

PROFESSOR JUNKER'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE TRANSOCEANIC FLIGHTS ✓

Professor Junkers stated that his works stood in no other relation to the Kohl-Hunefeld project than that of airplane supplier. He had no participation in this project either financially or organizationally, even indirectly through other navigation or air traffic enterprises, as was wrongly supposed. Professor Junkers then explained that it was incorrect and unjust to characterize the attempt at a transoceanic flight as a sporting nuisance without any practical value or even as a veiled attempt at suicide, as has been done. "We can distinguish," continued Professor Junkers, "the action of two fundamentally different but interdependent types of men in all fields of human and political endeavor: the conservative man whose efforts in economic life aim at mass production without risk; in other cases, at the office-holder's career, extensively insured as it is against external disturbances; on the other hand, the opposite of this man, the pioneer, the man who stakes all on one card, the man of great risks. This type is the man of progress, the road-forgor, sometimes also the revolutionary. He is the one who raises new problems and tries to solve them, and who concedes the freest right of operation to every personal initiative. These men broaden the boundaries of human energy and human action. We need these two types in all fields of human activity. They create tension, urge and healthful obstruction; in a word, development.

"It must, of course, not be concluded from this that every venture has a moral value simply because it is a venture. That would be a much too far-reaching conclusion. It goes without saying that the venture is also subject to criticism and one must condemn every venture when the object is not great enough to justify the risk, or when the degree of probability of success is too small. This measure is somewhat elastic, and history has revised many a judgment that contemporaries have passed. When we look back from the standpoint of our stage of technical development, we may say with good reason that the history of the development of communications consists at first only of a series of attempts with unsuitable means. Just consider with what kinds of ships Columbus and Magellan made their discoveries. Think of the passionate fights against the railroad and of the history of the auto's development. That is what I mean when I say that history has often revised the opinion of contemporaries; it has made dare-devils into martyrs of an idea and great discoveries.

"The development of aviation would not have been possible at all without the type of man who takes upon himself a great risk. The further development of aviation will also not be able to do without cultivating courage and resolution. A stake for an ideal object has never yet been in vain, even if the one or the other could not gain a name by the loss of his life. The individual may perish, but the movement itself is driven forward by these ready-to-venture men who, in their urge for progress and accomplishment, do not flinch at danger.

"I have really said about all there is to say about the main points: It is unjust to condemn men who have set the crossing of the ocean as their goal simply because the attainment of their goal is connected with danger to their life. Do we condemn the mountain climber, the jockey, the motorcyclist, the automobilist, who often sacrifice their life to sport without having a great goal before them? Hence, more justice for the ocean fliers!

"The problem they have assigned themselves is a great one. That is a fact that cannot be disputed. Success today in the age of sport is a gain in national renown. But it would be quite wrong to deny the ocean attempts any practical value. They give the constructor of motor and machine problems which promote technical development more strongly in a few months than the easy-going work of much greater spans of time can do under other circumstances. We were able to observe this very well during the preparation of our record flights and later, while we were preparing the flight of the "Bremen" and "Europa." It is always the great problem that produces the exceptional accomplishment. Striving toward a goal, in aviation just as everywhere else, bears its fruits.

"The objection has been raised that they should wait with the ocean flight attempts until a more suitable machine is available. Persuasive as this objection appears, it is psychologically and practically incorrect. It lies in the nature of every development of communications that the intermediated stage of pure venture cannot be skipped. Nothing shows this more clearly, for example, than the development of aviation thus far. In ocean navigation they did not wait for the twin-screw steamer with watertight bulkheads, nor for the steam compound

locomotive in land transportation. The means, the instrument, always remained somewhat behind the object, and it was precisely this tension what brought development and progress.

"As regards the risk, it does not seem to me so great that it cannot be borne. It is chiefly a weather risk. The solution of these problems must naturally be left to the pilot and the meteorologists. The other question, land airplane or hydroplane, in the present stage of technique can only be answered in favor of the land plane. As long as ocean flight is predominantly a motor question as long as not only a proper supply of gasoline but, in addition to that, a large fuel reserve must be carried to travel such vast distances, the land plane, which possesses a greater range of flight than the hydroplane owing to the more favorable aerodynamic conditions, will stand in the foreground. The assumption that there will in the near future be types of airplanes with which one can make emergency landings at any place on the ocean and in any weather and wait for help is not shared by all professional circles. I believe that we will sometime have large airplanes weighing 100 tons with perhaps 40 percent useful load. But the road in that direction is still long."

Professor Junkers then reverted to a detailed discussion of the reasons why the Dessau works declined all cooperation with the persons preparing for ocean flights. "The problem in itself," said Professor Junkers, "would certainly be tempting and it lies partly in our line, since we have always done a great deal in little cultivated fields of science with great pleasure and enthusiasm in keeping with the research character of my works. But, precisely in view of the research purpose of my works, we have, on the other hand, more important things to do, problems that can only be solved by the concentration of all our forces. There is, to mention only one example, the problems of the airplane engine, which are fundamental for aviation.

"For these reasons we see our duty with regard to transoceanic flight problem only in the role of adviser. In full recognition of the principle of freedom for individual initiative, we warn against rashness and contribute our part to limiting the risk as much as possible wherever the requisites of success appear to be present. I gladly betray to you the secret that, by foregoing a large number of business advantages, we have, through our refusal, prevented ocean flights which we had to assume originated from men who in our opinion were not equal to this task. But wherever the personal requirements are fulfilled, we do not believe we would be serving aviation if we withheld our advice and experience from these daring men and abandoned them to the reproaches of the general public."

Professor Junkers then spoke of the American air traffic, which he said would soon outstrip the European air traffic, and concluded his remarks with the observation that, precisely from the standpoint that struggle and contest alone guarantee human progress, he most heartily welcomed the fact that the world endurance record formerly held by the Junkers fliers Edvard and Ristiez had again reverted to the Americans. He expected that this feat would have a stimulating and fruitful effect upon the German industry which, on its part, would by no means give up sport competition.