

BOOST FOR EXPÉDITIONS POLAIRE FRANÇAISES

French Antarctic activities have taken a step forward with the start of work on plans to establish an outside air link to their base at Dumont d'Urville. At present only the USA and USSR have the facilities to fly in direct from outside the continent.

Expéditions Polaire Françaises have received 15 m francs (£1.4 m) from the French Military for Research to construct a 600 m runway suitable for Twin Otter aircraft, and it is expected that this will later be extended to cope with the heavier Transall transport aircraft operated by the French Air Force. The most likely site is on the island of Gouverneur, 3 km from Dumont d'Urville, and the new facilities should be ready for the 1984–85 field season. It is also hoped eventually to establish a permanent wintering base at the East Antarctic drill site at Dome C, though this is not likely to occur in the near future.

Replenishment by air of the present drilling camp, 1 000 km from the coast, is expected to double the time available for research there during the austral summer. At present French glaciologists are developing a new drilling technique; instead of extracting a solid ice core, they plan to use a thermal probe to extract liquid samples every few metres. Although this will not yield as much information as a frozen core would, it will be quicker and cheaper and should penetrate completely through the ice sheet. (*Sciences et avenir*, February 1982.)

Obituary

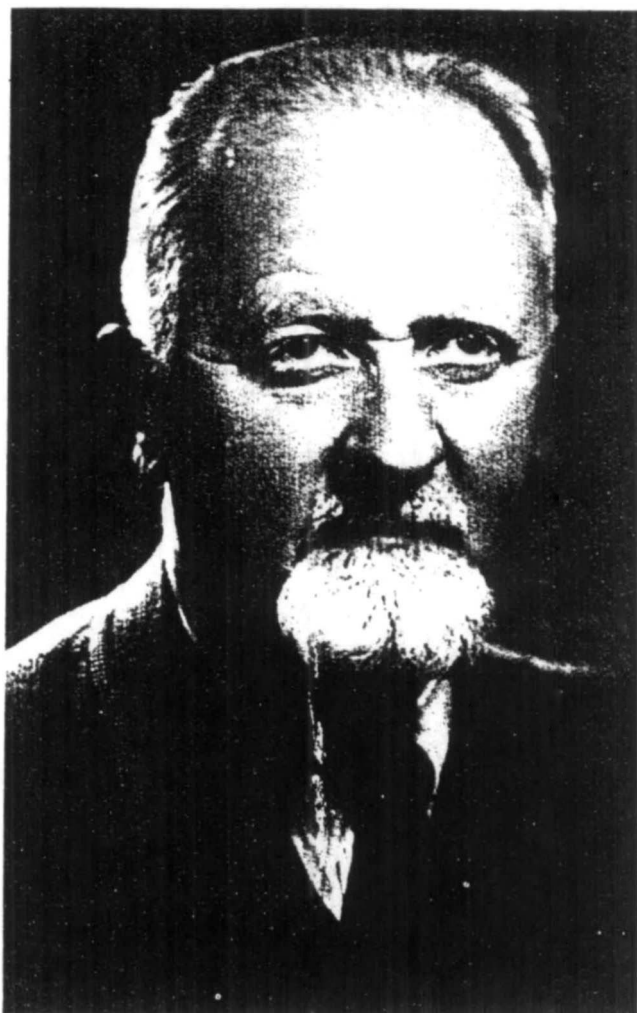
Professor **ALEKSANDER KOSIBA**, Head of the Department of Meteorology and Climatology and its Observatory at Bolesław Bierut University in Wrocław, Poland, died on 18 September 1981. He was 80.

Aleksander Kosiba was born in Libusza in Krosno province on 16 January 1901. After completing a classical secondary education, from which he gained an excellent knowledge of Latin and Greek, he studied geography, geology, geophysics, as well as mathematics and physics, at Jan Kazimierz University in Lwów from 1923 to 1929. At that time he also extended his studies to geodesy and photogrammetry at the Lwów Institute of Technology. He took his doctorate in 1933, qualifying as an assistant professor in 1945.

During 1925–28, while still an undergraduate, Kosiba worked as an assistant at the Cartographic Institute in Lwów, following which he taught in a secondary school for four years. It was during his undergraduate days that Kosiba first became interested in the problems of polar regions, and he remained so all his life. From 1929 onwards he travelled to the Arctic each year. In 1934 he took part in a large Danish polar expedition to Greenland. After returning from that expedition he began to organize a Polish Greenland expedition which was realized in the summer of 1937.

During World War II Kosiba remained in Lwów, and during the German occupation he worked in the Anti-typhus Institute, at the same time teaching in secret Polish schools. In 1945 Professor Kosiba moved to Wrocław University to head the Department and Observatory of Meteorology and Climatology. There he started the Observatory's series of scientific papers, *Prace Obserwatorium Meteorologii i Klimatologii Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego*.

While directing the department, Professor Kosiba initiated or participated in a large number of research enterprises, including actinometric studies, research on climate and atmospheric pollution in highly industrialized regions, for example Upper Silesia. Of particular significance was his work connected with the International Geophysical Year (IGY), 1957–58. He was a member of the IGY Committee and the Commission for Geophysical and Polar Expeditions of the Polish Academy of Sciences; he organized the IGY Polish Polar Expedition to Spitsbergen, leading the glaciological and meteorological studies on the Werenskiöld and Hans glaciers. His polar research brought him well-deserved appreciation. One of the Spitsbergen mountain passes carries the name Kosiba, and on



Aleksander Kosiba.

the 100th anniversary of Fridtjof Nansen's birth he was awarded honorary membership of the Norwegian Geographical Society.

Professor Kosiba was involved with numerous scientific activities and learned societies both at home and abroad, organizing or co-organizing many symposia, conferences and congresses. He also participated in devising geography curricula and was deeply involved in teaching activities in general. Under his direction, 116 students graduated in climatology, 25 graduates gained doctorates and nine qualified as assistant professors.

The man who has left us was a scientist of great merit in the field of geography and geophysics, in particular polar studies and climatology. He is sadly missed by his colleagues and pupils. But Professor Kosiba leaves behind a large number of scientific and popular publications from which a comprehensive bibliography is being compiled.

Gabriel Wójcik

ERRATUM

Polar Record, Vol 21, No 131, May 1982, p 162. The source of the map should read: J. H. Bater and R. A. French, eds. *Studies in the historical geography of Russia* (in press).