

In memoriam Alex Meyer

On 14 August 1978, Professor Dr Alex Meyer died in Zürich where he lived since 1939. In him we lose one of the last great men who actively participated in the development of air law right from the beginning.

Alex Meyer, a German national, was born on 15 December 1879 in Berlin. He studied law, wrote his doctoral thesis in 1904, was a judge, and worked at the Department of Justice between 1907 and 1936. In 1909, he obtained his *brevet* as balloon-pilot and worked for his flying license, but an accident brought his flying career to an end in 1910; in this year he founded the *Deutsche Fliegerbund* and became president of the German branch of the *Comité Juridique de l'Aviation* (1910-1914 and 1918-1935). From 1928-1935 and after 1952, he was president of the Legal Committee of the German Society for Air and Space Studies. His first book on air law dates from 1908 (*Die Erschliessung des Luftraums in ihren rechtlichen Folgen*, Frankfurt am Main, 47 pp.). He started writing regularly articles on air law in 1910, and in 1911, he gave his first lectures on air law at the University of Göttingen.

In 1939, he left Nazi-Germany for Switzerland. In 1950, he became professor for air law at the University of Cologne and director of the Institute of Air Law at the same University. In 1952, he founded the post-war *Zeitschrift für Luftrecht* (ZLW), which he directed until 30 September 1974, the date on which he was pensioned. His article 'Rückschau auf Luftrecht und Weltraumrecht' (23 ZLW 1974, pp. 228-243) gives an excellent impression of what happened between Alex Meyer and air law during a period of almost 70 years.

On 15 December 1954, he received his first *Festschrift* at the occasion of his 75th birthday (*Beiträge zum internationalen Luftrecht*, Düsseldorf 1954, 155 pp.). A selection of his own writings was published in 1959 for his 80th birthday (*Luftrecht in fünf Jahrzehnten*, Cologne-Berlin 1961, viii-480 pp.). In 1974, the ICAO Council bestowed on him the Ninth Edward Warner Award (*ICAO Bulletin*, June 1974, pp.20-21; 23 ZLW 1974, pp. 155-159.). And at his 96th birthday he received his second *Festschrift* (*Beiträge zum Luft- und Weltraumrecht*, Cologne-Berlin 1975, xi-482 pp., with a bibliography of 221 items on pp. 457-482) during a festive meeting of the Cologne Law Faculty (see *Air Law* 1976, pp. 207-208).

For those who were his friends and associates it will be impossible ever to forget Alex Meyer. He could be very demanding with regard to himself as *vis-a-vis* others, but his total dedication to air and space law never failed to fascinate his audience. He was always very much present: he actively participated in the development of air and space law in conferences, by lecturing, by writing (last publications in the ZLW of 1977), and – above all – by being himself. His strongly-worded speech on his 96th birthday against the pensioning of professors when they are still too young to stop working will not soon be forgotten by those present.

Did air law keep Alex Meyer so young, or was Alex Meyer one of the reasons why air law can still stimulate so many eminent lawyers? Probably both assumptions are correct: we can only be very grateful to the man who – it is hard to believe – left us.

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