Diesel engine plant in Hunan focused his binoculars on a cylindrical object while enjoying an outdoor theatre presentation. "All present turned their heads to look at it," he said. It emitted powerful beams of light at either end, much like the object seen at another open-air presentation in 1978.

February 19, 1981. A cyclist from Hang Zou (Zeijan province) saw a noisy and strange object in a canyon adjacent to some mining works. The sound was also heard by the residents of a nearby

village who were unable to see the source of the din.

July 24, 1981. Hundreds of thousands of onlookers witnessed an enormous luminous spiral which crossed the skies of several provinces.

October 12, 1981. This object was seen by two grade school instructors in the Ya district (Guadong). It flew silently at the speed of an airliner at issued multicolored rays.

Ex Libris
A Random Sampling of Hispanic Ufology in Print

La Noche de Mi Encuentro con Extraterrestres by Amaury Rivera. Mexico: Editorial Diana. Phone - [525] 575-0711. 211 pages. Paperback.

This book retells the beginning and the aftermath of one of the most controversial cases to ever rock the Spanish-speaking UFO community. What exactly happened to Amaury Rivera in May 1988? Was in fact abducted by non-human forces and given a terrifying view of the future, or was he simply creating his experiences out of this air, as his detractors have charged?

This book will not answer either of these questions. Ghost-written by Miami-based author Manuel Figueroa, La Noche... is a straightforward retelling of the experiences discussed elsewhere and the very interesting aftermath of the experiences. UFO critics will notice that the book hearkens back to the early days of contacteeism á la George Adamski and has elements of more contemporary contactee chronicles from South America and Europe. It is not known at this time if Rivera's book will be translated into English. Rating: ★

UFOs: A Great New Dawn for Humanity by Enrique Castillo Rincón (translated from the original Spanish by Hugo A. Castro) Blue Dolphin Publishing, 1997. 256 pages. Softbound. \$19.95

Eduardo Castillo's encounter with humanoid aliens from the Pleiades ranks among the greatest stories of Latin American ufology (who cares if the Pleiades are too hot to have planets of any kind orbiting them?) for the sheer logic of what is clearly a contactee experience. Unlike 99.5 % of contactees, Castillo was given no discernible message to impart to the rest of the ignorant human flock and was treated to several trips by saucer to a number of locations. His experiences were allegedly found so interesting that by the U.S. government that he was whisked off to Washington D.C. to undergo a series of "tests".

What strikes the reader most is the innocence and lucidity of Castillo's ostensibly impossible claims. The reader is drawn into the story and is able to accept it at face value despite the fact that a little voice in the back of his or her head is shouting "put the book down!". Castillo's candid retelling of his experiences with his extraterrestrial host "Cyril" and an experience at a "camp" for contactees in the Andean highlands of Peru -- staffed by a variety of humanoid aliens, some of them veritable giants -- are a must read for the most hardened skeptic. Inexplicata gives this one ★ ★ ★.

Dr. Rafael A. Lara's
MEXICO WATCH

Contactee Carlos Diaz and the Sounds of the Light Beings

We were the first to say so: Mexico shall never have a generation of researchers and theoreticians like Vallée, Persinger, Schwarz or others, since "official" research is in the hands of charlatans, yellow journalists and UFO merchants.

Carlos Díaz, who can fairly lay claim to being this country's most popular contactee given his close ties to Jaime Maussan as well as to the TELEVISA media outlet, has launched his new musical CD entitled *Todos Nosotros Podemos Salvar al Planeta* (We Can All Save the Planet). Said release took place on May 30, 1997 at the auditorium of the Centro Medico Nacional Siglo XXI in Mexico City with the presentation of the video *Ovnis: la Otra Realidad* (UFOs: The Other Reality).

The CD in question contains the following melodies: "Bernal", "Tepoztlan", "Teotihuacán", "Monte Albán", "Amatlán" and others. The musicians appearing on this musical effort are all New Age performers including veteran singer Johnny Laboriel and the entire Díaz family. The liner notes indicate: "...Carlos Díaz was invited to know this ship of light, from which he was shown that our Mother Earth is in her death throes. This music was inspired by the marvelous energy which has reached our planet to motivate us so that we may all save the Earth, our only home..."

This production, priced at \$70.00 NP (U.S. \$10), had a run of 3 million copies. According to Nina Castillo Velazco, the album's main promoter, "this music will undoubtedly put you in touch with the beings of light who watch over us and care for us in these dark times (?)..."

It is depressing that at this stage of UFO research a country such as Mexico should have its investigative activities in this field fall into the hands of opportunists seeking personal gain. We are in complete disagreement with this attitude and with the statements made by Augusto Hernandez, an alleged "computer expert" who claims that the frequency at which the Tepoztlan UFO vibrates is similar to a musical note (shadows of CE3K?). I was not wrong when in Samizdat Special Reports Mexico 1995 and 1996 I discussed the nebulous activities of these alleged contactees. Therefore, I shall repeat my original statement: the stage is set, the actors have taken their places, but what will be the first act?

Dr. Rafael A. Lara's
MEXICO WATCH

The MIB in South America: A Sampling of Cases

In spite of the dismal theatrical release with the classic Hollywood overtones, the phenomenon of the "Men-in-Black" represents a bona fide mystery within those associated to the UFO phenomenon. On this occasion, we present our dear readers with some little-known cases corresponding to this highly unusual phenomenology.

In 1967, the wave of apparitions which stunned Argentina, Chile, Brazil and Uruguay with over 110 UFO sightings in a space of 24 hours on June 24th alone, was preceded by a singular MIB event: four days prior to the June 24th "night of lights", a man dressed in black showed up at the newsroom of Cordoba, Argentina's "Los Principios" daily, where he dropped off a letter addressed to the editor stating that before the week was out, the Southern Cone would experience a massive fly-over involving hundreds of extraterrestrial craft. The day before the sightings began, the newspaper received a strange phone call stating: "Attention, it will begin at any moment..." The UFO flap began almost immediately, but the strange MIB remained anonymous.

The famous "Cobrea Case", which took place in the eponymous city in Argentina's Santa Fe province, captured the attention of that country's media. During several days in August 1968, witnesses observed strange lights moving around the sky and no less enigmatic reflections being seen in the remotest areas of the wilderness. Local residents were surprised to find considerable amounts of burnt grass and earth with huge toadstools growing around them. Several animals -- small dairy cattle -- also turned up dead, apparently as a result of radiation exposure. Nonetheless, the most interesting experience was that of the Rodriguez family, who witnessed a Jeep carrying four men (2 of them dressed in blue coveralls, the other 2 dressed in black) drive along the only access road to the property. One of the men asked the landowner where they could find an exit, and the startled Mr. Rodriguez asked them how had they gotten there in the first place! There were, in fact, no tire-marks on the ground, nor had the barbed-wire fence surrounding the perimeter been cut. The owners of neighboring fields later told police that they had not allowed the transit of such outlandish characters and their vehicle through their own fields. Curiously enough, after the Jeep-driving MIB departed, UFO activity in the area came to a complete halt.

In 1971, two physicians -- Arguello de la Mota and Antonio Arocha -- were in San Juan de los Morros, a small town not far from Caracas, Venezuela when they were startled by the unexpected arrival of two characters dressed in black who drove into the dusty town in a sporty Mustang. Unaware that they were being watched, the MIB exchanged remarks and donned orange-colored belts. Suddenly, a brilliant object appeared in the sky, descending rapidly to the surface. The physicians, swore that the object was a 60-foot wide disk-shaped craft which produced a parabolic ladder while hovering inches off the ground. The MIB entered the vehicle, which rose into the skies and vanished out of sight (no information is available on the fate of the brand-new sports car they left behind). The story was circulated worldwide by United Press International.