

THE FUTURE AND THE OLYMPIC MOVEMENT

The Olympic Movement will carry on its salutary activity and its ideal cannot fade away.

When we speak nowadays about the important mission which the Olympic Idea has to fulfil in the interest of the development and the re-education of the human race, we often hear the wrong opinion, that the Olympic Movement is out of date and in the present condition of social life, no practical results can be expected from the Olympic Games.

Such defeatist ideas make it a point of duty for the members of the International Olympic Committee not only to carry on an intensive propaganda for the Olympic Games, but above all to impress the entire population of all countries with the real character of the Olympic Idea and its possibilities. Everyone has to understand that now more than ever before in the history of the Olympic Games of the modern chronology, the Olympic Movement can have a salutary and beneficial influence on the happiness and the re-education of mankind. Stimulating good understanding between nations without any regard to questions of politics, religion or of race, the Olympic Movement can contribute to the reconstruction of our devastated world. As a work of peace and of rapprochement of the nations of the world, the Olympic Movement must continue its triumphant and glorious course for the welfare and happiness of mankind.

The consequences of the war

Six years of a terrible and murderous war, of a gigantic and merciless struggle have covered the world with blood. The war with its damages, ruins, sufferings and deaths of many thousands of young men is ended, but the struggle for peace is still going on with great intensity.

The long period of war left the world in a indescribable chaotic condition. Ruins everywhere ; numerous art-treasures lost for ever. Poverty, misery, worries of all kind and privation instead of the pre-war prosperity. But worse than the material losses is the alarming moral depression of men on the whole.

A spirit of distrust, hate and disagreement prevails among the nations of the world. The international atmosphere is loaded with dark clouds and gives least of all the impression of a harmonious and pacific cooperation, which is indispensable to repair the damages caused

by the war, in a spirit of fraternity. The national chauvinism is exaggerated. Every country fights for its own interests, not considering what is best for all the nations together.

National and international life are subordinated to politics. Disagreement and jealousy take place of co-operation and mutual confidence which are essential for the rebuilding of moral, cultural and material values.

Individually men have the same deplorable aspect. Everyone seems to live egocentrically and puts the interests of the individual before those of the community. Men are no more a part of the whole ; they are separate individuals who live for themselves and do not realize that co-operation in and for the community is one of the first social duties and a mission of life.

To be able to overcome the great difficulties of modern life, all of us and everyone in the right place must have the firm will to co-operate for the creation of a better future. Everyone must understand that only by an intensive co-operation the interests of the community can be served and that this is the best way to secure the individual interests.

The feeling of solidarity no longer exists. All methods seem to be admissible to gain personal profit ; jealousy, unfounded insinuations, evil-speaking, slander and corruption are no exceptions. Rise in wages is a general demand and when refused, they go on strike. It seems that people are not in a position to understand that concessions to unreasonable individual demands mean only an apparent improvement, as this is detrimental to the interests of the whole and in consequence to the individual interests as well.

The human race is living in an atmosphere of uneasiness, actuated by a feeling of anxiety and without any faith in the future. Deprived of every normal recreation during the years of war, they wish to enjoy life at any cost and as much as possible. They are unbalanced and have lost the significance of a simple and sane life. Instead of a general effort to increase the moral values, a philosophy of a fatalistic and materialized conception of life has " money " as the highest ideal. Work, once an aim of life, has become only a means to earn money

which must make it possible to enjoy illusive, superficial pleasures, devoid of sense.

Love of real art which enobles the character, has become an exception. The importance of the family and of religion, which are and must remain the sources of life, is underrated and as a result the intrinsic strength of men and nations is undermined.

The reconstruction of the world must begin with man individually

It is absolutely necessary to return to a life of re-edification of the world as a whole and of man individually. In what way will this be possible and what can the Olympic Movement contribute towards this ?

When we bare in mind that the world is diseased and social life is on slippery grounds ; when we ascertain the fact that the human race is suffering from an arteriosclerosis by which self-confidence and intrinsic strength have been lost; when we search for a new morale, suited to modern life . . . ; then it would be a wrong principle that the first to be done is the improvement of the collectivity with the intention that only in a better social life the character and the moral qualities of the individual men can improve.

No! Only all-round educated men will be able to build a normal social life. To establish better social conditions and also for the edification of each group which has to co-operate, it is essential to begin with the intellectual, physical and moral reinforcement of the individual. Then these men, strong and sane allround, inspired by the firm will to join all their forces for the prosperity of their country and the upliftment of the world, will be able to rebuild what the war destroyed.

And the more they exert themselves to improve social life, national and international, the more also the character, the qualities and the personality and the happiness of the individual men will be favoured. This is a reciprocity which converts men and collectivity into a unit, harmoniously working for the prosperity of the world and of man individually.

An old Dutch proverb says : " It is only in a lamp, filled with oil, that light burns ", or as the Romans said : " Civium, vires hodie, cras civitatis vis ". The forces to-day obtained by the citizens, will be to-morrow the strength of the city.

The mission of the Olympic Movement

Having analyzed post-war modern life, we have to answer the question in what way the Olympic Movement will be able to contribute the improvement of the human race and to the re-edification of social life. In a following article I hope to give a more detailed answer

and also some general directives which in my opinion might be observed for the propaganda which the members of the I. O. C. have to carry on to spread a better knowledge of the Olympic Idea and the Olympic Games. For the present I will restrict myself to the following observations.

The sense of the Olympic Idea cannot be better explained than by the words of Baron de Coubertin, the founder of the modern Olympic Games :

" The joy of muscular strength, cult of beauty, work on behalf of the family and the community, these three elements joined as an indissoluble chain ; this is the Olympic Idea, which the International Olympic Committee took up as their mission to serve and to propagate ".

May real joy fill the valleys, the mountains resound the ideal, work give us all its salutary shelter, then peace will reign, better ensured than by the stipulations of treaties and by the dangerous balance of fear ".

Sport exercises, as they are propagandized by the Olympic Movement, improve public health and increase the physical power. In the struggle for life only healthy and strong men will be able to conquer. A weak body or a body enfeebled by an inadequate education is a bad bearer of the spirit, hinders the development of energy and reigns like a tyrant. As Rousseau properly said : " The weaker the body, the more it commands ; the stronger it is, the more it obeys ; a good servant has to be robust. "

Appropriate and well guided physical culture and sport exercises give to youth the joy of living and at the same time influence favourably the development of the character.

The qualities of the character play a prominent part in life. Therefore it is of great importance, that the practice of sport cultivates discipline, initiative, punctuality, energy, sense of duty, self-control. Without these aptitudes all gifts of intellect are of no use.

Our young men have to be educated for practical life. Education has another purpose than intellectual development alone. It is more important to be a " man " than to be a savant. Life needs men with a ready hand, a strong body proof against fatigue, a lucid mind and a firm will, able to pull themselves through life and to tide over numerous difficulties of all kind which they will meet everywhere.

Intellect, body and character influence each other. Together they form a trinity which has to be harmoniously educated.

The Olympic Idea is a cult of all that is beautiful and true, of the appreciation of art, the importance of religion ; it stimulates the wish to work on behalf of the family and of the community.

Sport exercises make youth understand that co-operation is essential to obtain a common



La famille olympique, sous la présidence de M. J. S. Edström (au centre), se rend en pèlerinage au cimetière du Bois-de-Vaux, à Lausanne, le 3 septembre 1946, sur la tombe du baron Pierre de Coubertin. (On reconnaît la baronne de Coubertin à la gauche du président Edström.)

result. *This sense for co-operation, felt as a necessity on the sporting grounds, will be applied afterwards in social life.*

The Olympic Idea has in view the rapprochement of the nations and to place world-peace on a firm footing. To prevent terrible cataclysms as the one the world has just endured, youth must be willing to stretch hands of fellowship to each other.

One of the most efficacious means to realize this happy ideal, is the Olympic Games. Irrespective of politics, religion or race, the best athletes from all nations are brought together in the first year of every Olympiad in the Olympic Stadium. In a pacific, sportive and chivalrous fight ties of friendship for life are established.

It is a mistake to consider Olympic Games as a "fight of gladiators, of sport stars". Above all the Games are a grandiose festival of peace, where by the admirable performances of some thousands of athletes, the mass is seized with the desire to practice sport and to physical culture. We must not forget that — and now I cite with a little variation the Baron de Coubertin — to bring thousands to physical culture, hundreds have to exercise sport. To

have hundreds of practioners of sport, it takes tens to specialize themselves. To have tens who specialize, it takes some athletes who are able to display wonderful performances. It is impossible to evade this, because it is all linked together.

The Olympic Games of the XIVth Olympiad will take place in London in 1948. The decision of the I. O. C. to entrust London with the celebration of the first Olympic Games after the war, has been welcomed with enthousiasm by the sportsmen of the whole world. With all our energy we must do our utmost to make the important and difficult work of our English friends a great success. It is urgent that the Games of London will be a festival of peace par excellence, a triumph for the Olympic Movement, in the interest of the happiness and the prosperity of the world. The Olympic Idea, source of vital strength, will carry on in the international cadre its salutary activity as a cult of health, beauty and world-peace.

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