

## The first Inter-Country Committee between Germany and France

Statement made by Robert HAUSSMAN  
on May 20<sup>th</sup> 1950 at District 70 Conference at Strasbourg

District Governor, Your Excellency,  
Ladies & Gentlemen,  
Fellow Rotarians,

I speak in my capacity as representative of the Administration of German Clubs, a post RI President Percy HODGSON asked me to assume when he visited German Clubs in August 1949.

In the name of the 24 German Clubs reformed during this year and according to the directives of the Board in Chicago, I thank DG COUTANT and the Strasbourg Club for their kind invitation. We are happy to renew contact after a separation of 13 years: following those years of war and devastation throughout Europe.

I would especially like to thank DG COUTANT who, despite his very many responsibilities has been very willing to attend the first Conference of our future District 74. His words at Baden-Baden on May 18<sup>th</sup> had a profound effect on the German Rotarians gathered there.

In the same spirit of mutual understanding and in response to him, I must read out the resolution agreed by the 24 German Clubs in praise of the 4<sup>th</sup> Object of Rotary:

*« We must at this first reunion of our reformed Rotary Clubs pay tribute to the 4<sup>th</sup> Object which encourages the advancement of friendship amongst mankind, beyond political boundaries in the pursuit of international understanding,*

*This aim has always been in the hearts of German Rotarians.*

*It was due to their belief in this 4<sup>th</sup> Object that Rotary was dissolved under the Third Reich, forcing our predecessors to meet secretly.*

*We German Rotarians condemn all actions directed against justice, morality and human rights, particularly all the hideous crimes and inhuman acts at whatever time and place they occurred and where they might happen again.*

*We deplore the sufferings resulting from such actions, now and in the future.*

*Above all, we are sorry for all that aggression which deprived people of neighbouring nations of their human rights.*

*Now we can make a fresh start; Rotary International showing the right spirit and pre-empted the politicians, by reviving the Rotary Clubs in Japan and Germany before our Statesmen could even agree over Peace Treaties.*

*We German Rotarians are very grateful to RI. All Rotarians must be in the vanguard of the ideal of PEACE.*

*We shall not fail to collaborate when Clubs outside our frontiers offer us the hand of peaceful cooperation ».* (Prolonged Applause)

Then COUTANT speaking to Paul Henry SPAAK said:

‘Your Excellency: you ask for actions. Here is the first – *“The RI President is very much in favour of establishing new relations between France & Germany”*’.

Frank SPAIN, International President 1951-1952 gave financial help in order to create Inter Country Committees in Europe, notably for the ICC France-Germany.

Strengthened by these encouragements COUTANT & HAUSSMAN organised the first constituent meeting of our Committee in the Hotel Harlass at Heigelberg. Jean CARONI and KAMPE de FERIET together with HAUSSMAN, HEDINGER and BURGERS, all took part. Internal rules were adopted: other biennial (once every two years) or biannual (twice a year), then annual meetings followed: Paris, Cologne, Marseille, Essen, Bordeaux, etc.

One of the first aims of the ICC France-Germany was to re-establish inter Club contacts. Considering the very recent carnage and destruction caused by the war, it might have seemed foolhardy to hope to get open agreement with such a policy. But this was to ignore the generosity, good sense and intelligence of the German and the French Rotarians. Indeed the first bond was between Lille and Cologne.