

# GEORGE ADAMSKI: AN HISTORICAL NOTE

By Eric Herr (San Diego, California)

As those aware of UFO history know, the publication in 1953 of the book *Flying Saucers Have Landed* by Desmond Leslie and George Adamski was an event of exceptional importance to both the conception of UFOs by students of the subject and to the public awareness of them. Because the controversy that followed Adamski's writings continues to this day, it may be of some value to put the comments of one of his alleged scientific witnesses on record. I located this man, Gene Luther Bloom, after having by chance read again Adamski's references to him on pages 174 through 177 of *Flying Saucers Have Landed*.

First, what George Adamski said: "Then late in 1949 four men came into the café at Palomar Gardens... One of these men was Mr J.P. Maxfield, and another was his partner, Mr G.L. Bloom, both of the Point Loma Navy Electronics Laboratory near San Diego..."

"They asked me if I would co-operate with them in trying to get photographs of strange craft moving through space..."

"I asked them then where I should look to be most likely to see the strange objects which they were asking me to try to photograph... The Moon was decided upon as a good spot for careful observation."

"Thus, when the military requested my co-operation in trying to photograph strange objects moving through space, with the aid of my 6-inch telescope, I was more than willing..."

"And it was not too long after this meeting that I succeeded in getting what I deemed at the time to be

two good pictures of an object moving through space..."

"Some days later, Mr Bloom stepped into the place... I handed him the two photographs which I had taken. I asked him to pass them on to Mr Maxfield for examination and for the records. He said he would." (End of statement by George Adamski.)

In my interview with him on July 19th, 1988, Mr Bloom said that he and his colleague at the Naval Electronics Laboratory, Joseph Maxfield, had only stopped at the café where Adamski worked to have a brief lunch before continuing up the road to the Hale Observatory on Palomar Mountain. He said further that they were not there to ask for George Adamski's co-operation in any way, and, until meeting him, did not even know of his interest in flying saucers. He also said that neither he nor Maxfield instructed Adamski on how to photograph the saucers, and did not accept any photographs for analysis by the Naval Electronics Laboratory or for any other purpose. Mr Bloom's final comment to me was that "Everything Adamski wrote about us was fiction, pure fiction".

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At the conclusion of Mr Herr's article is the following handwritten statement by Mr Gene L. Bloom:—

"Summary above of my conversation via phone call on 19 July is correct.

If anything is printed, I would appreciate seeing".

(Signed): GENE L. BLOOM

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## THE "GREAT MARTIAN SCARE" . . . OF TWO FRENCH UFOLOGISTS WHO "NOW THINK BETTER" AND HAVE CHANGED THEIR MINDS!

Pier Luigi Sani  
(Translation from Italian)

For this very important article, by one of Italy's foremost UFO researchers, we are indebted to the Editor of *Il Giornale dei Misteri* of Firenze, from issues Nos. 166 and 167 of which (June and July/August, 1986) we have translated it. As we reported in *It Didn't Happen!* (FSR 31/2), and as we have indicated in various places since then, it is evident that for some time past a new phase has been under way, especially in France, in the brainwashing operation now being conducted against mankind. "Good money" is probably available for those who are prepared to help to spread the idea that all reports of UFOs are due to mis-perception or mass-psychosis or hoax. We shall perhaps not be far wrong if we interpret all this as meaning that the "take-over" here is reaching a more advanced stage.

In *It Didn't Happen!* we have already given a brief account of the book *La Grande Peur Martienne (The Great Martian Scare)* by the French writers Gérard Barthel and Jacques Brucker. Pier Luigi Sani has, however, devoted two long articles to this curious book, and in view of its great importance we have thought it well worth while to provide our readers with a full translation of what the Italian investigator has to say about it. — Editor

## PART I. THE PROBLEM

AMONG all those folk who are drawn towards Ufology, there are few that do so out of the pure desire for knowledge. More are impelled by mere commonplace curiosity; others are fired by the typical enthusiasm of the "believer"; and yet again others are spurred on by the ambition of finding in the field of Ufology those opportunities to shine which they have been unable or have not known how to achieve in other fields.

All these people sooner or later begin to slacken off. The curiosity-seekers do so because at a certain moment their curiosity, being an end in itself, is quenched or no longer finds enough to feed on. The enthusiasts, for their part, fall off because their ardour dies down or is extinguished or else it finds greater opportunities for free play in the realms of "contacteeism" and cultism. The ambitious ones, finally, drop out because, inevitably, they end up disappointed, either by the fact of having failed to "become somebody" — as they had hoped — or by a constitutional incapacity to endure the long-term indifference and contempt meted out to them by "official Science".

### The "Second-Thoughters"

It is precisely this last-named category, the category of the ambitious, which has in recent years spawned — and especially in France — the new race, the "Ufologists who have changed their minds". These are individuals in whom disappointment has ended by converting into rage that passion which in the first instance had induced them to launch themselves so boldly into the ufological arena. Like the celebrated fox in the fable, who disdains the grapes when he perceives that he can't reach them, these folk, the minute they realize that the UFO Phenomenon insists on remaining outside the limits of their own particular capacity for comprehension (leaving aside of course the question of other peoples' capacities), they instantly start pouring scorn on it. Devoid of intellectual humility themselves, they are not even capable of grasping the fact that the solution of a problem may call for very protracted periods of research and study (maybe even more than one or several generations), so they take refuge in the most convenient and most simplistic of rationalizations: namely, that, *if the UFO Problem refuses to let itself be solved, then this means there IS no problem, that it has no objective reality, and is merely a "myth"*.

### "Experts" in Psychology, Sociology, etc.

And, lo and behold, it is at this point that all those frustrated Ufologists suddenly transform themselves, as though by some sort of enchantment, into "experts" in Psychology, in Sociology, and in the Physiology of Human Perception, hoping in this way to attract to themselves the attention and the approbation of the "moderate" rationalists! The old idols, like Keyhoe, Ruppelt, Hynek, Vallée, are being toppled from their pedestals. The new heroes are Menzel, Klass, Sheaffer, and Oberg, and all those who, in any manner or fashion, however licit or however convincing it may be, now deny the genuineness of this or that UFO case, or insinuate doubts, however well or ill-founded they may be, concerning this or the other. *The only things that count and that matter are to criticize, to doubt, to confuse, and, above all of course, to display "ambitions of being scientific"*, so that "those whose duty it is" will see how "clever" they have become, and how very, very different they now are from those poor "quixotic" types — the traditional Ufologists!

## A "Rationalist" Book, and the Enthusiasm of the Simpleton

A typical product of this "vogue for repentance" is the book *La Grande Peur Martienne* (*The Great Martian Scare*) (by the ex-Ufologists Gérard Barthel and Jacques Brucker, and published in France in 1979 by the Nouvelles Editions Rationalistes, a group who are the leaders in the "Union Rationaliste", a French organization whose declared aim is to combat, in the name of "rationalism", certain modern "superstitions", such as Parapsychology, Ufology, etc. Dedicated by its two authors to Michel Monnerie, "who opened our eyes", and furnished with a flattering preface by Evry Schatzman, President of the "Rationalist Union", the book aims to prove that the famous great French UFO Wave of 1954 was nothing more than a mass-psychosis nurtured by the journalists and the good-time boys expert in "Martian jokes".

Well now, whoever reads this volume with even a minimum of critical sense and objectivity will have the greatest difficulty in finding any justification whatever for all the enthusiasm and admiration that it has evoked among certain Ufologists who are adherents of the so-called "nouvelle vague" ("new wave"), since if there is anything at all that the book does succeed in proving, it is simply the "anti-Ufological fury" of its two authors. The selection and presentation of the cases; the arbitrary character of the conclusions everywhere suggested; the fragility of the arguments employed in order to "reduce" certain pieces of evidence, leave in fact little doubt as to the "catechizing" intentions of the book. Like all partisan works, in a word, the objectivity of the information furnished is in inverse proportion to the desire to flog one's own preconceived theses as "gospel truth".

Within the confines of this one article, it would be impossible for me to analyze the whole Barthel-Brucker thesis item by item. I must accordingly limit myself to a few remarks that will suffice to give an idea of the type of intellectual attitude that underlies the book.

The assumption from which Messrs B. and B. start out is that the subject-matter of Ufology is totally devoid of reality, being reducible to:—

- (1) Accounts given by folk telling all sorts of tales in bars.
- (2) Journalists reporting all sorts of tales and embellishing them as they see fit.
- (3) Ufologists who naively believe the tales.
- (4) Writers of books who make use of the tales.
- (5) Gullible folk who seek nothing more avidly than to believe the tales.

Nevertheless, say our two authors, "We have not wanted to run the risk of 'throwing out the baby with the bath-water', as the British proverb puts it, and, bearing this in mind, we have passed the entire French Wave of 1954 through a fine sieve". The result, so they tell us, has been to "dry up the vast swamp of the so-called Wave".

Well, of course, there's nothing wrong with all that sort of talk, so far as it goes up to this point. They start out from a premise: namely the non-existence of Ufological data. They subject it to verification, (i.e. re-examination of the 1954 cases); and they discover that their premise is confirmed. (The "swamp" is "drained".)

But, alas, the flaws in the argument appear — and they are big ones — when we examine the criteria with which our authors have carried out their "drain-

age”, thereby presuming to have proved the assumption that was their starting-point. Alas indeed! With similar criteria, you could “drain away” not merely the UFO Wave of 1954 but anything you like! *You could, for example, prove the non-existence of Picasso, given the fact that countless ‘fake Picassos’ exist. And you could even throw doubt upon the validity of Palaeoanthropology, given the fact that the ‘Piltdown Forgery’ exists!*

That Messrs B. and B. are shamelessly “cooking” the data instantly became clear (at any rate, to anybody with a minimal knowledge of matters Ufological) from the quantity and the quality of the cases they utilize to “demolish” the Wave. The number of sightings recorded at the time when Aimé Michel formulated his Theory of Orthoteny (that is to say, at the close of the 1950s) was already far in excess of 400, but the successive researches carried out later took the figure to at least double that. Aimé Michel himself, in the last edition of his book *Mystérieux Objets Célestes* (1967), reports the discovery of at least 300 more cases. Well now, Messrs B. and B. claim to demolish the entire Wave by using, in their book, no more than 70 to 80 cases, *that is to say, less than 10% of the total!* But even that might still have been acceptable (particularly bearing in mind the time that had elapsed, and consequently the difficulty of retracing the eyewitnesses, some having moved, some having died) provided — naturally — that the model employed had been *statistically “honest”*, that is to say — not contaminated by *ad hoc* selections.

But, on the contrary, the model is a biased concoction, being built up largely from confessed fakes, hoaxes, and anonymous testimony.

Today, it is a well-known fact that any wave of UFO sightings, if publicized by the press, does inevitably trigger off a situation of *some* psychosis, with the resulting development of spurious cases consisting of erroneous observations or outright hoaxes, but it is also an equally well-known fact that any wave (whether publicized by the press or not) always contains an above-average nucleus of “unexplained” sightings (by which we mean cases with a high coefficient of “*credibility-strangeness*”). It is consequently captious to do as B. and B. have done — that is to say, to analyze a wave by employing chiefly its spurious element and then engineering the results — obviously negative — to demolish not only the wave in question, but all other waves with it, and, consequently, the entire fabric of Ufology.

### How to Reduce Cases “Rationally”

It is assuredly no accident that our two authors — while they found it necessary to justify the very small percentage of cases that they have used (“The number was enormous, and we could not quote them all”) — nevertheless are extremely careful not to reveal what criteria they followed in making their selections. Had they done so, it would have been rather difficult for them to explain, for example, why they devote so much space in their book to “documented” cases of ... *anonymous letters* (!), while, on the other hand, they totally ignore many celebrated cases (and pretty difficult ones to “reduce”!) — cases like those at Mouriéras, Cenon, Contay, Chabeuil, Poncey-sur-l’Igon, etc.

To be sure, limiting oneself to little items in the daily newspapers (and of only certain daily papers in particular) makes it a whole lot easier to “supply grist for one’s own mill”, as we say in Italy. And, by speculating about the dubiousness of UFO reports in the press, or speculating about the absence of, or inaccuracy of, dates, or about the “embellishments” made by

certain people, or by disregarding certain cases with the excuse that they “were reported by folk who already *believed in flying saucers*”, seems to be just a very good way of rapidly freeing oneself of material that is “inconvenient”.

Maybe they call these tactics “*rationalistic criteria*”, though to what species of “rationalism” they pertain I confess that I find it impossible to see.

On the other hand, I would remark that the accusation of “partiality” levelled against those investigators whom they allege to be “credulous” can easily be reversed. In fact it is legitimate for us to wonder why investigations made on the spot, and at the time, by investigators who were “*believers*” (or are considered to have been such) should be refused credibility while, on the other hand, *we should now be asked to accept investigations made twenty and more years later, often merely by telephone, by investigators not claiming to be “believers” (and they certainly aren’t)!*

And our suspicions increase when we learn that all of these “re-investigations” by “non-believers” invariably end in “*reductions*”, (i.e. “*demolitions*”).

Here are a few examples from the book:—

#### 1. *The Case at Jonquerets de Livet*

A farmer sees an oblong-shaped object in a field. Two hours later, a passing motorcyclist has an accident through the sudden failure of his machine, and in the meanwhile he sees strange lights in the field. Messrs B. and B. do their reinvestigation. In the meantime, the farmer has died. The motorcyclist now confirms that he saw the lights in the field, but he rules out any connection between them and the failure of his engine. Conclusion of Messrs. B. and B.:—

*The farmer saw the Sun going down; the motorcyclist saw something unusual, but assuredly of a meteorological or geophysical or psychosociological nature.*

#### 2. *The Case at “Jonches”*

A sighting of two beings in light-coloured clothing. Two hours later, a luminous object was also seen, at a low altitude. Traces were left by it, and there was an investigation by the Gendarmerie. Conclusion by B. and B.:—

*There is an airport in the vicinity, so consequently the UFO hypothesis is at once ruled out.*

#### 3. *The Case at Claix*

A veterinarian declares he has seen a UFO and a humanoid. Interference by the UFO with the electricity in his car. Re-investigation by B. and B. (Meanwhile the veterinarian has died in 1956 of cirrhosis of the liver due to alcoholism.) Conclusion of Messrs B. and B.:—

*The alleged sighting was a drunkard’s hallucination.*

#### 4. *The Case at Les Egots*

A boy says he saw a hairy dwarf dressed in red and with eyes as big as the eyes of a cow. Re-investigation by B. and B.

*They fail to trace the witness, but “a local woman” declares it was a piece of nonsense.*

#### 5. *The Case at Maisoncelles-en-Brie*

An individual was paralyzed by an oval object with a cupola which had landed in a field. Re-investigation by B. and B.

*The witness was not traced, but his workmates laughed about the thirty-year-old story and said it was a “bluff”. Conclusion by B. and B.:—*

*A hoax.*

## 6. *The Case at Toulouse*

A cook and his grandson see a gigantic spindle take off and vanish into the sky. Traces on the ground. Investigation by Police and Military. Conclusion by B. and B.:-

*The saucer was the handiwork of the cook, clearly a man well acquainted with plates and saucers.*

## 7. *Cerf Case*

Sighting of an object shaped "like a segment of an orange" which then assumed the form of a "pear", and finally split into three parts, which vanished, as though behind a curtain. Explanation by B. and B.:-

*"Only a minimum of 'rationality' is required to know that it was the Moon, seen through clouds".*

But it would be useless to continue. B. and B.'s "reductions" are all more or less of this type — that is to say, based mainly on statements by "friends of friends", or by "mayors", or by "neighbours", or on the authors' own personal inferences. (This does not of course mean that the original cases quoted in the book are to be considered as surely authentic. Of course not. It simply means that the "reductions" by B. and B. aren't worth tuppence.)

The selection of their "cases" is already extremely fragile, and the acceptance of them as genuine or their refutation is in the ultimate analysis only a question of *opinion*. The trouble, however, is that, merely on the basis of such a selection as this and on their relative interpretations thereof — operated as we have indicated above — our two "second-thoughters" claim to have "demonstrated" that:-

- A. The fantastic UFO Wave of 1954 over France was "a generalized psychosis comprising a mixture of mistakes made in good faith, hasty interpretations, embellishments by chroniclers, gross frauds and hoaxes, and journalistic fix-ups". Most of the alleged UFO landings or take-offs, say the authors, would be explicable as follows: namely that any object or phenomenon coming from the horizon towards the witness is "taking off" and, *vice-versa*, any object or phenomenon descending, i.e. going from the observer towards the horizon, is "landing". And then, when a UFO shaped like a football was seen taking off suddenly at supersonic speed, it was "a squall of journalistic wind."
- B. The number of sightings in the Wave that were truly ascribable to an unknown phenomenon was ... *NIL*.
- C. The Ufonauts of 1954 never existed. The disc-type of craft with cupola and port-holes was never truly seen on any occasion.
- D. To sum up: since no humanoid ever emerged, and no object from "elsewhere" ever landed here, it is clear that no traces attributable to such a happening can have been left, and no physical effects on any vehicle can ever have been suffered. And, as regards the alleged physiological reactions of the eyewitnesses (such as "paralysis", "pins and needles", "tingling", etc.) these were either pure imagination or can be explained as due to the fear caused by some chance event (such as lightning, or a meteor, or a mirage). Thus they can never in any case at all have been due to the actual presence of a craft.

### The Undrained "Puddles"

Faced with such assertions (based, I repeat and I emphasise, on arbitrarily chosen and opportunistically interpreted data) the student of our subject might confine himself simply to making some ironic comment on the perpetrators, or might dismiss them with

Dante's famous line, "*Non ragionam di lor, ma guarda e passa.*" ("Let us just disregard them, but watch them, and pass on" . . .)

However, the book was not written for the field-workers. As I have already said, it is a "catechizing" job. And the "rationalism" in the name of which it purports to be offered — to say nothing of the pomposity with which it is written — could on the one hand be convincing to readers possessing no previous personal knowledge of Ufology and, on the other hand, could influence (and even excite) the more naive sort of Ufologists, particularly the younger ones who are already affected with "scientomania". So, for the sake of these latter, I venture to point out that the rationalistic pomposity of B. and B. is solely a matter of appearance. Only a minimum of critical sense and reflexion are needed for us to discover that matters are in fact not quite so clear and simple as our two authors would like to have us believe. I have already shown that they disregard (intentionally) *all of the strongest cases* of the Great French UFO Wave of 1954. They only discuss *two* of them — namely the DeWilde (Quarouble) Case and the Prémanon Case. But they fail to demolish the former and, in the latter, they claim to have "reduced" it, as we shall see, by means of arguments that are frankly highly dubious.

Moreover they are obliged to admit that they have not truly drained the "*vast swamp*" of the 1954 Wave entirely. They say that "*puddles still remain*", and they add: "Will the Sun of *Reason* finally evaporate these puddles, or will they continue to conceal a treasure?"

No particular acumen is required for us to grasp what these "puddles" are. (*They are, in fact, precisely the "strong" cases that they have disregarded!*) Nor are any exceptional critical capacities needed for one to see that these "puddles" still remaining to be drained represent a flagrant contradiction of the two authors' assertions as listed by us above.

One of these "undrained puddles" is, as mentioned, the Quarouble or DeWilde Case. Now evidently the "*Sun of Reason*" which Messrs B. and B. have concentrated on to that case has turned out to be too tepid! The authors console themselves by attributing to the DeWilde case the special role of having served as the "*detonating factor*" to almost the entire French Wave (they don't mention whether it also triggered off the big Italian Wave of 1954 which, as everybody knows, occurred at the same time as the French Wave!) As a consolation they also maintain that "the effectiveness of the DeWilde Case as a decisive argument in the armoury of the Ufologists has never been proved". The conclusion in which they take refuge sounds spiteful: — "If certain Ufologists want to cling on desperately to this case, they are aware that it is simply a relic — one of the few rare remains, we might say, of the 'extraterrestrial shipwreck'".

We refrain from comment.

But these admissions that our authors have been obliged to make in utter contradiction of their own arrogant claims are not confined to the DeWilde Case. Speaking of the UFO landing reports, after having declared that most of them are explicable as low-level light phenomena", they concede that, on a very few occasions, (in fact 50%), "the phenomenon was indeed seen on the ground", but they then hasten to add that in such cases "the possibility cannot be ruled out that the eyewitnesses were mistaken over some perfectly explicable event".

**O.K. then.  
But, which event?**

Then there is the thorny problem of the marks left

on the ground — a problem that has never ceased to create difficulties for those who aim at the complete “reduction” of all UFO Phenomena — even those who are a lot more “authoritative” than our Messrs B. and B. Having laid it down in advance that “no trace mark can be due to UFOs” (seeing that, *by definition*, UFOs are non-existent), our two authors still know of no better recourse than to avail themselves of the traditional “let-out” of all the “reductionists”:-

“The explanation for the trace-marks may lie in natural causes, even though these may be very rare.”

And, while they are saying this, they don't perceive that they themselves are falling into that same “error” that they impute to the Ufologists, *namely that they are hypothesizing regarding the occurrence of an unknown phenomenon.*

—Which is a pretty grave error for “rationalists”!

## PART II. A DOUBLE RETRACTION — THE MYSTERY OF THE BENT GRASS — INCONSISTENT ARGUMENTS — AN ATTEMPT THAT FAILED

### The “Demolition” of the Prémanon Case

I have intentionally left until last, in this my critical discussion of the B. and B. book, the Prémanon Case, one of the *only two* “important” sightings of the French Wave of 1954 that our two authors have looked at. (The other being the DeWilde Case.) DeWilde — as we have seen — could not be demolished. B. and B. claim however that they *have* demolished Prémanon.<sup>1</sup>

Well now, I maintain that the data they produce with this end in mind are not convincing, and therefore are not conclusive. At the very most all that they might do is to throw some doubt on the case. At any rate, the discussion needs to be taken a little deeper.

I won't give a detailed account of the Prémanon episode, which is in any case extremely well known.<sup>2</sup> I will simply recall that it happened on September 27, 1954, and that the eyewitnesses were four children between the ages of four and 12 years. They said they had seen a strange “being” and had seen a “luminous disc” take off. Traces were left on the ground. There was the investigation by the Gendarmerie, and numerous journalists visited the site. The children weathered the interrogations without falling into contradictions, and no satisfactory explanation for the traces was found. The case remained unexplained, and was considered *genuine*.

And lo, now, 24 years later, our Messrs B. and B. succeed in “demonstrating” that nothing happened at Prémanon. Nothing at all! It was all just an invention by the four children, influenced by their schoolteacher — who had talked to them in previous days about flying saucers. B. and B. say this is proved by the fact that, when traced by them, one of the children (the eldest boy, aged 12 at that time) today retracts the whole thing. B. and B.'s argument would consequently appear to be decisive and final, but in reality it is far less so than might seem at first sight. *For, in fact, I note that only one of the four eyewitnesses has been traced and interviewed. Secondly, I note that this eldest boy, today, is “following a scientific career in a University in the South of France”.<sup>3</sup> Thirdly, I note that, although he retracts the story, he has not explained “how” in collusion with his three brothers, he managed to create those marks on the ground that successfully perplexed and deceived the Gendarmerie and the journalists.*

So that the reader may have a better understanding

of why it is that I don't consider this “retraction” conclusive and final, I must state first of all that it is the common experience of anybody who ever has had occasion to re-interrogate the witness or witnesses of a UFO sighting, many years after it happened, finds himself confronted with a remarkable reluctance on the part of the individuals concerned to recall their own ufological experience. B. and B. themselves state that: “When the individuals who had the sighting at the time are interrogated, they wander off into conjectures, sometimes no longer have a good recollection of what they saw, at other times admitting that they saw something, but who knows what it was?”<sup>4</sup>

To this I might add that not infrequently they refuse to recall their experience (through fear of once more having to undergo the unpleasant consequences that the incident had for them at the time, in the form of investigations, interrogations, intimidations, mockery, etc.) or they totally withdraw their original testimony, inasmuch as, with the passage of time, it has now come to tend to represent a sort of “thicket” that they would prefer to erase or deny, particularly when they are living in a “rationalistic” society or are following a career for which being pointed out as a “visionary who sees flying saucers” might be a handicap or even downright dangerous. Now, the basic argument that B. and B. produce in order to demolish the Prémanon Case is precisely this fact of the retraction by one of the eyewitnesses who — and note this well — is now “*following a scientific career in a French university*”.

The other arguments, namely the opinion of the *present* Mayor of Prémanon, and the statement by the aged father of the children to the effect that “the thing never happened”, are just like those always produced in order to reduce the number of cases, and they aren't worth a row of beans. Particularly suspect does the present attitude of the children's father seem, who no longer lives in Prémanon and who, at the time of the sighting, not only did not deny that the affair had occurred, but expressed his certainty as to the truthfulness of his children and even let himself be photographed beside the wooden post that had been stripped of its bark by the saucer!

It was he, the father, who supplied B. and B. with the necessary information with which to trace the son Raymond who is now pursuing the “scientific career”. Why precisely Raymond? *Why not the other three children also?* When B. and B. talked to Raymond, he was at first astonished, and then he is supposed to have “confessed”. He said it was his schoolmistress at the time who had triggered off the children's imaginations, inducing them to invent the story of the UFO sighting. The rest was then allegedly done unwittingly by the journalists (“already ‘sensitized’ by the tales of flying saucers”) and by the Gendarmes, “obliged to record facts that they themselves were unable to verify”.(!!!)

And what about the marks on the ground? From B. and B.'s book it does not appear that Raymond has explained “how or when” they were made. Which is pretty strange, seeing that it was precisely these marks which, at the time of the episode, constituted the determining feature in causing the case to be accepted as authentic. There were, to be precise, the minutes of the discussion held by the Gendarmerie. Furthermore, these findings were confirmed by the journalists, among them Charles Garreau, who described the marks in great detail: a circle four metres in diameter, within which the grass was bent (*not* “flattened”) in anti-clockwise fashion, and in which were to be seen four holes arranged in a square, each hole 10 cms. wide and inclined at 45° towards the centre of the

circle. Near the circle, a wooden post had lost its bark over an area of 15 cms., at a height of 1½ m. from the ground. And at the foot of the post there were two more holes in the ground, identical with those in the circle.

Now, how could four children, aged between four and twelve years, have prepared those marks? And without anybody being aware of it? This problem is solved of course by B. and B. who suggest: "A few square metres of ground trampled down by animals, a post with its bark removed by no matter what, and, lo and behold, you have one of the most solid cases in the whole literature of Ufology". The only trouble is that this so "simple" solution is the fruit of the imaginations of B. and B. and not of the imagination of Raymond. And, more serious than that, is the fact that B. and B. are unaware, or pretend to be unaware, that the grass at the site was not "trampled down by animals", but merely "bent in an anti-clockwise direction" and the mark was "circular" and also contained four large holes set at the points of a square and inclined at 45°.

Let us now attempt to visualize for ourselves the scenario, with the children doing all this. After having worked out the plan for the hoax, they get some animals (cows?); take them out to the field; and, at a certain spot, begin to make them go round and round in a circle in such a fashion as to "bend the grass without trampling it"(!) Then, when the "circle" is ready, the children get a big pointed stick and run it four times into the soil inside the circle, producing four holes 10 cms. wide in cross-section and inclined (all of them) at an angle of 45° so as to form a "square". Then they get an implement (scythe, bill-hook, or other) and remove bark from the post near the circle and then, in the ground beneath the post, they make two more holes like the others. Nobody else noticed any of this. The cows that had "bent the grass" were taken back to their stalls, the stick with which the holes were made in the ground is hidden or removed, and the scene is now set.

Now the children run through afresh the part that each of them has to recite and, with everything set, they put the project into operation. Everything goes off marvellously smoothly. Their parents believe their story, and the schoolmistress and the parish priest also believe them. But — more important (and even more surprising) — is the fact that the Gendarmes and the Press believe them too! Questioned separately, all four of the little pranksters recite their parts to perfection: no contradictions, no hesitations — not even from the smallest little girl (aged four!). And then, to cap it all, even the marks work all right; nobody, not even the Gendarmerie, manages to discover how the marks were made: not a single blade of trampled grass; not a single animal's hoof-mark, not a single thing to suggest to those clue-less Gendarmes this solution which is so simple that, 24 years later, B. and B. found it so easily and so brilliantly!

A real masterpiece indeed — by four little kids from a little village in the French Jura!

So — I ask myself: is it right to accept as valid the "demolition" of Prémanon based on the "proofs" presented by B. and B.?

Personally, I don't think so. Raymond's retraction may have been dictated by the necessities of his own career: *you aren't very well regarded in university circles if you say you have seen a UFO.*

And confirmation that this retraction may have been "an accommodation" is furnished by the failure to explain how and when the famous marks were made. And, finally, *there are still three other retractions that are lacking: the retractions of the three*

*other eyewitnesses.* Why have B. and B. failed to trace *them* and question *them* too? There is something about the whole affair that is unconvincing, and in my opinion we are right to have our doubts.

I imagine that, at this point, the "moderate-minded" person will, in turn, accuse me of wanting to believe in the authenticity of the Prémanon Case *at all costs* (as though the whole reason for the existence of Ufology depended on it). Such an accusation would be the argument of someone who has no better arguments with which to meet my objections. Prémanon, like so many other cases, more or less "classic", more or less quoted, *could* be genuine — or it *could* be false. What I am here maintaining is not that Prémanon "is pure gold", but, simply, that the arguments produced by B. and B. to demolish it not only do not appear conclusive, but don't even seem any more solid than those advanced in favour of its authenticity. And that, consequently, to choose the arguments of the one side as against the other is merely a matter of personal opinion. The arguments for the prosecution, in a word, are worth no more than those for the defence, and an honest and objective jury would only be able to find, on the basis of the data now available, a verdict of "*insufficient proof*".

### Conclusions

I said at the outset that it would have been difficult, for anyone who had read the book by B. and B. with a minimum of critical sense, to justify the enthusiasm that this book has evoked among certain "science-crazy" young Ufologists. I don't know whether I have succeeded, within the limits of these two brief articles, in making the reader grasp the full reasons for this statement. I believe that an inquiry into the objectivity, the background, and, above all, into the *motivation* that has led B. and B. to write their book could provide some highly illuminating results. In any case, to accept the book as "proof", "all sewn up and in the bag" — as the young science-maniacs have done, without the slightest exercise on their part of that "critical spirit" which they themselves are always proclaiming that they possess — and given their alleged ambitions of "*scientificness*" — all this, as I say, gives rise to a certain suspicion: namely that this "critical spirit", should they genuinely possess it, operates "one way only". Evidently the criterion of "*scientificness*" — if one may use this term — employed by certain Ufologists is founded upon two "theorems": firstly, that to hold the view that the UFOs, regarded as an unknown phenomenon, might truly exist, is of little or indeed no scientific validity; and, secondly, that, on the other hand, it is "supremely scientific" to maintain that, regarded as an unknown phenomenon, UFOs indeed do not exist at all. From this second theorem derives the following "corollary":

It is useless to take the trouble to verify the data and statements of the UFO-deniers inasmuch as, by their own very nature, such data and such statements are "*scientifically irrefutable*".

Needless to say, in adopting such a criterion, our "scientific" Ufologists are themselves committing precisely the same sin that they claim to be able to find it necessary to reproach in so many if not all of the "traditional" Ufologists, namely — *credulity*. Since to believe blindly in the UFO-deniers and refute indiscriminately all the UFO-supporters in an intellectual attitude that is in no way different from its opposite. The terms are changed, but the result does not change, and the consequence in both cases is a pretty poor job. This "*Ufological Manichaeism*" shows once again how difficult it is to interest oneself in the

problem without also getting emotionally involved in it, and, consequently, *how rarely do we find the student of Ufology who is capable of receiving and evaluating the available data with the objectivity and the detachment of one who is intellectually free, not only of theoretical or fideistic prejudices, but also free of the conditionings imposed by the scientific dogmatism of certain academics and of moderate "rationalists"*.

I will close by observing that the "*Sun of Reason*" which B. and B. hoped (after they had annihilated the Shades of Ufological obscurantism) would shine down so benignly in the shape of applause and admiration from the scientists, has in that respect revealed itself to be delusive. The only applause they have received is that (which one can discount) from the Rationalist Union, who themselves championed the book. But, from the scientific side, not only has there not been any praise for them: there has even been criticism. Thus, clearly alluding to B. and B. and their attempt to "reduce" the Great Wave of 1954, the astrophysicist Dr Pierre Guérin wrote, for example, in *LDLN* No. 200 (p. 3):-

"This 'reduction' was effected with varying success, the authors at times displaying lucidity, and even humour, in detecting a bolide, the planet Venus, or some hilarious cock-and-bull story behind this or that alleged 'saucer'; or, on the contrary, having gone hopelessly wrong by conducting their own enquiries too hastily, by phone, and from individuals only familiar with the alleged facts by hearsay, or from individuals who, having indeed been eyewitnesses of the facts, have since decided, once and for all time, to minimize them or even never speak of them again. In any case, this book of which we are speaking is very, very far indeed from covering the totality of the cases during the period studied (basically the Wave of 1954 — all very old now). And the authors are very careful not to mention this, no doubt in order to make their non-specialist readers believe that, when a serious investigation of the alleged facts is made, it will be found that in Ufology there is nothing left.

And, let us repeat, this book deals mainly with easy cases."

Should anyone object that Dr Pierre Guérin, although a scientist, is nonetheless still a Ufologist too, I shall reply that not even G.E.P.A.N., the French body that is studying UFOs officially within the framework of the CNES (French Space Research Agency) has displayed much interest in the work of Messrs. B. and B. In their *Technical Note No. 3* (page 13), speaking of the statistical results obtained by Claude Poher tending to show that the UFOs are seen by the observers to the same extent as ordinary physical phenomena, they refer to certain persons who have been mistaken over the scope of those results, some of them concluding that they deal indeed with merely physical phenomena, while others think even that it is a question of known physical phenomena". Well now, in a note at the foot of the page, G.E.P.A.N. comment ironically: "*We owe this little pearl to the 'rationalist' pen of Messrs Barthel, Brucker, and Monnerie.*"

To sum up, then: our valiant "repentant" Ufologists have not reaped the hoped-for fruits from their "repentance". "*The Great Martian Scare*" is, in conclusion, nothing but the reflection of their own fear: *the fear of appearing, as Ufologists, unworthy of scientific consideration*. From which comes their ostentatious transition to "rationalism" and the exploit of producing a book which, as they had intended it, was to have rehabilitated them in the eyes of the

academic world. But they have not succeeded. I would say that, on reputation, they have lost out. Their mistake has been, I think, that they forgot that, in order to shine, their "*Sun of Reason*" requires a sky free of clouds: *especially free of the clouds of prejudice and the even darker clouds of intellectual abdication*.

#### Notes and References

- (1) G. Barthel and J. Brucker. "*La Grande Peur Martienne*". Publ by Nouvelles Editions Rationalistes, Paris, 1979. (pp. 88-93).
- (2) See, for example, *Il Giornale dei Misteri*, No. 344.
- (3) Barthel and Brucker: op. cit., p. 92
- (4) Barthel and Brucker: op. cit., p. 100.

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#### Note by Editor, FSR

Should it be asked why we have troubled to translate and publish this very lengthy article, we would explain that in our opinion the question under discussion is an immensely important one. We have already reported on the astonishing success in France of the current attempt to eliminate all interest in UFOs and prove that not a single genuine case has ever occurred. We know a good deal about the political motivations that lie behind all this, and we know what are the political allegiances of those who, in the USA, just as in France and Britain, are pursuing these ends, so there is no need to say more than that. It is certain that preparations are under way for a massive drive here in Britain to achieve the same results, and we must expect therefore to see books appearing here in which the same methods are employed as have been employed in France by Messrs B. and B.

*Our deepest thanks go to Monsieur Roger Chereau for giving us a copy of this book which is now out of print and most difficult to get!*

Finally, to round all this off, it might be advisable to say a word or two for our English-speaking readers about some of these famous French cases in the Wave of 1954. With the passing of the years, there are naturally even fewer people in Britain (and assuredly in the USA, Canada and Australia) who recall any details of these matters than there are in France. And in France itself they are few enough!

Of the 1954 French Cases mentioned by name in Pier Luigi Sani's articles, only a few will be recalled even by our older readers. Details of those at Mourières, Cenon, Contay, Chabeuil, and Poncey-sur-l'ignon (all cases that were too "good", as Pier Luigi Sani says for B. and B. to dare to look at them!) will be found in the American book *FLYING SAUCERS AND THE STRAIGHT-LINE MYSTERY* (Criterion Books, New York City, 1958) the first half of which is a translation of the original edition of Aimé Michel's famous book *Mystérieux Objets Célestes* (1958).

As for the seven cases that B. and B. did choose to select (Jonquerets-de-Livet; Jonches; Claix; Les Egots; Maisoncelles-en-Brie; Toulouse, and Cerf) it does not seem, at this moment at any rate, that, except for the first, I can lay my hands on any English language source that gives them.

As for the two most important cases which are discussed here, namely those of Quarouble and Prémanon, both are given in detail in Aimé Michel's book *Mystérieux Objets Célestes* and in the American translation thereof (*Flying Saucers and the Straight-Line Mystery*).

In FSR's collection, THE HUMANOIDS (Futura Paperbacks, 1974) some of the cases will be found on the undermentioned pages, in Jacques Vallée's section, *The Pattern Behind the UFO Landings*:-

Quarouble Case (Marius DeWilde)	<i>Humanoids, p. 31</i>
Cenon Case	<i>Humanoids, p. 31</i>
Contay Case	<i>Humanoids, p. 30</i>
Mouriéras Case	<i>Humanoids, p. 31</i>
Chabeuil Case	<i>Humanoids, p. 32</i>
Prémanon Case	<i>Humanoids, p. 32</i>
Les Jonquerets-de-Livet Case	<i>Humanoids, p. 53</i>
Poncey-sur-l'ignon Case	<i>Humanoids, p. 36</i>

And, finally, how *very* interesting it is to note that, in the Prémanon Case of September 27, 1954, Messrs B. and B. are accusing four little children of having "bent" the grass, but not "trampled" it, in a circular, anticlockwise fashion. Clever kids! It seems that B. and B. managed to find only one of the children (by then a university student) but did not manage to find the other three children. But we in Britain know very well where the missing children are. They are in England, on the farms of Wiltshire and Hampshire, and still up to their old anticlockwise tricks too, as is proved by our recent reports on the great swirled rings in the cornfields! — G.C.

## STOP PRESS

# FIRST CORNFIELD CIRCLES IN HERTFORDSHIRE

# Mystery

August 11, 1989 MERCURY M7

# circles appear

MUCH HADHAM (N. Hertfordshire)

# in wheat field

MYSTERIOUS circles, which cannot be explained by the country's top experts, have appeared in a wheat field at Much Hadham.

Partners Rodney and Richard Munday discovered two 10-yard wide circles in a field behind The Jolly Wagons, Widford Road, on their 180-acre Camwell Hall farm.

The wheat had been completely flattened, bent over at the base of the stem and was lying in a clockwise direction.

The circles were about three yards apart and one was slightly bigger than the other.

They were discovered at the weekend as the brothers, whose family have been at Camwell Hall since 1935, began to harvest their crop.

Mr Rodney Munday (41) said: "It's totally extraordinary. I have never seen anything like it.

"I can't see how it could happen."

They believe from the state of the flattened wheat that it could have happened up to two weeks earlier.

The brothers were puzzled that if the circles had been caused by a freak shift in air pressure, why the edges were not ragged or did not tail off.

They concluded it would have taken quite a force to flatten the wheat.

They also believe it was one of the first times that the mysterious circles had been discovered in the region.

Since they were first recorded in 1981, the number of circles found every year has been growing.

Initially there were just 25 in a year. Last year there were 250, and already there have been 250 this year.

Most have been in the Hampshire and Sussex areas.

Several theories have been put forward to explain them — including freak mini-cyclones, or the presence of underground workings or historic settlements.

More bizarre explanations include alien space-ships.

Mr Richard Payne, the senior policy advisor of the East Anglian region of the National Farmers'

Union said it could have been a result of chemical spraying over old workings in the exceptionally dry weather.

He added that it was the first case reported to the union in the region.

Mr Willie White, assistant technical adviser in the NFU's south east region, where most of the circles have been found, said: "There is absolutely nothing to explain what they are. It is really weird."



THE MUNDAY brothers in one of the circles.