

Opening Speech of Mr. L. A. de Lange

President of OSTIV

Mr. Lerat, President of the Fédération Française de Vol à Voile,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Just 14 days ago – to be exact on 6 July – it was my 28th anniversary as President of OSTIV. Faced with my farewell here at Châteauroux, I would like to look back with you a moment on that interesting period in which the OSTIV has formed part of my life, so that my daughter – when a young child – being asked what was her father's profession, answered: "Papa is OSTIV". Those present in the nice Swedish town of Örebro, amongst them our Honorary Vice-President Dr. Eichenberger and our Board Member Mr. Weishaupt, attending the third OSTIV Congress there from 3–7 July 1950 will remember the great confusion reigning when my predecessor did not appear, no program was prepared, and even the place of the Congress as well as of the General Conference was unknown.

Consequently the delegates of the nine Active Members of OSTIV present had to improvise everything themselves! It was no flourishing Congress, but still there were given 6 lectures, three by the well-known research-worker, Dr. August Raspet, who later lost his life during an experimental flight.

More important was the improvised General Conference which decided to outline the organization by setting up two Sections, one for technical and one for scientific matters, and by making a Constitution which would determine the objects of OSTIV and define the obligations and rights of the members as well as the tasks of the officers. Though the Constitution was drafted in Örebro by Dr. Eichenberger and myself, the final text was only accepted at the General Conference in 1954 (Buxton). However, the basis for it was laid down in Örebro.

Being chosen to be OSTIV's second President, I was – in co-operation with the other Board Members – obliged essentially to build up our organization from the bottom.

The papers given in the first and second OSTIV Congresses, respectively at Samaden and in Paris, had not been published. The six papers of Örebro

were printed and bound together as "OSTIV Publication I"; it comprised only 44 pages.

I cannot better express the faith the collaborators of that time had in the reason for existence and in the aim of OSTIV than by quoting what I wrote in the "Introduction" of OSTIV's first Publication:

"There is no pastime in which science, technique and sport are so closely interwoven as in soaring. Whilst in 1930 the "Internationale Studienkommission für den Motorlosen Flug", the ISTUS, was set up with the object of bringing into closer touch those countries which engaged in soaring and of furthering the development of soaring itself by the exchange of experiences and friendly co-operation, the OSTIV which succeeded the ISTUS in 1948, embarked upon a wider task. Its objects are to encourage and to further the development as well as the use of the sailplane in pure and applied research."

As we look, for instance, at the excellent use Dr. Toutenhoofd nowadays makes of the sailplane for scientific cloud physics research in Colorado – with which he demonstrates the great value of the sailplane as a sensor of cloud properties – then I am astonished at the far-seeing spirit we possessed 28 years ago.

Starting my activities as President, I was aware of the fact that well organised and attractive Congresses – at the site and during the time of the World Gliding Championships – would be the main requisite for a prosperous development of OSTIV. Only there would one find the right atmosphere for international co-operation and exchange of ideas between scientists, technicians and soaring pilots.

Contrary to pure scientific and technical congresses, the papers presented at OSTIV Congresses have to be directed more towards the practice, namely towards the furtherance of soaring regarding the development of

the sailplane and its equipment as well as to the sources of energy in the air to be used by it. Also subjects in the field of training and medical themes, such as the stresses to which the pilot is subject during flight, belong amongst the topics of OSTIV Congresses.

I said attractive congresses, by which I not only meant to refer to the kind and the level of the lectures, but also to the social intercourses, excursions and closing dinners, for the OSTIV participants and the people of the gliding site.

To realize these ideas already at the first Congress under my presidency – the OSTIV Congress in Madrid 1952 – through which experience could be acquired and a model could be set for coming congresses, I went some months before the Congress to Madrid for the purpose of having a discussion there with the President of CIVV, Mr. Gehriger, and the President of the Royal Aero-Club of Spain, the Duke de Almodóvar, concerning the organization of the Congress in cohesion with the organization of the World Championships.

I do not exaggerate in saying that the results of that discussion were fantastic: a fine air-conditioned Room for the Opening Ceremony and for the scientific and technical lectures on the airfield, even two excursions, all evening meals of the participants in the first class hotel "Grillon" as well as an excellent Closing Dinner, all offered by the Royal Aero-Club of Spain.

Meanwhile the Chairman of the Scientific Section and the Chairman of the Technical Section had drawn up an interesting program consisting of 53 papers, even one more than here at Châteauroux.

For the first time a printed Program – of which the layout is just the same as that for this Congress – was available at the OSTIV Secretariat in the "OSTIV Building" on the airfield. In a word, the Congress in Madrid turned out to be an eminent model for all OSTIV Congresses from then until to-day.

Whereas the papers read at Örebro, Madrid and Buxton (1954) were published by OSTIV itself, from September 1956 almost all OSTIV papers have been published first in the OSTIV Section of Aero Revue – the official organ of our organization since May 1953 –, and subsequently in bound form in the well-known OSTIV Publications of which the last one – OSTIV Publication XIII – is just available here at Châteauroux.

One can say that 5 years after Örebro the organization of OSTIV Congresses and the publication of the papers read there, did not have a single problem: the procedure for these activities had become stabilized.

Now there were possibilities for other activities within the framework of the objects of OSTIV.

Such a possibility originated when the President of CIVV, Mr. Gehriger, approached me in 1955 with the request for a study to be made by OSTIV to set up technical rules for a "restricted class" of sailplanes which would be: cheap to make and easy to operate, which meant the use of cheap materials and simple methods of construction, easy to repair and to maintain, quick and easy to rig and to de-rig as well as simple to transport on a trailer. Moreover, the sailplane must still have good performances and flying qualities.

performances and flying qualities. He hit upon this idea, because the World Gliding Championships were becoming more and more expensive since several – mostly state subsidized – National Aero Clubs were entering with "super orchid" sailplanes and so were reducing the chances for less financially potent nations.

Already in July 1956, OSTIV presented to CIVV a set of rules defining a "Standard Class" for sailplanes. CIVV adopted the rules, and decided to introduce the Standard Class for the first time at the World Championships at Leszno in 1958.

In this connection it is interesting to observe that several designers of sailplanes of that class at that time propagated their new sailplanes as "OSTIV Standard Class Sailplanes", though of course it is FAI which determines the classes for sailplanes to be entered at the World Championships.

OSTIV decided – at least until the Standard Class should be shown to be a success – to encourage the new class by awarding a Trophy to the designers of a Standard Class sailplane at the World Championships having in its opinion the best combination of cheapness, simplicity and performance.

During the evaluation of the Standard Class sailplanes, presented to OSTIV during the World Gliding Championships in Leszno, it became obvious to the members of the jury that it would have facilitated the evaluation, if the sailplanes offered had been built according to the same airworthiness requirements. This, and other arguments

led to the formation of a group of specialists within OSTIV – later called the "OSTIV Sailplane Development Panel" – which was given the task to make a comparative study of the various existing national airworthiness requirements and – on the basis of this study – to set up minimum OSTIV airworthiness requirements, at first for Standard Class sailplanes only.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The outcome of the work of the Panel – the creation of generally accepted airworthiness requirements for sailplanes, latterly also including requirements for powered sailplanes – led to the fact that OSTIV now is recognized and appreciated by designers and government agencies all over the world.

With the increasing number of active soaring pilots and the growing number of national and international soaring competitions held each year throughout the world, the need for accurate forecasting for soaring flight increases more and more.

The soaring pilot has to use continually the kinetic energy of the air manifested in convective and wave motions of the atmosphere. Obviously, it requires special skills to predict the intensity, distribution and duration of vertical air currents.

In many countries several aviation forecasters – often soaring pilots themselves – have developed highly specialized prediction methods for soaring. Their experience is unique, but their forecasting techniques vary from person to person and from country to country.

In order to combine these skills into general forecasting rules, to standardize the most successful methods, and to make the resulting techniques available to all professional aviation forecasters in the world, OSTIV set up at Alpine, USA, during its XIIIth Congress there, a "Meteorological Panel", being composed of the most experienced soaring forecasters, with the object of drafting a "Handbook of Meteorological Forecasting for Soaring Flight".

After two extensive working conferences, successively in Zell am See (Austria 1971) and in Oerlinghausen (Federal Republic of Germany 1976), the Handbook – then called "Manual" – was published and, because of the restricted impression of this first trial edition, became available for OSTIV members only at the end of 1976.

As a result of negotiations I had with

the Staff of the World Meteorological Organization at Geneva in September last year, that organization has agreed to issue the Handbook as a WMO Technical Note. In this form the publication has been distributed free of charge to the meteorological institutes all over the world. It will evoke the interest of many meteorologists for soaring forecasting, so useful to pilots making performance flights.

Just as the creation of the Sailplane Development Panel – the "OSTIV Airworthiness Requirements for Sailplanes" – has interested the technical world in the activities of OSTIV, the "Handbook of Meteorological Forecasting for Soaring Flight" will interest the community of meteorologists in OSTIV's activities in their field.

My greatest satisfaction however, is that at the end of my presidency – after I had raised the question for several years – the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale, the highest international organization in the field of aviation sports, passed a resolution during its General Conference in Rome on 4 October 1977, by which FAI essentially accepts OSTIV as an international body of equal status by granting *the right of mutual representation – including voting right – of each party (FAI and OSTIV) in the General Conferences of the other party.*

I do hope that I have succeeded in giving you a clear picture of how OSTIV in the past 28 years rose from its "ashes" in Örebro to a flourishing, wellknown international organization of to-day.

Before addressing in French the orators before me, I like to draw your attention to a historical error which has been perpetuated all over the world for many, many years.

In records, and in many books and documents it is stated that the first Silver C is awarded to Wolf Hirth, whereas as a matter of fact the Austrian Robert Kronfeld is the first who fulfilled the three requirements laid down by ISTUS for the Silver C.

Kronfeld's performances were:

a *duration flight* on 14 August 1928 (7 hours and 54 minutes)

a *distance flight* on 15 May 1929 (102,2 kilometers)

an *altitude flight* on 20 July 1929 (gain in height 2025 meters).

Since OSTIV is the successor of ISTUS, our organization is in some sense responsible for errors made by the organization it succeeded. Therefore, just before my resignation as President of OSTIV, I tried to find out what happened with the awarding of the first Silver C.

Well, Ladies and Gentlemen, in its first General Assembly in London on 1 and 2 October 1931, ISTUS instituted an "International Silver C Badge", based on a proposal of its Board made in Paris on 6 December 1930.

After the Board Meeting in December 1930, but before the General Assembly of ISTUS in October 1931, the German "Rhön-Rossitten-Gesellschaft" instituted a *national* Silver C Badge, using for it the proposed ISTUS requirements, and awarded in that period 6 Silver C Badges.

When, however, the General Assembly of ISTUS decided to award the international Silver C Badges *itself*, the six badges awarded by the RRG so far were converted in "International Silver C Badges".

In its Bulletin No. 2 of January 1932 ISTUS states, under the headline "Offi-

cial Information of ISTUS", the sequence wherein the first six international Silver C Badges had been awarded: No. 1 Robert Kronfeld, No. 2 Wolf Hirth, No. 3 Günther Groenhoff, No. 4 Kurt Starck, No. 5 Otto Fuchs and No. 6 Hermann Mayer.

That sequence is in accordance with the system on which the ISTUS Register was set up, namely according to the date on which the last flight for qualification was made. As a matter of fact, Kronfeld's last flight for the Silver C was performed more than *one* year and *two* months *before* Hirth's last flight for that badge, *a distance flight of 53 km on 2 October 1930*, made from the Elmira Gliding Site in the U.S.A.

The change in the ISTUS Register must have been made after 1933, the year of the "Umbruch", the political revolution in Germany, when nationalism reigned supreme there, and Jews were discriminated against. Robert Kronfeld was an Austrian, and a Jew!

Now, Ladies and Gentlemen, I say my few words in French.

Monsieur Le Président Lerat, nous vous sommes très reconnaissants, ainsi qu'à tous vos collaborateurs de la Fédération Française de Vol à Voile, d'avoir aidé l'OSTIV à organiser son 16ème Congrès à Châteauroux.

En effet, la tâche était particulièrement ardue puisque d'une part le Congrès se tenait à l'aérodrome et d'autre part les participants logeaient en ville.

Je vous remercie cordialement pour les aimables paroles que vous nous avez adressées. Je tiens à remercier également Monsieur Brochet, Directeur de la Météorologie Nationale, Monsieur Lelait, Directeur du Centre d'Essais en Vol d'Istres et Monsieur Jamet, Sous-Directeur du Service de la Formation Aéronautique et du Contrôle Technique, représentant le Directeur de l'Aviation Civile, pour leurs aimables et intéressantes allocutions.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I now have the honour and the pleasure of declaring the sixteenth OSTIV Congress opened.