

height had landed in the district a few days before, and there was speculation that this was food that had been left for them by UFOs.

### **Alarm in Ecuador**

The governments of some of the smaller states are no longer hiding their fears that an 'invasion' is imminent. Ecuador, for example, has been the scene of "Alarm, panic and commotion" (*Noticias Populares* of São Paulo, October 16). The towns and upland Andean regions have witnessed hundreds of saucers flying overhead, and an announcement on channel 6 of the Quito TV service recently stated that a large part of the population was at that moment watching a luminous object, certainly not a satellite, as it passed overhead. An eleven-man team had set off to climb the volcano Recu Pichincha, east of Quito, to investigate happenings up there: the team included photographers, reporters and army signallers.

### **Failing lights and Aerial shocks**

This preview account of the 1965 scene in Latin America closes with an important incident in Mexico, one which readers will be quick to associate in their minds with an event some six weeks later in the United States.

The newspaper *Ultima Hora* of September 24 told how, on the previous evening, the important town of Cuernavaca, 75 km. south-east of Mexico

City, suffered three failures of electric power and lights. The cause—a huge, luminous plate-shaped object—was photographed, and the picture appeared along with the accounts of several witnesses who included the Governor of the City, Emilio Riva Palacio. He, and other officials, were at a private cinema show when the light and power supply failed: as they emerged from the cinema, the whole party saw the UFO. The intense light from this object lit up the valley around Cuernavaca.

Shortly afterwards, Cuauhtemoc Betanzos, a pilot of Mexican Airways, saw the same UFO over Lake Tequesquitengo. Although on a routine flight from Mexico City to Acapulco, he attempted to approach the object, but it caused his aircraft to suffer a series of "crazy and fearful shocks".

There is little doubt that the pattern of South American events has changed considerably during the past twelve months. I have attempted to capture some idea of the feeling of apprehension and even alarm that pervades the scene, particularly along the vast Andean mountain chain. Some South American Republics need no warnings from H. G. Wells: with mounting hysteria, it seems, they are already frantically watching the skies.

[Gordon Creighton's full account of the 1965 scene is scheduled to appear in our May/June issue.]

# **Comment on the Valensole Affair**

**Our medical consultant has a few words to say about Aimé Michel's article which appeared in the November/December issue of the FLYING SAUCER REVIEW**

*By Dr. Bernard E. Finch*

AIMÉ MICHEL has produced an excellent account of the Valensole affair. However, he is not exactly correct in assuming that the weapon of the extraterrestrials acts only on the reticular formation.

This substance is a mixture of grey and white matter (cells and axons) situated in the brain stem and broken up into various portions called the reticular centres. These centres control the "vital services", i.e., breathing, heartbeat and muscle tone, etc. Injuries to parts of the reticular system are liable to cause tremors, involuntary movements and various rigidities.

True temporary paralysis of *voluntary* muscles could quite easily be brought about by a lesion of the "pyramidal fibres" or motor pathway. If the lesion involves the pathway from the spinal cord to the voluntary muscles, then there is a flaccid paralysis (or lower motor nerve lesion) and the

person would fall down limp. If the lesion involves the pathways from the cerebral cortex to the spinal cord, then there is spastic paralysis and the person becomes rigid.

My own view is that the force field affects the motor cells situated on the outer surface of the cerebral cortex. These cells are situated in a line running from the ears on either side to the top of the cranium. The sensory area is behind the motor area. The force field therefore produces its effect on all the surface cells of the cerebral cortex, and its effects wear off as it penetrates into the brain tissues, the effect disappearing a few millimetres inwards. This dampening effect is produced due to the thickness of the brain tissue, and as the more vital centres are deep in the brain, they are not touched by the field at all.

Hence surface cells receive the brunt of the field, resulting in spastic paralysis and sensory changes

involving touch and feeling, and sight. One can only speculate on the mechanics of the field proper on the nerve cells. Being of a magnetic nature, the insulation of the nerve fibres is broken down, nerve (electric) currents will not flow, the cell does not function, and fills up with granules that normally appear during periods of intense activity.

The cells of the cerebral cortex need long periods of rest to recover from the intense assault of the

force field, hence sleep and tiredness appear after contact with a UFO force field or weapon. This would also explain how reflex actions, which are motivated by deeply seated cells, are still active in spite of the force field.

In addition one must assume that the motivating force field of the UFO is similar to that of the weapon, which probably aims a concentrated beam at the head.

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## The Great American and Mexican Blackouts

By Gordon Creighton

AT approximaely 5.18 p.m. on November 9, an area of 80,000 square miles, extending from Boston to Buffalo and up into the Canadian Province of Ontario, and embracing some 30,000,000 people, experienced a remarkable blackout, which in some areas lasted for as much as 13½ hours (upper New York State) and in the other areas from three to six hours. All our readers will have seen full details in their papers, and I will quote here only a few lines from the six-page account that appeared in *TIME Magazine* for November 19:

"The first hint that the Northeast's huge CANUSE (Canadian-U.S. Eastern Interconnection) power-grid was in trouble came at 5.16. Moving clockwise, millions of kilowatts of electricity were coursing through the vast network of cables to meet the early-evening needs of the Western Hemisphere's most heavily populated, most power-dependent region. In the humming central control room of the Ontario Hydro-Electric Commission, ink-pens tracing the flow of power suddenly shuddered. At the Rochester Gas and Electric Corporation, on the other side of Lake Ontario, the dials on a wall lurched out of control. A minute later, meters at the mammoth Robert Moses Niagara Power Plant—biggest in the Hemisphere—also went wild. The power output surged from 1,500 megavolts to 2,250, then sank abruptly to zero. Exclaimed one Engineer: 'The needle came clear off the paper! There were more squiggly lines than in an earthquake.'

"Giant generators spun uncontrollably out of step, and overfed switches sprang open. At Consolidated Edison's Energy Control Center on West Side, Manhattan, the meter showing the power flowing in from the up-state sources recorded 300,000 kilowatts. At 5.18 the flux reversed, and within seconds 1.5 million kw. were surging northward . . ."

While admitting that not one utility expert could offer an explanation (the London *Evening Standard* had carried a report to the same effect from New York on November 11), *Time* concluded that the blackout had been caused by the phenomenon known as "cascading". "When there is a sudden

drain on the line, power rushes in to make up for the loss, but there is a tendency in such cases for the waves to pile up on each other in wild, ever-growing oscillations that carom through the circuit."

In Britain officialdom promptly assured us that "it couldn't happen here", and so said officialdom in most other parts of the U.S.A., such, for example, as officials of the power company at El Paso, Texas. This being so, let us now note with growing interest that, on the night of December 3, another big blackout occurred, allegedly having its origin in that area. It lasted for two hours, and affected a total of about a million people in parts of western Texas, parts of New Mexico, and also the Mexican frontier town of Juarez. Four or five U.S. Air Force bases in that part of the South-West were affected, one of them being Holloman Air Force Base, which is located near a missile centre and is well known to all students of the UFO problem by reason of the large number of sightings there.

I have a minimal knowledge of electrical matters, and certainly do not claim to know what caused these two blackouts, but it may be wise to assemble here a few scraps and notes which could conceivably help us to arrive at the right answer.

1. According to *Time Magazine* (November 19), "Some New Yorkers claimed that they had seen a satellite pass over at the moment the lights failed, and argued that 'the Russians had done it again'."

2. The Italian paper *Corriere della Sera* of November 15 carried the following report:

Syracuse, November 14: "A pilot from Syracuse (State of New York) has declared that he saw an enormous 'ball of fire' rise from the electric power-line linking the town of Clay to Niagara Falls immediately after the sudden stoppage of current last week which plunged vast areas of the USA and Canada into darkness.