

Argentina 1963-64 Part II

By Gordon Creighton

I CONCLUDED Part I of this account of events in Argentina with the sensational story of truck-driver Eugenio Douglas, which occurred near Monte Maíz (Córdoba Province) on October 12, 1963. Readers will forgive me when I repeat that I have space only to record those events which are sensational, or unusual in character. Single 'fly-overs' are ignored—and there were scores of such sightings—and I deal here with landing reports, contact claims, near approaches, multiple 'fly-overs', and cases where there are detailed reports of shapes and unusual effects.

This second part of my article begins with another of the great, sensational cases of 1963.

Trancas (Province of Tucumán)

A brief account of this case was given on page 29 of FLYING SAUCER REVIEW for January/February 1964, and I discussed certain aspects of it in the second part of my article *The Most Amazing Case of All* (see page 7 of FLYING SAUCER REVIEW for March/April 1965). But there is so much that has not yet been reported, so much that I feel to be possibly of the very greatest significance, that I now give the complete picture as I have been able to piece it together from a great many press reports, from CODOVNI'S Summary of Argentine Sightings in 1963, as well as from certain valuable letters which have come to me from private Argentine citizens, and which contain details that have been overlooked or suppressed in all the other accounts that I have seen.

The affair happened on a very isolated farm situated 3 km. from the town of Trancas and about 78 km. north of the Provincial Capital of Tucumán. There were nine people in the house, the seventy-two-year-old Señor Antonio Moreno, his wife aged sixty-three, three of their adult daughters, three children of one of these daughters, and a fifteen-year-old servant girl. It must be emphasised that the Moreno family are not peasants or ill-educated folk, but important people in the Province, their son Dr. Moreno being a counsellor to the municipal government of Tucumán City.

It was 9.30 p.m. on October 21, 1963, and the household were preparing to go to bed, when the maidservant Dora Martín Guzmán looked over towards the tracks of the Belgrano Railway Line, which passes at a distance of about 300 yards from the house. She had noticed something intensely

luminous on the line, and what seemed to be a number of men moving to and fro around it.

The possibility of workmen being engaged in maintenance of the permanent way at that time of night was out of the question, so naturally the Moreno family decided that an accident must have occurred on the railway line. To make sure, one of the young women, Señora Julia Moreno de Colotti, aged twenty-one, went out into the garden to take a closer look, and there she saw exactly what the maidservant had seen, namely "something like a small train, intensely illuminated", and she could clearly see figures moving about near it.

At this point there is some discrepancy in the various reports. Some say that Señora Julia and her mother Doña Teresa Kairus de Moreno both began walking across the garden towards the front gate, while others say that the daughter alone did this. Whoever it was, however, turned back again to get a lantern, and set this up somewhere near the gate, presumably intending to venture out further in the direction of the mystery. In the meantime they had seen something decidedly odd happen on the railway line, for it seemed as though one half of the luminous "train" suddenly shot away from the rest. It flew, just skimming above the ground, for a distance of half a mile or so, and could clearly be seen to consist of three circular objects. Not one of the accounts is very clear at this point. Presumably three of the six craft had remained on the railway, and the three that had flown away came back again shortly afterwards.

Meanwhile, as soon as the women had set up the lantern, and as though in response to it, one of the brilliant beams of light emanating from one of the machines on or above the railway track at once turned from white to violet, and was switched round so as to play upon the two women in the garden. They immediately were overcome by suffocating heat, and prickling or tingling sensations in the body, and were obliged to run back into the house.

The beam now turned from violet to red, and was playing steadily upon the house.

Inside, the terrified family proceeded to hide the children in different places in the house, and for the next forty minutes they all cowered there in

anxious silence. The temperature inside the house had risen greatly on account of the light beam, and the air was filled with a smell like sulphur, and everyone could feel the burning, needling, prickling sensations in the body.

The family owned three very fierce dogs, but these, like the two dozen fowls outside, were powerfully affected by the beams of light. The family noticed that so soon as the beam shining into the rooms fell upon the dogs, the animals at once appeared to be listless and enervated. But then occasionally, when the beam fluctuated temporarily, or was playing on another part of the house and grounds, the dogs seemed to come to life again and began to growl.

With great courage the old lady, Doña Teresa, seems to have wandered from room to room taking peeps at the UFOs. By this time she was able to establish that there were now at least five of the discs hovering near the house, two of them being only about 70 yards distant. She and her husband state that all the machines were about 8 metres (26 feet) in diameter. The brightly illuminated interior of the machines could be seen through a row of six portholes in their central part, and Señor Moreno stated that at one stage he could see figures silhouetted at the portholes.

The two discs near the house were only thirty or forty feet from the ground, and "appeared to be supported by a jet of gas."

The luminous beams continued to sweep the house and garden. These consisted of one white "tubular" beam from one machine, and one reddish-violet "tubular" beam from the other, and the inside of the house was now like a furnace. The Moreno family laid particular emphasis on the fact that unlike ordinary light, these beams did not fan out, but kept their shape, "as though solid". One of the accounts adds that the beams gave off a whitish gas, and speaks of "a sort of howling noise" that accompanied the beam.

After 45 minutes spent in their terrifying situation, the Morenos saw the UFO which was on the railway track rise up into the air and begin to move away. At once the others began to follow suit. The beams of tingling light were turned off and the flotilla swept away over the house towards the Sierra de Medina range, flying quite low.

The stupefied dogs now began to howl fearfully, and kept it up for some time.

In the garden, "a thick mist looking like smoke and smelling like sulphur" hung over the trees and vegetation for some time, and a journalist who came to the house next day wrote that the abnormal heat and sulphurous smell were still quite noticeable in the rooms.

Next day, a police inspector was sent from

Tucumán to lend moral support to the isolated Moreno family, whose nearest neighbours were two or three kilometres distant. An enquiry was at once instituted, and it was found that various individuals (a Señor José Acosta and a family named Huanca) had seen, from a distance, the extraordinary illumination on the railway embankment, while a Señor Francisco Tropicano, resident about two kilometres distant, had seen the six discs passing across the sky at between 10.15 and 10.20 p.m., which was approximately the time when the siege of the Morenos' farmhouse was lifted.

This case received widespread publicity in the world at the time, but was allowed to drop into oblivion very quickly and I have seen no mention of it since in the South American press. One of my correspondents, the Buenos Aires meteorologist Ricardo Perez de la Sierra, informs me however that qualified individuals from the National University at Tucumán visited the site on the railway line next day and took away various materials for tests and analysis. These materials included calcined stones and other geological matter. My informant adds that a blanket of silence has been dropped upon the case by the Argentine Navy and Air Force, both of which services have their own UFO investigation departments.

Reporting the Trancas case at some length, *Acción*, evening daily newspaper published in Montevideo, pointed out with much satisfaction (October 24) that this extraordinarily impressive sighting coincided exactly with the arrival in Montevideo of rocket tycoon von Braun. In his press-conference, von Braun dismissed the UFOs. They do not exist.

The Trancas case contains many elements of great interest. It will be recalled that in *The Most Amazing Case of All* I threw out the suggestion that perhaps the Trancas UFOs were searching for young men, like the farmer A.V.B. In the light of all the new material that I have given above, it looks as though my theory was altogether wide of the mark. Surely the visitors were carrying out some sort of investigation on the railway line. Or perhaps carrying out repairs to one of their craft, since one machine seems to have remained on or above the railway embankment the whole time.

As for the beams of light, these were evidently used to discourage onlookers, and very effectively too. In brief, it looks as though the Trancas affair was a defensive rather than an offensive or a man-hunting operation.

But why this penchant for landing on our railway tracks? There have already been quite a number of cases with this feature, and I hope that some of our scientific friends are thinking about it. One thing is evident: Trancas lies within the

SALTA-CORDOBA-BAHIA BLANCA Magnetic Zone. (See map).

Iron is one of the ferromagnetic elements. Is it this that draws them to our railway lines?

Andes

The Tucumán *Clarín* of October 25, 1963, reported the highly mysterious affair of the three-storeyed Hotel Termas, a summer-season resort in the foothills of the Andes, which, so it seems, was totally destroyed at 6.05 a.m. a few days previously. Some rumours said it had been hit by an avalanche, while others blamed a huge meteorite or aerolite. All that is known is that residents of the neighbouring town of Malargüe were awakened by the tremendous detonation. Workers at the nearby Ethel Mine confirmed this, and added that the explosion was accompanied by a vast bluish light that lit up the whole sky over the area of the hotel. CODOVNI tried to investigate, but the only explanations that they could extract from the local Gendarmerie Headquarters, and from the Malargüe Airport director, was that a meteorite had fallen. (Malargüe lies on the edge of the Andes at 35° 30' S., 69° 30' W. The hotel lay at approximately 34° 30' S., 70° 00' W., not far from the Cerro Overo Peak which is 15,700 feet high.)

San Andrés (Province of Tucumán)

According to the daily *La Gaceta*, of October 29, a certain Señor Roberto Capdevilla was driving home on the previous evening when, on National Highway No. 9, he beheld a luminous red object suspended above the side of the road. He estimated that it was at about 60 metres from the ground and about 150 metres distant from his car, and he had it under observation for about four minutes. He described the object as looking "like half an orange". It eventually disappeared slowly towards the south.

La Plata

According to the newspaper *La Razón* of Buenos Aires (November 14, 1963) many people at La Plata saw, between midnight and 1 a.m. of that day, a luminous cigar flying westwards towards the Andes and emitting a powerful light varying from blue to white or yellow.

Mar del Plata

According to a report published in the *Histonium Review* for November 15, 1963, hundreds of people in the coastal town of Mar del Plata had recently seen a 'cigar' stationary in the sky. This was just after midnight. The machine remained there from 12.30 a.m. to 12.45 a.m., when it suddenly began to move off and vanished rapidly towards the north.

The leading Buenos Aires daily paper *La Prensa* of November 16 carried a report that hundreds of people on the streets in the central part of Mar del



1. Entre Rios Province, 2. Bahía Blanca, 3. Salta, 4. Córdoba, 5. Tucumán, 6. Mendoza, 7. Malargüe, 8. La Plata, 9. Mar del Plata, 10. Santa Fé, 11. Resistencia, 12. Saladillo, 13. Guleguaychu, 14. Metán, 15. Pajas Blancas (Airport), 16. Puna de Atacama, 17. Highway 9, 18. Comodoro Rivadavia, 19. Puerto Madryn (in Golfo Nuevo), 20. Rocha, 21. Trelew, 22. San Juan, 23. Lampian Valley, 24. Trancas, 25. Misiones Province.

Shaded section: The Salta-Córdoba-Bahía Blanca Magnetic Zone.

Plata had again seen UFOs. This time it was a number of objects of tremendous luminosity which were observed out at sea, over the South Atlantic.

Alta Gracia

The *Diario de Córdoba* for November 29 reported that at 10 p.m. on the previous evening two men named Gustavo Pipino and Carlos Perez had been driving along the road to Alta Gracia in the province of Córdoba when they came across a luminous blue object, circular, and about 30 metres in diameter, which was hovering at about 20 metres from the ground and at about 50 metres from the highway. While they were watching it, the object suddenly made off and vanished at staggering speed.

Sauce Viejo

The newspaper *La Gaceta* for December 17 reports that a railway worker named Cesar Tulio Gallardo claims to have had an extraordinary

experience with an extraterrestrial being. According to his account to the Police authorities, he was sitting in a stationary sleeping-coach on a siding at Sauce Viejo province of Santa Fé, reading the paper and listening to the wireless, when his carbide lamp went out and his wireless went dead. He went to look outside, but seeing strange lights out there, he at once shut the door and remained inside. At that moment somebody else, "a being totally surrounded by lights," came in at the other door of the coach, and the dazzle from him was so terrible that Gallardo was obliged to cover his face with the newspaper. But the visitor snatched the paper away from him and tore it up. Gallardo was able to observe at this point that the visitor's legs were clad in some kind of shiny dark cloth. The mysterious being next seized an oil-can and poured its contents into a sort of small bottle which he produced from inside his clothing. He then vanished through the same door by which he had entered. A few minutes after Gallardo had reported his story to the police, passengers on an incoming train declared that they had just seen "a luminous man" walking along the railway track.

Resistencia

The three-man crew of a freight train had a strange experience between Presidencia La Plaza and Resistencia, Province of El Chaco, according to several press reports. At 6.30 p.m. (precise date

not given) they beheld, walking along the railway track towards them, a tall being, "over 2 metres high", wearing a red one-piece garment. The driver slowed down and all three were able to get a view of the stranger, who, they agree, had a pale face, long fair hair, and was holding something before him in both hands "as though making an offering". They thought at first that the object looked like the body of a small child. Suddenly, when the locomotive was not more than 5 metres from the figure, it "shot up suddenly as though in a whirlwind, and vanished". Railway officials subsequently searched the area but found nothing. Meanwhile, in the town of Resistencia, a man named Justo Masin reported to the authorities that on the same day and at about the same hour, just as he and his fourteen-year-old son were about to take their supper in the garden, "a strange being descended towards them". In an interview with journalists they described the entity, and it was established that the figure was identical in all respects with the apparition seen by the train crew.

Mar del Plata

According to the daily paper *La Prensa* (Buenos Aires) for December 26 and 27, 1963, large numbers of people had reported that as they were coming out of the casino at Mar del Plata late at night, they had seen large numbers of intensely luminous objects over the sea.

Late Flash

January 19, 1966. A new and important photograph of an unidentifiable sky object has been handed to Charles Gibbs-Smith by a colleague of his. Mr. Gibbs-Smith, the eminent aviation historian and Hon. Companion, Royal Aeronautical Society, personally arranged the processing of the film by a leading photographic expert. We hope to publish the photograph with reports, in our next issue: it is possible, that in the meantime it may be published elsewhere.

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