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OFF TO MEET THE ENEMY

HIGH SPEED single-seaters of the defending 'Westland' forces ambushed above the London clouds to await 'Eastland's' attack.

The British Air Manoeuvres

A Lay Observer Finds London Impossible of Defense Against Aërial Attack

From the *New Statesman* (London Liberal Weekly)

THE air manoeuvres — mostly over London — this week should certainly have served to stimulate the imaginations of Londoners regarding the wide possibilities of air attack in the next large war in which we may be involved. But whether they have produced upon the mind of the man in the street exactly the impression which the Air Ministry would like them to have produced may be doubted. Millions were able to watch the fast swooping of the defending forces upon the 'enemy' bombers, but naturally the bombers always appeared to survive unscathed. There were three over Kingsway within an hour of the 'declaration of war,' and a few minutes later seven more. They were both attacked in turn by a flight of nine fighting planes and eventually flew away. Not one was 'brought down in flames.'

This, of course, is accounted for by the circumstance that we were witnessing peaceful manoeuvres, and not the real thing. Still the fact remains that there were (theoretically) those great loads of bombs vertically above Kingsway. One or two of the bombers might perhaps have improved the spectacle by simulating nose-dives when attacked, but it is doubtful whether even that would have afforded very much comfort to the man in the street. A bomber, neatly brought down — as most of them no doubt will be adjudged to have been by the umpires — over London would presumably bring its bombs with it; and so for each pair or trio of enemies destroyed there would probably be a few hundred dead Londoners. It may be better — it probably is — to have ten bombs dropped in one place than to have one bomb dropped on each of ten

places, but calculations of that kind, however sure, afford but cold comfort to the onlooker with a bomber over his head. He tends to take a non-technical view of the subject and cannot easily appreciate, still less enthusiastically applaud, the efforts of those who are defending him to bring down upon him ten bombs all in a lump, even though they may be accompanied by three dead Frenchmen or three dead Ruritians.

Making all possible allowances for the inevitable limitations of mock fighting, the outstanding fact from the spectator's point of view was that a considerable number of heavy bombers got over the very heart of London without being attacked at all. They were attacked only when they were already there. In this fact there is, of course, nothing to surprise the student of air-warfare because he already knew that

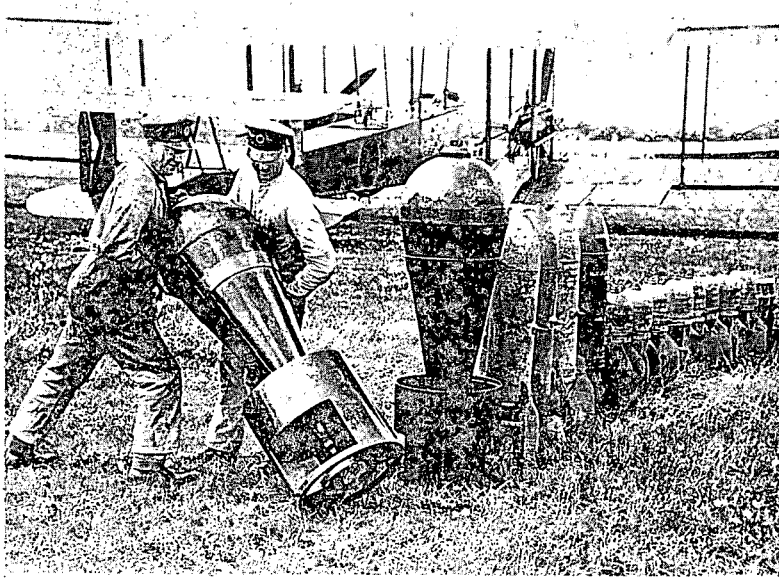


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THE MUNITIONS OF WAR IN THE AIR

A FEW OF THE BOMBS which were carried over London during the mimic air raid. Some weighed more than a quarter of a ton.

the problem of effective defense against attack by air is at present quite insoluble. This week's exhibition has served mainly as a great public demonstration of that insolubility.

Evidently there is not the slightest reason to suppose that these air manœuvres, though they may have afforded valuable experience and even new knowledge in other respects, will be found to have made any appreciable contribution to the solution of the essential problem — which is, how to prevent high explosives or poisonous gas bombs being dropped on London at all. It is just possible to conceive some form of defense. It is possible, for example, at least to imagine the invention of some electrical apparatus which would put all magnetos out of action within a given area, or rather, a given volume of space, and so prevent aeroplanes entering that area. But that would be a rather wild effort of the imagination, having no basis upon anything that we know at present of wireless electrical forces. Besides, it would probably not be very difficult in that case to invent another form of ignition for petrol engines analogous to the direct form of gas ignition which used to be used for gas engines.

It is evident, therefore, that the problem of defense against air-attack cannot be solved by present-day physical science. It is a tactical not a laboratory problem, and tactically it is quite impossible to imagine a satisfactory solution. In the case of London, the area to be defended is from 70 to 100 miles in circumference, and the attack may come at any altitude from one mile to five miles high — with plenty of clouds to hide behind. A

bombs would be wasted on fields or open spaces.

From all this it would appear, in the first place, that no system of defense is of much use if it does not prevent enemy aeroplanes from entering the London area at all — which would seem to be quite impossible; and consequently, in the second place, that we are approaching this serious problem from an altogether wrong angle. The old maxim that the best form of defense is attack would seem to apply here with greater force than ever before in any form of warfare. If London is to be protected against attacks from the air, it must be protected by attacks delivered elsewhere, preferably, of course, upon the enemy's air bases, but at any rate at as great a distance away as is possible. It will not be usefully protected by the shooting down of giant bombers over Kingsway and Whitehall.

Actually, of course, we have to make up our minds to the fact that it is impossible to devise, and as far as we know will always be impossible to devise, any effective de-

considerable proportion of any bombing force, especially if it is scattered in formation, is sure to get through any cordon; and even if our defense were so well organized as to make it almost certain that no enemy pilot would get away alive, that would only ensure that none of the enemy

fense against air raids whether by day or by night. Every great city in Europe is in the same position. It is easier, naturally, to defend smaller cities, easier to defend Paris than London or Cologne than Paris, because the bomber's mark is smaller, and he may, with luck, be driven away before he can reach it. But with a huge area like London there is no reasonable hope of that. In any serious attack a certain proportion, and probably a large proportion, of enemy planes are bound to get above the metropolitan area, and once there can by no means be prevented from unloading their bombs somewhere and somehow. Heavy casualties could in such a case be avoided only by an unthinkable flight *en masse* into the country. Short of that, London's best means of defense would probably be a large increase of the Fire Brigade, and a special organization designed to meet the dangers of poisonous gas. When war breaks out with any neighboring Power, London will certainly be bombed with incendiary bombs, or gas bombs, or high explosive. No aerial defense force will, it is clear, be able to prevent that. All we can hope for is to limit the damage as much as possible and to be in a position to inflict even more severe damage upon the enemy. This conclusion may be a brutal one and is certainly in all respects unpalatable; but how is it to be avoided? We must face the facts sooner or later, and this week's mimic warfare seems to afford a good opportunity for facing them at once.

The central fact is, as we have said, that there can be no such thing as effective defense against an air raid
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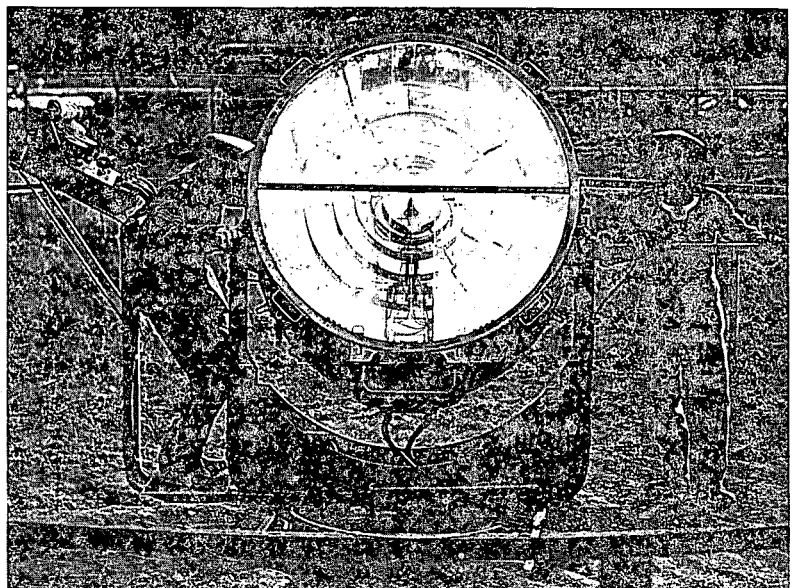


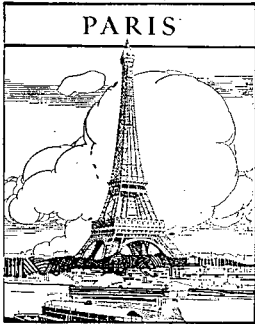
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FLOODLIGHTS FOR THE SKY

ONE OF THE GREAT searchlights turned on the raiding bombers as they attacked the British capital.

Metropolitana

*Paris Reacts to the Tourist—Jazz on Brussels Radios—‘Tragic Wives’ in Singapore—
The Temperamental Taxi-Drivers of Madrid—A Moscow Chief of Police—The
New Road That Leads to Rome—Vienna’s Brown-Robed Capuchins—
Gentlemen of the Night School in Berlin*



AMERICANS who visited Paris this summer and fall had the doubtful honor of forming part of the greatest influx of foreign tourists the French capital has ever known.

While official figures are yet to be published, unofficial predictions, made by persons ranging from the happiest night club proprietor to the most disgusted private citizen, are unanimous in saying that the final figures will be the highest ever recorded—far higher than last year. The 1927 record was high enough to satisfy most Parisians—a total of nearly two million holiday makers among whom, strangely enough, both Britons and Spaniards, with 833,531 and 415,000 respectively, greatly outnumbered Americans, with 225,000.

In general, Parisians are pleased and proud to see their city full of visitors from abroad, but there are a few whose welcome does not exclude a touch of jealousy, especially since foreign tongues are so freely spoken on the boulevards, and since signs and notices in many stores and resorts have for some time been appearing in both French and English. The proprietor of one Montmartre establishment, less acquiescent and perhaps less successful than his fellows, has given a hint of this feeling by putting up a sign: 'French spoken here.' And during one evening on the Boulevard St. Michel, for instance, an interested observer noted that out of the first hundred promenaders who passed him, only twelve were speaking French.

There is an unusual admission of a *faill accompli* in the fact that the Paris newspaper *Excelsior* has printed a whole article for the sole benefit of these visiting hordes. It is a full consideration of the old question of how to tip in Paris. Recognizing that this problem is a major annoyance to most inexperienced travelers, especially in the case of hotels where ten per cent for tips is not automatically included in the regular hotel bill, the

French newspaper states the following simple rule: If your bill is one thousand francs, your tip should be one hundred. Of this, you should give the dining room waiters forty-five francs, the valet or chambermaid thirty francs, the hall porter twenty-five francs. 'Tourists who tip according to this schedule,' adds the article, 'will be protected against over-liberality inspired by fear of under-tipping.'

Another event which may be pointed to by those not completely in sympathy with the tourist invasion, as a direct result of the presence of hundreds of thousands of foreigners in Paris, is the promulgation of a new traffic regulation by the famous Prefect of Police, M. Chiappe. This is designed to curb the blowing of motor horns between one and five in the morning by having automobiles slow for crossings rather than honk; and since these are the hours during which taxis may be seen scurrying up the broad Boulevard Raspail carrying foreign visitors away from an evening in the Latin Quarter, the new law is believed to be directed mainly at them. It will be appreciated, however, by anyone who has tried to sleep on a summer evening in Paris, with the windows open and a half thousand taxi horns playing limping arpeggios in the street below.



Pan Alley seem an insult and an abomination. This explains why, when the resident of Brussels sits down before his radio to tune in on *Radio-Belgique*, his home station, as every patriotic Bruxellois should, he has been growing more and more annoyed. For the sum of his irritation is expressed in the words, 'Too much jazz.'

Why, one may ask, does he work up

such a rage over the infelicities of his local station, when he is set in the center of a sea of invisible waves that swirl across Europe, and at a turning of the wrist can tune in on programs from three Paris stations, news reports from Toulouse, bed-time stories from London, organ music from Berlin, symphony concerts from Holland, Poland and Czechoslovakia, or even a physical culture lesson from Sweden?

The answer may lie in Belgian character. The Belgian likes home goods, and means to have them fit his tastes. If they fail to do so, he protests. And protesting against radio programs in Belgium assumes all the delights of being agin' the government, for broadcasting is a government monopoly.

'Jazz, jazz, nothing but jazz!' cry the exasperated Bruxellois listeners-in to M. Vanhoet and M. Tellier, who are in charge of *Radio-Belgique*, the big Brussels station, which holds the government broadcasting license. 'There ought to be a law.'

'Exactly,' answer M. Vanhoet and M. Tellier in unison. 'And that law is pending. If you help us pass it, part of the tax which it will set on receiving sets will go to pay broadcasting expenses.'

Otherwise, they explain, *Radio-Belgique* is too poor to keep symphony orchestras for long periods, with good musicians priced at \$1.40 an hour. In Vienna there are symphony concerts to be broadcast from a dozen big cafés, but not in Brussels. In Denmark, the government subsidizes the broadcasting stations to the tune of \$300,000 a year, but not in Belgium. *Radio-Belgique* actually has to pay a round sum in cash to get so much as a military band from the Defense Ministry. So the station is reduced to getting cheap music, which is jazz.

But, ask M. Vanhoet and M. Tellier, in the disarming way of monopolists the world over, is it as bad as it sounds? Three hours of jazz out of thirty-eight broadcasting hours a week—the actual count—should not be such a strain. Isn't it possibly pure misfortune that makes the Bruxellois, every time he sits down in his slippers for a pleasant evening before the dials, turn to something by George Gershwin or Irving Berlin?