

THE ITALIAN SCENE—Part 2

The January-February FLYING SAUCER REVIEW reported that the Italian periodical *Domenica del Corriere* had conducted an enquiry into the strange stories being related in this country by numerous witnesses and contact claimants. The reporter Renato Albanesi had started his research in a sceptical frame of mind but had ended a very puzzled man. "Frankly," he said, "I no longer know what to think. Only one thing is certain: thousands of people not only believe in the saucers but are ready to swear on oath that they exist. Why? 'Because we've seen them,' they say."

CONTINUING his account of strange saucer stories, Renato Albanesi referred to Signora Germana Grosso's alleged experience as most disconcerting. It is here printed with an open mind as part of the FLYING SAUCER REVIEW's declared policy of bringing to its readers' attention as much information on the subject as possible.

"Here is the most disconcerting case that came to our knowledge in the course of our investigation. Signora Germana Grosso, who lives with her parents at 204, Corso Vittorio Emanuele, Turin, says that she receives—telepathically—extraterrestrial message emanating from Mars, Venus, Neptune and the 'Third Galaxy.' 'Just like phone-calls,' she said, during our interview with her. She types the messages directly on her machine, so accomplished are her correspondents in communicating with her. She types them for from six to seven hours daily.

"These mysterious planetary correspondents, who have given her house the name of 'Centre 7,' are not anonymous. They have names. The Martian correspondent is called ITACHAR, describes himself as the commandant of a Martian space ship, and is the most frequent and best-known of the visitors. Signora Grosso has so far from him some 60 messages, each one four sheets in length.

"The Venusian correspondent calls himself MOHAR, and the one from Neptune signs himself HORIZ and the one from the Galaxy signs himself HITAOO. The contents of these messages (which we have seen—and read) are long descriptions of life on those planets. HITAOO is the one who announces the calamities which are going to befall the Earth. Indeed, Signora Germana Grosso already knew, a month before, that we were going to have the earthquake."

The next three experiences in the series are of

the more conventional type of sightings:

"On September 10, 1962, we were received by Duke Tommaso Gallarati Scotti at his home, Villa Melzi di Bellagio. He had most courteously expressed the wish to make certain statements to us about a saucer that he had seen in October, 1957. He told us: 'I was at Prada, above Guello, where I have a small property and a few cattle. With me was Signor Vittorio Dell'Orto, from Menaggio. (We have questioned the latter by phone and he confirms the story.) Besides Signor Dell'Orto and myself there were also two cattle-dealers up there with us. Suddenly, as we were discussing our farming business, I looked up in the direction of San Primo and beheld an oblong body at a very great height. Its colour was silvery and it was travelling at a tremendous speed from north to west. Of the reality of that unusual apparition I have no doubt. And, in support of my testimony, one thing is quite sure and certain, and that is that neither I nor those with me were dreaming'."

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"The young farmer and stockbreeder Giuseppe Fenu lives in Villamassargia, an agricultural district of the Campidano (in Sardinia). He has assured us personally that on October 10, 1956, at about 10.30 p.m., he had a fantastic sighting. He was coming home from the cinema and noticed, in the completely clear but moonless sky, a luminous globe moving in a N.-S. direction. Suddenly it vanished over the horizon, and then just as suddenly three more globes appeared, in formation. 'About half an hour after this first sighting,' he continues, 'we all saw a kind of airship in the sky. It was luminous, of the apparent length of 20 metres, with an extremely luminous bluish-coloured strip running along its full extent. This strip was intersected at equal intervals by vertical

bands of a lesser degree of luminosity, like grid-holes. Then we watched something quite fantastic. The globes began to circle round the giant cigar."

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"It is useless to talk about flying saucers if you haven't ever seen one," says the 84-year-old but still hale and hearty Osmondo Prampolini, whom we interviewed at his home at 16, via Carlo Pisacane, Brescia. "To cut a long story short, I will tell you that in August, 1924, at 1.45 a.m. (i.e. just after midnight), I went into my office, the office of the Reggio Emilia Gas Company where I was at that time working as managing director, and I noticed an enormous disc, with a diameter equal to the apparent diameter of the moon. The disc was at the far end of the furnace-yard, and at the side of the road leading to the steam-boiler. And it had the same reddish colour that the moon has when it is seen rising through mist. The disc was slowly descending. It did not leave behind it the luminous tail that meteors have. I stood there amazed, unable to utter a sound. I wanted to call the firemen who were busy feeding the furnaces, but I couldn't. Meanwhile the disc, still moving slowly, vanished behind the boiler-house."

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Albanesi then relates two more alleged encounters with beings from UFOs which have landed on Italian soil:

"The case of the workman Bruno Facchini, living at Abbiate Guazzone (Varese), and the experience he had in the vicinity of the della Fornace restaurant is one of the most notable and most impressive in the history of flying saucer landings.

"Bruno Facchini is a serious man and not of the type that invents nonsense. He does not believe in flying saucers, but the description which he has given us of the machine that he encountered is detailed and alarming.

"It was at just before 10 p.m. on April 24, 1950—the night on which there had been the great storm. Bruno Facchini was returning home. Just as he was about to enter the door of his house he both heard, and saw, in the direction of the fields (his house is on the edge of the town) as it were a sputtering of sparks.

"He thought it must surely be some phenomenon due to the storm, as there is a line of electricity pylons over in that area.

"Facchini goes over to have a look and perceives a dark something, a black mass blacker than the night-sky, hanging motionless in the air, between one of the pylons and

a mulberry tree, and at a distance of some 200 metres from his house and on the left-hand side of the path along which he was walking. It is a contraption which appears to be of circular shape, but owing to the darkness he is unable to make out its precise shape. From an open hatch in the lower part of it there comes a certain amount of light. 'A being, who seemed to be a man, was on a pneumatic jack and seemed to be engaged in soldering the metal surface of the machine.' This then was the cause of the sparks that Facchini had seen from afar. The man was 'all swarthied up,' as Facchini puts it in his colourful Lombardy dialect—that is to say that the man was wearing a tight-fitting overall and had a kind of helmet on his head. There were three other beings, dressed in the same uniform, walking about round the huge thing. They were talking among themselves, but they, too, had helmets and he could make out nothing of what was being said. Then, out of politeness, Facchini asked the one who was on the jack whether he needed anything, and the individual made some sort of guttural reply, with the result that, somewhat alarmed, Facchini drew back but came up against a 'jet of compressed air' which, as he describes it, knocked him to the ground.

"The work being now completed, the hatch from which the light came was shut, and the machine rose rapidly, looming blacker than the night itself, and vanished."

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"Franco Tomassini is a young painter, who lives at 6, Guido d'Arezzo, Milan. He, too, so he writes to inform us, has had dealings with the flying saucers.

"According to his statement, he was taking photographs in the Orlandi Hills, near Pescara, and just as he was taking his twentieth picture, he noticed an object that was approaching at great speed and without any sound. 'The machine came still lower, and remained suspended at a height of about two metres from the ground. From an opening in the lower part of it there emerged a very tall individual (about two metres in height). He was wearing a rather tight-fitting overall which showed his muscular configuration. He seemed to have no stomach. He approached me and smiled at me and then, in a voice such as I had never heard before, he said to me "Occorremi acqua" (Italian for "I need water"). As he said this he showed me two containers, made of some fabric, which he produced, folded up, from a sort of pocket.'

Tomassini naturally obliged and went off to get the water for him. And the other, still smiling his ineffable smile, thanked him, saying 'I'll do a favour for a favour,' and jumped into his saucer, which took off like a rocket."

On October 28, 1962, *La Domenica del Corriere* returned to the subject with an article contributed by Dino Buzzati. He reports one of the strangest of all the stories that occurred in Verona last June:

"'I believe in them because I've seen them,' says the youth Roberto Peregozzo, aged 20, of 5, Via Abramo Massolongo, Verona, when we called upon him. Peregozzo, who has worked for the past four years as a clerk in a firm in the business centre of Verona, described for us the terrific experience that befell him and his mother, Signora Maria Peregozzo, and his 25-year-old sister Luisa, in this very same house on the night of June 26, 1962.

"The episode puts in the shade even the most terrifying tales of Poe or Stevenson. On the evening in question, which was a very hot one, Luisa and Roberto and their mother were all sitting by the open window of the bedroom in which the mother and daughter slept. All three were quietly smoking cigarettes when they perceived, above the Santa Anastasia church opposite, a silvery disc, of the size of the full moon, zig-zagging to and fro. Amazed at the strange spectacle, Roberto shouted 'Look—a flying saucer!' The saucer remained in view for about an hour. Then the two women, tired from watching it, decided to go to bed.

"Luisa sleeps on a divan near the window, her mother sleeps in a bed on the other side of the room, and Roberto in his own room. Towards 3 a.m. Luisa was awakened by a sensation of icy-cold that made her teeth chatter. 'The temperature seemed to have dropped below zero,' she said. 'Such cold! And then I saw a greenish fluctuating light invade the whole room. Before I could recover from my astonishment, I saw appear, two paces from my bed and in the rectangular opening of the window, an incorporeal being in human form, but with only the outlines hazily defined. The rest of it was transparent. It had an enormous close-shaven head. Although impalpable and, maybe, weightless, I could nevertheless see it, gigantic, with its huge legs and its huge hands extended towards me as if it intended to carry me off. It was motionless, and only its hands brushed me. It had no particular odour.'

"Luisa began to shout. Her mother woke, and herself saw the 'thing' and then fell out

of the bed in a faint. Then Roberto appeared, also awakened by Luisa's call. He came into the room, and he, too, beheld the terrifying form bathed in the greenish fluctuating light that still filled the room. Then the dreadful apparition began to recede and to grow smaller and, passing out through the window, it disappeared in a flash just like the light in a TV set when it goes out. But the freezing cold remained.

"Three months have now gone by since that amazing night, and the Peregozzos, still unable to recover their peace of mind, have decided to leave the house on the Via Massolongo and go to live in the country at a place 5 km. from Verona. The whole affair has given rise to much discussion in Verona."

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We are indebted to Miss Lou Zinsstag for sending to us the following translation of an article from the *Corriere Milanese* for December 19, 1962. The date of the occurrence was December 17.

"Martians near the Porta Magenta at Milan? —A night patrolman of the Milan police, 37 years old, was confronted with this problem. His name is Francesco Rizzi and he lives at 1, Viale Berengario at Milan. His story goes:

"It was exactly 2.20 o'clock at night when it happened. The night patrolman was about to fulfil his nightly round and at this precise moment he entered the premises of the mill 'Filatura cascami di seta' in Santa Valeria Street, a few steps away from the Sant' Ambrosio Square. It was his job to clock in and in order to do this he had to walk across the vast courtyard of the mill. 'Exactly in the middle of the courtyard I became aware of a swishing noise to the right of my neck,' said Rizzi later. 'At first I thought it was inside my ear, but then I noticed that the swish grew stronger and stronger. I therefore turned around and I beheld an incredible thing! Of course, I had read about flying saucers and Martians coming to visit us and to spy on us, and also about messages coming from other worlds, but I would never have imagined that it would fall to my lot to see such an object under my very nose. Yet there it was—just in front of me, hanging about three feet above the ground.'

"It was of a clear metal, perhaps of aluminium with silvery reflections on it; its diameter may have been 12 to 15 feet. On the top there was a turret around which were a number of dormer windows, lighted. I was paralysed and tried hard to believe my own

eyes, when suddenly the noise stopped. At the bottom of the disc a door was opened through which a little man came out, a little man of about three feet and a few inches. I could not see him very well because it was very dark in the courtyard and the man's head seemed to be absolutely black. To make matters worse he wore a kind of luminous overall which made it hard to see him clearly.

"The man had perhaps no hostile intentions. He pointed one finger towards my hand and with his other hand he gave me a sign to come nearer and not to be afraid. Yet I was completely unable to move. Soon after, another man jumped out of the disc, submerged in a

blue haze. With a commanding gesture he made a sign to the other to re-enter the disc. Suddenly the door closed behind them both, the swishing noise again started and the disc disappeared in a cloud of white smoke.

"Only after the disappearance the policeman regained command of his legs and he made good use of them. He rushed out of the courtyard to tell everything to another night patrolman. This man gave him the advice to report at once to the commander, and Rizzi did so. In order to be co-operative, a search patrol was sent at once to the spot, but the Martians had been careful not to leave a trace."

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA 'FLAP'

Civil Defence alerted

FLYING SAUCERS made a welcome return to the headlines in the United States. We are indebted to Mr. A. Heuel for having drawn our attention to the front page of the *Hollywood Citizen-News* of December 14, 1962. The headline asked boldly "Is Venus Looking Back?" for it was on that date that Mariner 2 was due to arrive in the vicinity of Venus. The full account read as follows:

Air Force Intelligence officers were investigating reported sightings of unidentified flying objects over Northern California today—unable to explain why hundreds of persons on the ground could see them while radar couldn't.

This morning's predawn unexplained activity was the largest UFO sighting in recent years, experts, who follow the subject with keen interest, said.

There was widespread interest in the sightings because they occurred coincidentally with the arrival of Mariner 2 on its flight path past the planet Venus.

The Air Force began sweeping the skies in the northern part of the State after bright, pulsating lights were seen and police and Civil Defence authorities rushed to a state of emergency readiness.

A spokesman at Hamilton Air Force Base, near San Francisco said a report from the sheriff's office at Salinas was received at 4.34 a.m. alerting the Air Force to the fact that a large unidentified flying object was "going back and forth and changing colours" high in the sky over King City.

The Air Force spokesman said the U.S.A.F. immediately alerted the State Civil Defence headquarters at Sacramento. Defence officials in turn called the 28th Combat Centre of the North American Air Defence Command at Hamilton where the chief controller ordered a radar sweep.

At the same time the Federal Aviation Agency at Oakland directed all civilian aircraft in Northern California to be alert for UFO or unidentified aircraft.

Pilots flying in the predawn darkness flashed radio reports that they could see lights but were unable to make positive contacts.

There was, however, "much meteor" activity in the area, the pilots' reports to the F.A.A. said.

Meanwhile, radar along the coast was unable to make a positive fix on the mysterious lights.

A half-hour later a second report from the sheriff's office was flashed to the Air Force—saying the UFO was back and now orbiting the Greenfield-Solidad-King City area.

As radar probed for it and supersonic jet interception was being considered, the UFO "suddenly climbed straight up and disappeared to the south," a Hamilton A.F.B. spokesman said.

Twenty-three minutes later (at 5.20 a.m.) the sheriff's office at Solidad told Hamilton A.F.B. officials that the UFO had returned for the third time.