

A STRANGE STORY FROM BRAZIL

by **JULES LEMAITRE**

IN the previous issue of *FLYING SAUCER REVIEW* I commented upon certain conclusions to be drawn from that remarkable book *Flying Saucers and the Straight Line Mystery*. Some readers have misunderstood my article, for they seem to have gained the impression that I had said that the saucers were hostile. On the whole I do not think so, but I do think that many of the incidents reported (and authenticated) tend to indicate that they are not necessarily friendly—which is not the same thing as being hostile. A gardener who steps back from weeding and crushes the life out of a beetle he has failed to observe cannot be dubbed hostile to the beetle. At the moment of impact he would have been unaware of its existence. When he noticed what he had done he would probably be indifferent and would return to his work without another thought. He might even never notice the remains of the insect. Also, it is not true to say, as some correspondents seem to think, that I reject Adamski and others out of hand. Here the readers seem to have confused my views with those of Aimé Michel, as expressed in his epoch-making book.

Sleeping garrison

In the September issue of *The A.P.R.O. Bulletin*, published in New Mexico, there appears a sensational account by Dr. Olavo T. Fontes of a terrifying incident in Brazil. Dr. Fontes would seem to think, with many of the readers of my former article, that there is no mid-way between hostility and amity, for he heads his article 'Friends or Foes?' I would suggest that an indifference similar to that of the gardener in my analogy might better explain what happened in the story that follows:

"On November 4, 1957, at 2 a.m., something sinister took place at the Brazilian Fortress Itaipu. This fortress belongs to the Brazilian Army and was built along the coast of Sao Paulo state, at Sao Vicente, near Santos.

"It was a moonless tropical night. Everything was quiet. The whole garrison was sleeping in peace. Two sentinels were on duty on top of the military fortifications. They were common soldiers, they did not know that saucers existed. They were performing a routine task, relaxed because there was no enemy to be feared. Then a new star suddenly burst into searing life among the others in the cloudless sky, over the Atlantic Ocean, near the horizon. The sentries watched the phenomenon. Their interest increased when they realised it was not a star, but a luminous flying object. It was coming toward the fortress. They thought at first that it was an airplane but the speed was strange—too high. . . . There was no need to alert the garrison, however. In fact, so tremendous was the object's speed that the two soldiers forgot their patrol just to observe it. It was approaching rapidly.

"Eerie orange glow"

"In just a few seconds the UFO was flying over the fortress. Then it stopped abruptly in mid-air and drifted slowly down, its strong orange glow etching each man's shadow against the illuminated ground between the heavy cannon turrets. It hovered about 120 feet to 180 feet above the highest cannon turret and then it became motionless. The sentries were frozen on the ground, their eyes wide with surprise; the tommy guns hung limply from their hands like dead things. The unknown object was a large craft about the size of a big Douglas [airplane], but round and shaped like a disk of some sort. It was encircled by an eerie orange glow. It had been silent when approaching, but now, at close range, the two sentries heard a distinct humming sound coming from it. Such a strange object hovered overhead and nothing happened for about one minute. Then came the nightmare. . . .

"The sentinels were startled, unable to think what to do about the UFO. But they felt no terror, no premonition, no hint of the danger.

Then something hot touched their faces (one of them thinks he heard a faint whining sound he could not identify at that same moment). In darkness this would have been horrifying. But the UFO was bright and they could see that nothing had changed. Then came the heat. Suddenly an intolerable wave of heat struck the two soldiers.

"One of the sentries said later that, when the heat wave engulfed him, it was like a fire burning all over his clothes. The air seemed to be filled with the UFO's humming sound. Blind panic yammered at him. He staggered, dazed, heat waves filling the air around him. It was too hot. . . . He went stumbling and lurching, his whole conscious purpose that of escaping from that invisible fire burning him alive. He fought, and gasped and beat the air before him. He was suffocating. Then he blacked out and collapsed to the ground—unconscious.

Enveloped in heat

"The other sentry got the horrible feeling that his clothes were on fire. A wave of heat suddenly enveloped him. Horror filled him and he lost his mind. He began to scream desperately, running and stumbling and crying from one side to another, like a trapped animal. He did not know what he was doing, but somehow he skidded into shelter, beneath the heavy cannons of the fortress. His cries were so loud that he awoke the whole garrison, starting an alarm all over the place.

"Inside the soldiers' living quarters everything was confusion. There was the sound of running footsteps everywhere, soldiers and officers trying to reach their battle stations, their eyes wide with shock. No one knew what could explain those horrible screams outside. Then just a few seconds later, the lights all over the fortress collapsed suddenly as well as the whole electric system that moved the turrets, heavy cannons and elevators. Even the ones supplied by the fortress' own generators. The intercommunications system was dead, too. Someone tried to switch on the emergency circuits but these were dead, too. The strangest thing, however, was the behaviour of the alarms in the electric clocks, which had been set to ring at 5.00 a.m.—they all started to ring everywhere, at 2.03 a.m.

"The fortress was dead, helpless. . . . Inside it, confusion had changed to widespread panic, soldiers and officers running blindly from one corner to another along the dark corridors. There was fear on every face—fear of the unknown—hands nervously grasping the useless weapons. Then the lights came on again and every man ran outside to fight the unexpected enemy who

surely was attacking the fortress. Some officers and soldiers came in time to see an orange light climbing up vertically and then moving away through the sky at high speed. One of the sentinels was on the ground, still unconscious. The other was hiding in a dark corner, mumbling and crying, entirely out of his mind. One of the officers who came first was a military doctor and, after a brief examination, he saw that both sentries were badly burned and ordered the men to take them to the infirmary immediately. They were put under medical care at once. It became clear that one of them was a severe case of heat syncope; he was still unconscious and showing evident signs of peripheral vascular failure. Besides this, both soldiers presented first and deep second-degree burns of more than 10 per cent. of body surface—mostly on areas that had been protected by clothes. The one that could talk was in deep nervous shock and many hours passed before he was able to tell the story.

"The nightmare had lasted for three minutes. . . .

"Next day the commander of the fortress (an army colonel) issued orders forbidding the whole garrison to tell anything about the incident to anyone—not even to their relatives. Intelligence officers came and took charge, working frantically to question and silence everyone with information pertaining to the matter. Soldiers and officers were instructed not to discuss the case. The fortress was placed in a state of martial law and a top-secret report was sent to the Q. G. (at Rio or Sao Paulo). Days later, American officers from the U.S. Army Military Mission arrived at the fortress together with officers from the Brazilian Air Force, to question the sentries and other witnesses involved. Afterwards a special plane was chartered to bring the two burned sentinels to Rio. It was an Air Force military aircraft. At Rio, they were put in the Army's Central Hospital (HCE), completely isolated from the world behind a tight security curtain. Two months later they were still there. I don't know where they are now.

Name suppressed

"Three weeks after the incident, I was contacted by an officer from the Brazilian Army, a friend who knew about my interest in UFO research. He was at the Fortress of Itaipu the night of the incident. He was one of those who questioned the two sentries. He told me the whole story exactly as it was described above. His name was suppressed from this report in order to protect him. The reasons are obvious; he told me