

# THE PROPAGANDA FOR THE OLYMPIC MOVEMENT

## II

### Aim of the Propaganda

As observed in the article „ *The Future of the Olympic Movement* ”<sup>1</sup>, at present more than ever before, the Olympic Movement has to fulfil an important mission. The intensive propaganda we have to pursue to make the salutary work of the Olympic Movement a success on behalf of the welfare and happiness of the world, must be concentrated on the following points :

1. To stimulate physical culture and sport, to improve public health and give youth a joy of living, as only healthy and strong men are able to fulfil their task in social life.

2. To propagate an harmonious pedagogical system which will give equal consideration to the intellectual culture, the physical culture and the moral development.

3. To stimulate love for the family, appreciation of the importance of religion and cult of the arts.

4. To develop the sense for solidarity and the will to co-operate as an essential factor to obtain a common result.

5. To spread a better knowledge of the real character and objectives of the Olympic Games which are and must remain a festival of peace where the mass is inspired by the desire for physical culture and which has in view the stimulating of a good understanding between nations, thus contributing to the foundation of world-peace on a firm footing.

### Wath can be done for this propaganda ?

1. By means of the radio and lectures, if possible illustrated by lantern-slides and films, carry on an intensive propaganda for physical culture and sport exercises, for the Olympic Games and their universal aim and for the education of spectators and sportsmen.

These lectures are not only to be given for sporting clubs, but above all for the pupils of

schools, for their parents, for the pedagogical authorities and for the pressmen.

We must win youth for our work, if we are to conquer the future ! To obtain results the co-operation of the parents and educators is indispensable.

We must also not forget the university students. In many countries students as a rule do not take sufficient interest in physical culture. They forget that for the intellectuals first of all it is a point of duty to set the example and give the proof, that intellect, body and character cannot be separated.

2. To write articles about the mission of the Olympic Movement in newspapers, periodicals, etc.

3. To call in the collaboration of the press. It is a pity that newspapers often give wrong or insignificant news about the Olympic Movement. The pressmen have to understand our work and our objectives thoroughly. They have to realize the importance of the social duty which they have to fulfil in this respect.

4. To encourage the establishment of a sufficient number of public playing fields and sports grounds. The lamentable shortage of public playing fields in nearly every country can only be harmful to the health of the population. It follows that in the absence of playing grounds the tendency to assist as onlookers at big matches instead of playing themselves, is getting greater and shows itself in people of all ages.

Each individual, whether rich or poor, has a right to be given the possibility to relax and to practice sports. What public reading rooms and university extension classes are to intellectual development, public playing grounds, gymnasiums and swimming-pools are to physical culture.

It is absolutely necessary, that each town and each village has a sufficient number of playing fields for children, sports grounds, gymnasiums

<sup>1</sup> See “ *Olympic Bulletin* ”, No 2.

and swimming baths for the younger and older generations.

All over the world the war has devastated big parts of many towns and villages. It is our duty to draw the attention of the men in authority to the necessity of including in their plans of reconstruction and in all town planning schemes public playing fields and sports grounds in adequate number for their respective populations.

It is difficult to lay down any fixed standard which would be common to all countries. It is however possible to agree that without taking count of gymnasiums and swimmingpools, each town and each village. must be provided with 2,5 m<sup>2</sup> of public playing fields and sports grounds per head of the population from the age of 10 years.

5. It is a serious mistake when only rich people can practice individual sport. It is important that every man, without class distinction, should be able to benefit by Olympic culture. As Baron de Coubertin repeatedly expounded, sport must get to be a daily habit for every healthy and normal individual. "He has a right to sports practice to keep in good condition, without his being forced to join a club."

With this in view we must make a more extended and better use of the Stadiums, which in ever greater number have been constructed in many towns. The Stadiums are indispensable for the Olympic Games and for great international matches, at which a large number of people assists. However these Stadiums have more and more become institutions, where financial outcome have taken the upper hand over the real sports interests and where the performances of a few athletes take place for the excitement of a noisy, but inactive lot of thousands of spectators, who in great part never do any sport themselves.

It is necessary that the Stadiums on days when they are not in use for big matches, are open to physical culture and health of the general public, allowing each citizen above the age of 18 years, who expresses a wish to do so, to practise the individual sports exercises of his choice without any thought of competition, with the least cost and without the help of a club or anybody trying to curtail his individual freedom. It must be possible for him to go to the Stadium and pay his entrance fee. There he must find a doctor for medical control and a trainer who surveys and direct his exercise which ends in a shower-bath.

The use of the Stadiums in the way it was done in the Gymnasium of ancient Greeks, whose restoration was so ardently propagated by the renovator of Olympism, can only augment bodily health of everybody, poor or rich, of the

young, the growing up and older, even of old people.

6. We must try to realize the beautiful idea of Baron de Coubertin, that everybody can have a sports cure with minimum costs, during some weeks, in a camp or a sports hotel, suited to that purpose.

This sports cure acts as a prevention and is only meant for healthy individuals who want to stay so. It is, as Baron de Coubertin said, "giving to the adult organism a preventive defensive force by supplementing and increasing the reserves of vital strength". It is meant as a determined period, exclusively dedicated to muscular exercise.

As long as the financial difficulties of the present time exist and it will be well nigh impossible, a utopia, to count on the installation of camps for a sports cure, the Stadiums might be used for this purpose. Moreover we might call on the collaboration of appropriate hotels after the season is over.

7. Of course it is absolutely necessary to have the collaboration of competent instructors and trainers for efficacious physical culture and for the realization of the Olympic Idea. We must never lose count of this problem.

No less important is an efficacious medical control. To prevent sports practise and especially matches from degenerating into excesses and to promote the favorable influence of sport on the development of the young, it is absolutely necessary to appeal to competent trainers and special sports tutors and doctors for their assistance.

8. To concentrate our efforts to develop the spirit of chivalry and sportmanlike behaviour of the athletes and spectators who assist at the matches.

The frequency of the great public matches is actuated by a mass of financial interests which combine and strengthen each other. It is not always that the spectators' sympathy goes out to the athlete who has the best performances, but to the favourite who often has the outcome of a sweepstake in his power. It is no exception that the spectators favour and rouse the spirit of rivalry and competition which is at the base of human nature, to the derogation of physical education and the character of the athletes.

Let us all fight for true amateurism and for the preservation and defense of the rules which the I. O. C. has fixed for the amateur. The athlete must practice sport for sport's sake ; he must keep himself under control ; he must value his chivalrous opponent and would rather lose than win by doing anything which is not fair. The spirit of chivalry, fair-play which are the foundation of social life, constitute the moral elegance of sports.

Let us take good care that the athletes are not victimized by the spectators, by false-sportsmen and financial interests. Sport must serve to urge the vital effort of man. The practice of sports must have a salutary influence on the development of the character instead of standing in its way.

For many of present day sportsmen physical proficiency, health and recreation do not come first ; for them the principle question is to attain remarkable performances, to win prizes and above all to become popular. These dangers and, moreover, the celebrity of young sports heroes in, the papers must not be underestimated.

9. To establish in every country a certificate of allround physical development with badge.

This is the certificate for the "débrouillard" who is depicted by baron de Coubertin in his book "La Gymnastique utilitaire"<sup>1</sup> the skilful with supple muscles proof against fatigue, with staying power, prompt to react, able to make a firm decision and trained in anticipation to every change of place, of trade or profession, of situation, of customs and ideas, which is rendered necessary by the fertile instability of modern life.

To obtain the certificate with badge, the débrouillard has to come up to tests in rescue by land (running, jumping, climbing, throwing), in rescue in water (swimming), in self-defense

<sup>1</sup> See "La Gymnastique utilitaire". Edition Felix Alcan, Paris. 1905.

(fencing, wrestling and boxing) and move on feet, on horseback, on bicycle, by boat, etc.

The outcomes, obtained in many countries, may stimulate the elaboration of this certificate in every country and if possible, to settle general Olympic rules which will be the same everywhere.

10. To fight erroneous and defeatist opinions about the Olympic Games which I mentioned in my former article.

Make known the difference between "Olympic Games" and "Olympiad" and protest against any abuse of the word "Olympic".

Here you have, my dear colleagues of the I. O. C., some general directives which in my opinion may be useful to our common work for the propagation of the Olympic movement. I am certain that there are other and better ones. I mentioned these directives only to incite everyone of you, to communicate the results which you obtained in your own country. Our work for the Olympic movement is difficult and a ticklish affair. In exchanging, opinions and experiences, which is now possible by means of our Bulletin, we can all join hands to find the best way to fulfill the mission with which baron de Coubertin, the renovator of the Olympic movement, entrusted us, and to honour his memory by our work. We must not weaken in our action which asks for a concentrated perseverance.

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