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FRANKENSTEIN AND
HIS MONSTER

(AVIATION FOR WORLD SERVICE)

By

H. M. SWANWICK, C.H., M.A.

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FRANKENSTEIN AND HIS
MONSTER

AVIATION FOR WORLD SERVICE

(A Sequel to "New Wars for Old")

BY
H. M. SWANWICK, C.H., M.A.

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FRANKENSTEIN AND HIS MONSTER.

AVIATION FOR WORLD SERVICE.

*Il trionfo dei liberi e dei saggi
su quanto oscuro e prono e iniquo ancora
opprima il mondo.*

LAURO DE BOSIS, the heroic Italian airman, left us a tragedy, the story of Icarus, in which he conceives Dædalus, the father who equipped his son with wings, as the Spirit of Science. Icarus declares that "the new poets dream of greater heroes and of a higher glory than to slay the sons of mothers on the field of battle". When asked what is the nature of the glory which is their dream, he replies, in the words set above as text to this pamphlet:—"The triumph of the free and of the wise over all things dark, low and iniquitous, which still oppress the world."

Wings! Down all the ages the possession of wings has been man's dream of Heaven, man's equipment for a pictured angelic host. They fit the young. They demand the firm will and the constant heart and the keenly calculating mind. The bright eyes of danger



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look ever into the young eyes of aviators and lure them on. The purest of the elements might beckon youth to the purest of adventures. Man has defiled the earth with his guns, and the sea with his submarines; now the air itself has been polluted in the same insensate way. Can nothing be done to purify it for heroic youth?

A NEGLECTED PLEA.

When aviation was in its infancy, John Galsworthy made an eloquent appeal to Governments that they should get together and undertake never to use this new medium for purposes of destruction. This appeal followed hard upon the news that Blériot had flown the Channel. It was before any vested interests were engaged, before any fears had been roused, before any prestige was at stake. The unimaginative (which is as much as to say, nearly all of us) took no heed. The Governments, lacking a prophet (although some politicians must have read Mr. Wells' books—but then they are “only novels”!) allowed the tiny grain of danger to grow, like Mr. Wells' nightmare-mushroom, to its present proportions. Poor Frankenstein made his monster.

Military aviation has reached a degree of aggressive power which has compelled experts to admit that “there is no defence against attack from the air except counter-attack”.

More bluntly, there is no defence at all. Indeed, it is believed that a so-called “defensive force” might very gravely injure its own people. There may be vengeance. A man may say, “Since you have burnt my home and murdered my wife and children, I will burn your home and murder your wife and children”; but the only hope is to be found in the possibility that, if State A were certain that its mass-murder of the population of State B would result in the mass-murder of its own population, this certainty might act as a deterrent.

The hope is a faint one. There never can be anything remotely resembling certainty in this matter, and we have seen too much mass-hysteria of late years not to be reasonably apprehensive that a state might attempt a gamble of this sort, if sufficiently infuriated or alarmed.

CHAOS THREATENED.

Any war on a big scale in Europe would not be even as ordered and predictable as wars have been in the past. It would be a monstrous orgy of reprisal on civilian populations. Adult civilians, reputed sane, female as well as male, have, of course, no moral right to exemption from the consequences of wars which they have abetted or tolerated; but the engagement of the whole population, as never before, would immeasurably increase the disaster of any large-scale war in which Europeans or North

Americans¹ were engaged and would differentiate it from past wars by the total disorganisation, social, political, commercial and financial that would result. If populations could be kept scurrying about, panic-stricken, on a large scale, in search of shelter which did not exist anywhere, the collapse of civilisation and of the very means of existence would speedily follow.

It is impossible to believe that any of the Governments which, like Germany, Poland and Yugoslavia, are said to be organising distribution of gas-masks, holding of gas-drills, construction of gas-proof shelters, can have any belief at all in the efficacy of such measures in face of a serious assault. Even if we could imagine infants living in gas-masks for days and nights on end, or the business of provisioning, eating, drinking, lighting, heating and sanitation carried on in bomb-proof shelters, how could the Government of the invaded countries go on? Who would be left, even to make the peace? Governments must be perfectly aware of the futility of all this gas-mask nonsense, and we are driven to the unpleasant conclusion that they want to work their peoples up to a state of "nerves" which will make them uncritically obedient to any alarmist summons.

In war-time many civil inhabitants have always

¹ So far, South American States seem to be impelled to fight only each other and, by a tacit understanding, have not used aircraft for purposes of destruction.

been killed; we ourselves, in the world-war, were instrumental in starving populations (and especially children) by blockade and as lately as the beginning of this century, we devastated a country by burning its farms and crops and herding its non-combatants into pestiferous concentration camps. What we have never seen is the total anarchy that would ensue from mass reprisals in densely populated countries; the absence of all ordered life, a chaos of which we have no record in European history since Christ, though we may guess that some earlier empires crashed in a similar way, by the dissolution of all coherence.

Reading the histories of primitive clans, we have thought men were savages who cut the throats of another's family when they had dealt (or failed to deal) with him. But that's nothing to what a bombing aviator may do. A strange thought—that to this pitch of senseless wickedness has the Western World been brought, by the collaboration of the "nice-boy" aviator, the mild-mannered, laboratory-minded man of science, the peace-protesting politician, the herd-like multitude! At none of these can we point and say, "That is the criminal!" The crime is in the total lack of international control which the peoples have allowed to grow up: mankind is Frankenstein; science, especially the science of aviation is his monster.

Can he learn to control it?

STILL TIME TO ACT.

While the havoc of a large-scale European war would be past computation horrible, this very fact makes it possible that no European State would resort to war, except under great provocation. There is not yet any overwhelming provocation anywhere and we still have a breathing-space in which to plan for peace. It is a strange paradox that just now the very clamour for Security and Equality is the chief cause of insecurity and inequality. Can we not divert men's minds from these barren and irritating controversies to a great co-operative effort, in which fretted nerves and prides might be assuaged?

In a pamphlet entitled *New Wars for Old*¹ the various proposals for a so-called "International Police" were discussed and rejected as being, in the first place, impracticable, in the sense which their advocates intend; they were also held to be exceedingly dangerous, since they were capable of being misapplied to evil purposes and, in so far as they drew men's minds from better ways of striving for the organised security of the world, injurious to the cause of international co-operation and peace.

Proposals for an "International Police" have, however, postulated two preliminary processes,

¹ Women's International League, 55, Gower Street, London, W.C.1. Price 7d. post free.

which can be heartily supported and which are indeed closely interwoven, so that one can scarcely be carried out without the other; these are the total abolition of military aviation and the internationalisation of civil aviation. These proposals have the great advantage that they do not divide the peace movement, as those for a "police force" do, and that they do not involve the organisation of men or materials for destructive violence of any kind. On the contrary, they are calculated to promote understanding and co-operation all the time, and the development of one can but help the development of the other. They have already received a great deal of thought and discussion and the inevitable extension of civil aviation makes its further control a matter of first-class importance, which must increasingly engage the attention of governments. This being so, it is imperative that people at large, not interested in one aspect only, such as the commercial, or financial, or military, but interested as existing on the earth beneath the heavens—they and their families, their homes, their crops, their institutions, their monuments—the earth whose most terrible enemy is now in the air—should also give the best of their attention to the trend of policies in regard to aviation.

At the very outset, we must insist that great main issues shall not be obscured by pettifogging objections to little inconveniences. It would be

a great advantage if internationalisation did not entail commercial losses and a still greater if it produced commercial gains. Those most fitted to judge believe that a well-devised plan, loyally worked, might result in great commercial gain to all the countries concerned, though it is possible that, as in all great changes, some individual interests might suffer. Be this as it may, the indirect commercial gain of greater security from war would more than counter-balance any possible cost, while, taking into account the immense human value of more decent relations between peoples, the cost could not possibly outweigh the gains. Probably everybody, except those personally engaged in military aviation, would feel immense relief if it were totally and universally abolished. The menace from the air is so fraught with possibilities of the complete destruction of organised society that all responsible governments must desire its withdrawal.

TWIN PROPOSALS.

There are two preliminary difficulties to be faced: (1) that, if in peace-time military aviation were completely and universally abandoned, all special bombing and fighting machines destroyed, all air-munitions of every sort abolished (so far as they can be distinguished from land or sea-munitions and from material used for civilian

purposes), and if no aviators were recruited or trained for military service—even if all this were done, a state under temptation might speedily convert the whole of its civilian aircraft and aviators to military purposes. These would doubtless be much less efficacious than fully trained men flying the latest types of bombing planes; but these are, by supposition, no longer there and the aggressor state, by being first in the air with its bombs, might gain a great advantage over the state which had not had time to adapt its civil aviation to war; (2) that if air lines between different countries were completely internationalised in the ways which will be described further on, states would be even more dangerously menaced than they are now by the continued existence of national military air-forces. It is impossible to conceive that a state which had been forbidden all military air force would consent to the merging of civil aviation in an international system, unless all other states consented to abandon their military air-forces too. Lord Londonderry and others have stated (and the British Draft Convention submitted to the Disarmament Conference includes a paragraph to the same effect) that the British Government would be willing to abolish naval and military aircraft if a system for control of civil aviation could be devised which should make it impossible to use it for military purposes. Now, though it may seem an extravagant demand

that such misuse should be made literally impossible at all times and everywhere, there is no doubt that very much could be done to hinder it and we should insist that Governments should put their heads together to work out the ways in which this could be done. The amount of support expressed for the principle of internationalisation justifies us in demanding this.

The only way to meet these very great difficulties is to meet them together: to insist that, step by step, the abolition of military aviation and the internationalisation of civil aviation shall proceed as parts of the same movement. No scheme can be made so absolutely complete that it will never be possible for a state here or there to misuse its national civil aircraft for aggressive purposes; but the complete absence from the world of all military aviation, with its evil tradition that it is permissible (whether for so-called national or international purposes) to rain down promiscuous death from the air, coupled with all the complications of a well-developed system of internationalised civil aviation, would make it infinitely more difficult and less "remunerative" than now.

DANGERS OF LEAGUE AIR FORCE.

I am not oblivious of the fact that some of the advocates of an International Air Force hope that, when these two processes have been

carried through, an I.A.F. would assure their maintenance. This hope is, I believe, illusory, because of the impossibility of establishing an I.A.F. that shall act speedily and impartially; but also because the very existence of Air Forces of any kind, with corollaries of legitimate recruitment, training and supplies of munitions for indiscriminate murder, would serve to keep alive the very fears and jealousies, the intrigues and brutalities which endanger the world as it is. "Absolute Security" is a mirage until we are all absolutely good; by which time no force will be required to keep us good. Meanwhile, the combination of the two processes recommended makes for security of the more enduring sort.

It is scarcely possible to overrate the obstacle that may be offered to internationalisation by the advocacy of an International Air Force. For the United States and the U.S.S.R. both object to the imposition of War-Sanctions and therefore the attempt to establish an International Air Force for the imposition of such Sanctions would prevent them from falling in with a world-agreement to abolish national military aviation; this would also keep Japan out of the agreement. But, as aforesaid, without such an agreement, it would be impossible to carry out the internationalisation of civil aviation. We need to create a moral atmosphere in which the air is, once for all, a demilitarised zone.

There must be no manufacture and stock of aerial munitions; no *arrière-pensée*, on the part of Governments subsidising their national civil aviation, so as to have a potential reserve-force in the air. In fact governments must undertake not to subsidise their national aviation at all; if it were to prove commercially unprofitable, that would be a good reason to let it go; there could be no good reason for subsidising national aviation, once military aviation were totally abolished.

DIFFICULTY AND COMPLEXITY.

The universal abolition of military aviation is a difficult resolve (although it has had very widespread governmental support in principle),¹ but it is not a very complex one; the difficulties are almost entirely moral. The internationalisation of civil aviation, on the other hand, is a much more complex process to carry through, but it is probably not so difficult; there exists already a substantial beginning, in the many regulations which have had to be agreed to by different states, and the fact that civil aviation

¹ Among the states which have declared in favour of abolition are Austria, China, Denmark, Germany, Hejaz, Hungary, Norway, Russia, Spain, Sweden and Turkey. In addition, the following have advocated abolition of air-bombardment: Czechoslovakia, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Rumania, Switzerland, U.S.A. and Yugoslavia. The United Kingdom's contribution is to ask for "The practical examination of the whole problem of bombing from the air in its widest possible form". This is not good enough.

has been heavily subsidised and extensively controlled by governments renders it more susceptible of international organisation than scattered and individualised ventures would be. In some respects, the international Postal Union may serve as a model.

It may be difficult to get agreement, partly because so many fears and jealousies have developed, and fear is ever a dangerous counsellor; but there is a great work to be done in popularising the idea of international control of civil aviation, and those who are already clamouring for the abolition of military aviation should certainly add to their armoury of persuasion a knowledge of the outlines, at least, of a scheme for such control. Advocacy of the one can but assist advocacy of the other.

It is not necessary, in an elementary pamphlet like this, to deal in detail with the abolition of military aviation. Complete and universal abolition is intended. It is sometimes suggested that a beginning might be made in Europe alone. But how could a European Power with possessions in Asia consent to disarm in the air unless Japan consented too? And how could Japan consent unless the United States consented?¹ The timing of disarmament in the air, so as to

¹ It will be understood that this is no place to argue the point whether "possessions" of the sort should be completely abandoned. I am concerned with agreements which might be made during the next year or two.

synchronise with the establishment of complete control of civil aviation, would be the chief technical difficulty.

States which still cling to the national use of aircraft as a very important "argument" in force-politics, and states which are apprehensive lest other states should not loyally carry out an agreed scheme are those which will find it difficult to agree upon one. All the Great Powers and some of the smaller Powers are in one or both of these categories, and it should be the task of the Convention which would be summoned to draw up a scheme, to make it as fool-proof as possible.

It seems possible that a large number of states, perhaps even all states, could very soon be persuaded to agree in peace-time to the abolition of bombing from the air. We must insist that this is not enough. What states agree to in peace-time does not hold in war-time. As long as there are men trained as military aviators, there will be something approaching certainty that they will be used in war for bombing. They may be trained ostensibly for scouting and for intelligence work; they may be trained to fight an invading air-force; under stress, they will be used in any purpose required for victory. In war there is only one law: to win the war. Peace-time is the time to put obstacles in the way of the outbreak of war; not to give futile undertakings regarding conduct in war.

PEACE-PLOTS AND PEACE-PLANS.

It is a difficult matter to distinguish between the wariness which is the result of psychological understanding, and the cynicism which holds it wisdom always to anticipate evil and to call every approach to better understanding a "peace-plot". While it is foolish (and incidentally leads to cynicism) to enter into solemn undertakings which are unlikely to be kept under great stress, just when they are needed (such as the stress of war, intense fear, or unbearable sense of wrong) it is as foolish to regard all proposals as "a trap". Every loving-cup has two handles: one to engage the left hand of each party to the pledge (so that he cannot use his dirk), while the right hands are clasped in token of friendship.

While therefore I would regard it as futile for any Governments to declare in peace-time that they would forgo in war-time any weapon they found efficacious, I would think it possible and desirable to make, in peace-time, all sorts of arrangements which would increase the difficulties of making war at all; provided, of course, that those difficulties were felt by all parties equally, for if this were not so, the sense of wrong and insecurity might cause panic. We should, in peace-time, construct all possible agreements which foster peace, but hamper war; instead of doing as we now do, making entanglements (like tariffs) which hamper peace,

but may assist to make nations self-contained in war. In fact, that the internationalisation of aviation would make states much more dependent on each other is a truth not to be shirked, but to be proclaimed with joy.

People who still believe that Rules of War would be kept by combatants are living in past ages, when sometimes some of them may have been observed. Before this scientific age, war might sometimes resemble a game, horrible, it is true, for non-combatants, but enjoyable and admirable for "heroes". Those days—not so spacious as romance would have us believe—are gone, never to return.

These two complementary proposals are not put forward as a sort of Universal Peace Pill. Even if we abolished all military, and internationalised all civil aviation, there would still remain many deadly weapons of war for men who wanted to use them. Until causes and occasions of war are removed, there is no peace. But the accomplishment of so big a task as these two could not be without countless good indirect effects. Men would feel so proud of having pulled off such difficult jobs as these, that they would be stimulated to attempt others of the same kind. Their courage would grow, and they might even stop talking about Security, when they had seriously set to work to establish it together. The great mistake of the past has been to try to achieve security separately. One

can't be sure that strong Powers will always refrain from bullying weaker Powers, or from the boyish recreation of "biting their thumbs" at each other. But the interest of more adult activities will tend to prevail, once they are well begun.

WHAT IS INTERNATIONALISATION?

What is meant by the Internationalisation of Civil Aviation? In the fullest sense, it means the ownership and control, by all the countries concerned, of all aircraft and ground establishments employed in aviation between those countries. This would cover the regulation and payment of employees engaged in such aviation; also complete control of the distribution of information relating to the business and of legal matters, such as the nationality of personnel, insurance, licences, flying regulations, patents; also of experiments and safety devices; also the manufacture of all that pertains to aircraft; also provisions for air-ports, hangars, fuelling and signalling.

It might be that internationalisation would be found to entail a certain degree of international control of civil aviation even of a national order (*i.e.* within the boundaries of one country). It is held essential, for instance, that the personnel of the International Air Company should be composed of people of different nationalities in an agreed proportion; but some

go so far as to require that a majority of those carrying on purely domestic aviation should be foreign to the country in which they fly. This would be exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to apply, and the difficulty of the misuse of national aviation might be partly met by a system of international licensing of all aviators and all machines, national as well as international.

THE PRESENT POSITION.

Most people are aware that the organisation of aviation between countries has been subject to international control, but few probably realise the extent to which this control has already developed, and how much experience has accumulated, showing both the difficulties of further development and the possibilities of overcoming them.

From 1889 onwards there have been aeronautical Congresses and the international study of aeronautical matters in various legal Congresses. In 1909 a great impetus was given to international discussions by the Channel-crossing of Blériot. The war changed the whole outlook of the world in regard to aviation. In August, 1919, was formed the *International Air Traffic Association* (I.A.T.A.) between certain German, English, Netherlands and Scandinavian Companies, with central offices at the Hague. It was followed quickly by the *Commission Inter-*

nationale de Navigation Aéronautique (C.I.N.A.), which is under the direction of the League of Nations, and which drew up its first Convention on October 13th, 1919. In the first instance, 29 States adhered to it, and after various modifications, seventeen more, including Germany, but not Russia. There are, besides, a large number of bilateral conventions in Europe, and others relating to the United States and to South America.

VARIOUS PROPOSALS.

It is reported that over half the delegations in the Air Commission at Geneva are in favour of internationalisation, and various proposals have been put forward, the French having been very active in this direction. One proposal is to set up "one or more International Bodies" which shall form "one or more companies" to operate the international lines. These companies shall be financed in the first place by "entrance subscriptions" and by "annual subsidies from the different countries, calculated on a basis to be determined". They would buy out all existing companies.¹

Other proposals are to raise the capital by an international issue of inscribed and redeemable

¹ See "Memorandum relating to the French delegation's proposals on the internationalisation of civil air transport," League of Nations, Official No. Conf. D. 115. Also "Objective Study on the Internationalisation of Civil Aviation," League of Nations Air Commission, Official No. D/C. A. 9.

stock ; not more than a certain proportion to be held by any one country.¹ It is also suggested, as a further safeguard against the capture of the company's assets, that the amount of stock held by one government or one individual should be limited. Interest should be fixed at a moderate rate.

The management of these International Companies would be in the hands of international committees which would represent all the nations in agreed proportions and have absolute technical control. Opinions vary as to the extent the League of Nations should be represented, and it must not be forgotten that, till the League is universal, an enterprise of this nature could not be entrusted to the League.

In all the plans discussed, it has been agreed that the owners should be the "International Body or Bodies", and the lines should be run by the technical and commercial experts of the companies on behalf of those bodies, to which they would have to report.

The personnel—aviators, office staffs, and ground establishments—is to be composed of persons of all countries in an agreed proportion and none of them shall be engaged in or liable to any military service of any kind.

The International Body would determine the construction of machines and spare parts on

¹ See *World Airways—Why Not?* Victor Gollancz. Price 1s.

an agreed basis. National civil aviation companies would have to buy from the International. They could not be allowed to manufacture their own.

INSPECTION AND SANCTION.

The International Body would be entrusted with the task of international inspection, to see that there was no preparation for the militarisation of aviation in any country, and that the laws internationally made were kept. This inspection would be greatly eased by the international character of the aviation staff, which would tend to prevent any serious development of law-breaking, and take the sting out of legitimate enquiries. Without being unduly optimistic, it is possible to hope that there would be little temptation to law-breaking, since both fear and ambition would be greatly diminished ; but there would have to be some agreed body, the Permanent Court of International Justice or another, before which cases of alleged breach of law could be brought. From a well-developed system of internationalised aviation it would be a terrible thing for any state to be suspended, with all the consequent loss of mobility and trade that would result. We need look no further for "sanction".

THE RIGHT AND THE WRONG END.

Many of the efforts to stop war have begun at the wrong end : the end of barren legalism ;

barren because not based on any profound feeling of respect for law. In all countries without exception, the national sentiment is as yet stronger than the international. Put the one in seeming opposition to the other and the Articles of your Pacts and Protocols are words, words, words. By pursuing a less rigid and more gradually developing policy of international co-operation, we avoid appearing to antagonise the interests of the nations; we accustom a large body of the flower of youth of all nations to work together, face danger together, acquire a common spirit of loyalty; we give to the world at large this exhilarating spectacle of a great service rendered publicly and picturesquely by all for all; we show the commercially-minded that Internationalism pays; we take pacifism—peace-making—out of the rut of the negative and prove it shingly heroic; we divorce, once for all, the idea of aviation from the idea of destruction, with which it has been so tragically connected during its infancy.

Not by mechanical means will domination and brutality be converted to constructive effort; but by welding so strong a spirit of gallant comradeship that it will use all mechanical means for the one great purpose only; whose service is perfect freedom.

