

Otto Lilienthal's letter to Moritz von Egidy in Berlin  
(not dated but about January 1894)

Dear Lieutenant Colonel

It was your essay about the trade contracts in the journal "Versöhnung" which I regularly read that has lead me to write to you and I trust this letter will be met with a warm reception. I have often listened to you with enthusiasm, when you refer to the borders not as separating the countries but rather as connecting them. I, too, have made it a lifelong task of mine to add a cultural element to my work, which should result in uniting countries and reconciling their people. Our experience of today's civilisation suffers from the fact that it only happens on the surface of the earth. We have invented barricades between our countries, custom regulations and constraints and complicated traffic laws and these are only possible because we are not in control of the 'kingdom of the air', and not as 'free as a bird'.

Numerous technicians in every state are doing their utmost to achieve the dream of free, unlimited flight and it is precisely here where changes can be made which would have a radical effect on our whole way of life. The frontiers between the countries would lose their significance as they could no longer be barricaded up. With man's increasing mobility the distinctions between the languages would be blurred. Defence would cease to take up all a single country's energy as it would become impossible in itself. There would be no need to fight bloody battles over borders, since they would have become mere figments of the imagination, and we would discover an urgent need to settle the nations' quarrels in some other way, which would, in its turn, lead us to eternal peace.

We are getting closer to this goal. When we will reach it, I do not know. The little bit that I have contributed to this is enclosed with this letter. I would be glad to be able to make a real contribution to the distinguished and ideal cultural tasks that you have taken on.

Yours Sincerely  
Otto Lilienthal