

# INFLUENCE OF ORGANIZED SPORT ON RE-ESTABLISHING HARMONIOUS RELATIONS BETWEEN PEOPLE

By Prof. JEAN LEGROS of Brussels.

*Conference held at the Congress of International Sport Haarlem, October 12th 1952.*

The law of the gathering together of affinities is a well-known law of society.

People of like interests come together. People of the same race, religion, nationality, or colour like to join together and to meet each other. People with the same ideals band together.

For instance, round a football field, the white supporters assemble together on one side of the field and the black supporters on the other, often without deliberate planning but rather by some sort of affinity.

In fact, a custom has even become established in this sphere: the grandstand side being reserved for the home club, while the terraces become the vocal stronghold of the visiting supporters.

This gathering together of the affinities is a natural phenomenon usually, although often also awakened or roused, even provoked or encouraged, although I will not call it artificial, for this word would not always be suitable. If it is to survive it must always be brought about voluntarily. Let me explain myself:

One does not urge the swallows to gather together when the cold weather approaches.

There is no need to encourage the gregarious instinct of certain animals, wild or tame (the herd instinct).

One does not have to persuade the members of a tribe to form a common front when danger threatens.

These are perfect examples of the gathering together of affinities.

I said that there were also cases when the gregarious instinct must be awakened, or at least re-awakened, the patriotic feeling of certain countries, for example.

Let us establish the fact, in passing, that the more a people evolves and becomes civilised, the more it becomes individualistic and far from the herd instinct. Yet this does not mean that its herd instinct, its national feeling, or its patriotism or its sense of the community are not so deep as in less civilised peoples. In the main, however, this instinct requires to be awakened and « organised » upon a yet firmer basis.

War is often the medium that awakens the patriotic instinct in such a people.

There are also cases when the herd instinct must only be excited to become evident. Were this not so there would be no object in supporters' clubs, flags would have no significance, nor would military bands hold any appeal.

Lastly there are cases when the herd instinct must not only be excited, awakened or aroused, but actually provoked, encouraged and one might almost say, created.

Then it is strictly no longer an instinct but something indefinable, artificial, abstract and insubstantial.

I am thinking of most of the numerous societies with which the world is teeming and of my own country in particular. Doubtless, you will have heard the well-known story, although it is a calumny, that when three Belgians meet they cannot resist the temptation of forming a society there and then, consisting of a President, Treasurer and Secretary.

As I remarked, I am thinking of the numerous societies with which the world is teeming, whose sole

reason for existence is to flatter the rather childish vanity of their committee members.

In Belgium, nearly all of us are President, Vice-President, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer or Assistant Treasurer of some society or other.

The members of these societies, these artificial and insubstantial groups of humanity, are not individuals who are similar to each other in the sociological sense of the world. They are merely subscribers, who, in any case do not always pay their subscriptions.

Men with affinities for each other are men who are burning with the same ideals, or the same belief, or more simply, who have the same interests, or who think in the same way.

But one man has various ideals and various interests. At one and the same time, he is a member of humanity, of his country, of his family, of his political party, of a business and of his sporting or bridge club.

In each group he joins the people like himself. But unfortunately it may happen that the people like him in one group are not necessarily like him in another. He will come across members of his sports' team who do not belong to his political party. In his business he will come across people who are against sport. In his bridge club he will come in contact with foreigners.

Thus we come to the seemingly paradoxical conclusion that the great sociological law of the gathering together of affinities might be known equally well as the law of the attraction of the opposites.

The whole drama of our age, and not merely of our time but of humanity itself is contained in this.

No two men exist who have the same ideals, the same interests, and to use a sweeping formula, the same conception of things.

It would seem that men were not created to harmonize with each other but to oppose each other.

Man will be divided against man.

Indeed the pattern of our age does not disprove this claim.

Must we, then, give up all hope for mankind and humanity?

I do not think so, and I hold this view because I am persuaded that mankind will come to understand that amongst the medley of ideals and pseudo-ideals, worthwhile interests and other interests, good ideas and ideas that are not so good, there are some which surpass all the others, to which mankind, in its own interest which it must betray in the end, must at least subordinate, if not actually sacrifice its other ideals, interests and ideas.

There is a whole scale of ideals, interests and ideas known to us all as the scale of values, to which it is essential for mankind to pay attention and which, I am convinced, he will one day fully realize.

To attain this, mankind must be able to establish and determine this scale of values. Based upon what standards?... It is all plain enough.

I believe the main one to be this: The utterly fundamental ideas, interests and ideas are those in whose support the greatest number of indivi-

duals come together, the majority of men and this is the supreme ideal — let us not deny that it is purely theoretical — all of them if possible. This has a certain similarity to the ideal of the democratic majority. It is this that we express at present in a concise formula saying that common interests should take precedence over private interests and that men should concentrate upon the things that draw them together and not upon the things that divide them.

Let us see what, in the basis of fundamental standards, are the supreme ideals and ideas. Let us eliminate forthwith those that, in any form whatsoever can, by their very definition, draw together, unite or attract only a small or comparatively small number of individuals.

The ideal of the family, commercial business, the ideal or interest of party politics, of an association or a society and even national feeling come in this category as well as others. Having eliminated all such ideals and ideas, which we will call secondary, without giving the slightest detrimental sense to the word, what then remains?

The political ideal in its most universal sense.

The scientific ideal.

The religious ideal.

The artistic ideal.

Finally the *Olympic ideal*.

I can find no others.

I am fully aware that the thesis that I am going to defend is a daring one and I feel sure that it will cause a certain amount of shrugging of shoulders, if not actually being ridiculed in non-sporting circles. But the important thing is not to give pleasure, even in non-sporting circles, but to be sincere. First of all, I assert that certainly up to now and without attempting to predict the future, of these five supreme ideals that I have just listed, the first four have proved to be so much failure and disillusion. Let us consider the political ideal: Unable to manage the whole world, we attempt to rule Europe and became entangled in the Benelux. The League of Nations was a pitiful failure. East and West are perpetually in a state of cold, hot or tepid war. The U. N. O. is considered less and less seriously. Benelux is hampered by the fact that the plan for the economic union of the three countries that form the union is abandoned, only for the time being I hope and that the union of the Benelux Customs and Excise has again come under discussion. The Conference at Zoute will decide this question for us. Why are there all these political difficulties? Because just as much in the cases of the League of Nations and the U. N. O. as in the case of the Benelux and all the others, we have not been able to distinguish between particular interests and common interests. We have not attained a true understanding of the scale of values. We have failed to detect the things that draw us firmly together, nor have we been able to avoid the things that divide us, although often superficially. One year ago, Mr. Spaak was the President of a European Constituent Assembly representing 18 countries. Today he is the President of another so-called European Constituent Assembly embracing only six countries, having left the other and slammed the door behind him. The champions of a United Europe cannot even agree among themselves.

The nominations for the High Authority of the Schuman Plan in Europe are openly made, in fact this is admitted frankly by some members-countries, not in the general interest, as the Schuman Plan intended but to the particular advantage of the countries which have supported it, at least they claim to support it!

I must say that this state of affairs pains me deeply; I do not seek to find out who is responsible for it; I am stating simply and objectively an actual series of facts, and it is well-known, that facts mean

more to a sportsman than a Lord Mayor or even a People's Commissioner.

The scientific ideal: Let us mention it simply for the sake of record. It has sold itself into the service of war, death and evil. The atomic bomb, the use of poison gases for warlike purposes, the V1, 2, 3 and 4 as well as the germ warfare will remain forever a source of inescapable shame to the Twentieth Century. This ideal has certainly not kept its vows.

The religious ideal: Has it really helped to bring mankind together. Doubtless it has, but in how many sects and diverse religious groups, some gigantic, some large and some small, all fiercely opposed to one another! The very word « fanaticism » has a religious origin. It means precisely « excessive zeal for religion ». For example, one could say that Islam has made the negro population of Africa fanatical. One might talk of Mahommedan fanaticism. Certainly Peace cannot be engendered by the turbulence of fanaticism. Besides, were not the religious wars the most bloody, the most cruel and the most destructive of all wars?

The artistic ideal: Nowadays Art is becoming less and less disinterested. It is, to use the current expression, more and more involved. Nowadays there is a strange custom of having officially appointed Poets and State sculptors.

To the Left Wing Picasso is a genius, to the Right Wing he is a practical joker. The value of Art has not the advantage of being reckoned in figures like the value of sport.

Truth and the artistic ideal are no longer distinguishable. Things sincere, things « felt », simple things, depth, none of these are of any value. This then allows pedantic literary work to flourish.

Beauty has a thousand faces or rather she has a thousand masks.

Impressionism, expressionism, naturalism, surrealism, animism, cubism, dadaism, fauvism, all are hailed as schools by the art critics. In point of fact, they are usually the keeps of ennemy strongholds.

The greatest international competition: the Edinburgh Festival, is losing popularity like Mr. Spaak's Europe. Once again I am forced to state the facts as they are.

Two years ago, Russian artists competed at the Festival and received an enthusiastic welcome. Today they are not taking part in it nor will they compete in the future, for reasons that are quite unrelated to the world of music. Thus there also we are losing ground. I do not attempt either to discover or to disclose the person or persons responsible. I repeat that once again I am limiting myself to stating a fact, without drawing any political conclusion from it. We are not here, thank heavens to discuss politics.

#### *There remains the OLYMPIC IDEAL*

At the European Athletics Championship at Oslo in 1946, Russia and these same satellite countries were present. Lord Burghley congratulated the Soviet comrades.

At the Olympic Games in London in 1948, the Russians and the athletes of the other countries of the Eastern bloc were absent.

In 1952, at the Games of Helsinki, they answered the summons. Americans and Russians invited each other to their respective training camps.

In no other sphere had either Europe or the rest of the world ever held sporting events in a Soviet town.

In 1952, the European men's and women's volleyball championships and the men's basketball championships were held in Moscow.

In 1953, the European men's basketball championship will be held at Leningrad, the Russians being the present title holders.

These again are statements of facts but this time they are optimistic.

*Henceforth the world of sport is the only sphere in which men of all Nationalities, without any exceptions, can still meet and foregather in a friendly atmosphere.*

In this sphere and in this sphere only, Europe and the world are gaining ground.

\* \* \*

Throughout the world, sporting people recognize each other, understand each other and nearly always manage to agree, whether it be in politics or in business, in prison camps, or in various international meetings, in trains or on boardship and—even amongst enemies—even on the battlefields.

Let me quote the account, reported by the American periodical *Life* of two champions, a North Korean and a South Korean, who broke off a hand to hand fight when they recognized each other.

In the prison camp in Germany where I was interned, I and my sportminded companions, who continued training as much as was possible, actually enjoyed greater understanding—and this also is a fact—from the sporting members among our guards than from the others. I was personally able to write more frequently to my family than was officially permitted, through a guard who was a former champion of athletics.

When Charles Rigoulot, the Olympic weight lifting champion and world record holder, was taken prisoner, he found, from the moment that he arrived in the camp until his release, that he was allocated a triple ration of food, through the intervention of a German officer who was a keen sportsman.

American and Russian athletes fraternised together at the Olympic Village at Helsinki.

According to the *Reader's Digest*, President Roosevelt and Marshall Timotchenko, both of whom had been excellent swimmers, never failed to discuss sport during their meetings, a fact that helped to foster that friendly atmosphere in their interviews that is missing in the meetings between Russian and American politicians nowadays.

The expression «the sporting spirit» has a very definite meaning, not merely in the sporting world, but throughout every sphere of human activity. It has become, as it were, a synonym for «fair play».

An industrial or businessman often says of a competitor, that he has or has not a «sporting spirit» or sense of fair play, meaning that he is correct straight and honest in business.

Sport is a source of common inspiration for artists and consequently draws them together. It is a powerful factor in human culture.

Without considering Greek statuary, there are many masterpieces, both literary, sculptural, painting and others that have been inspired by sport.

Poets and writers such as Montherlant, Giraudoux, Obey, Prévost, also musicians such as Arthur Honegger have turned to sport for their inspiration.

Sport is a common source of pleasure for all men, even the greatest amongst us and is consequently a factor of drawing people together.

I have already mentioned that President Roosevelt and Timotchenko were excellent swimmers. Although he was an invalid, Roosevelt used to play water-polo. Rommel was one of the athletic champions of Germany. Patton was a fine rugger-player, General Koenig a very fine sportsman. Montgomery used to, and indeed still does take part in several forms of sport. Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands is a particularly brilliant horseman. The late King of Sweden was an excellent tennis player as also is Mr. Spaak. We saw this King even play some very friendly matches against this socialist leader.

Sport is a school of brotherhood. Let us look back...

At the European Athletics Championships at Brussels in 1950, the Frenchman Heinrich and the Icelander Clausen were almost equal in points, before the 1500 metres, the last of the ten stages of the Decathlon, the hardest test of all for decathlon competitors.

Clausen had but one chance to beat Heinrich, that was to «Leave him standing» as one says in sporting jargon. In fact he knew that Heinrich was certain to beat him in a sprint. For three gruelling circuits of the Heysel Stadium, Clausen made a superhuman effort to reach his goal, to shake off his rival, and by so doing to achieve the dream that he had cherished for so long: the dream of becoming the European champion of the greatest of all sporting events: the Decathlon.

Heinrich whose courage and will-power had also been magnificent, was still close on his rival's heels at the last bend in this marvellous race.

At this moment Clausen made the gesture that will remain forever graven on the memory of the fifty thousand spectators: at the moment when Heinrich passed him in a relentless burst, 110 metres from the finish, he offered him his hand.

Without being aware of it, Clausen had won a victory every bit as great as his conqueror, a victory over himself and over his disappointment as the vanquished champion.

Fifty thousand spectators were in sympathy with him in this fine gesture of sporting brotherhood of brotherhood in humanity.

Only a few weeks before, in the same Stadium, the great Dutch champion William Slyckhuis, battled with our own champion (Olympic), Gaston Reiff, in the three thousand metres.

There were but fifty metres to go and for half a lap the two men had fought savagely, shoulder to shoulder, at a record pace. All at once, Reiff stumbled and fell. It seemed that Slyckhuis had only to go on to collect the victor's laurels, for he had only to continue the race at his present speed. But Slyckhuis had no desire for such worthless laurels. So what did he do? He stopped, run back and helped Reiff to his feet!

Amid wild applause the pair finished the race hand in hand. What would have been a record worth compared with Slyckhuis' brotherly gesture?

Let us look back once more...

A hundred thousand spectators of every nationality rose as one man at Helsinki, in frantic applause for the Communist Captain and Czechoslovakian Zatopek, as he entered the Stadium at the end of his victorious Marathon.

At Helsinki again, the American Bob Mathias was loudly acclaimed by the Soviet athletes after his Decathlon victory.

In Paris, in October 1952, French and German footballers shook hands after an entirely correct game during which sixty thousand spectators, both French and German, applauded both teams impartially.

The gestures of brotherhood in sport are quite countless.

Such is the spontaneous gesture of the fencer when he admits defeat.

Such is the gesture of the tennis player who deliberately drives the ball into the net or out of court, to neutralise an umpire's error in his favour.

Such is the gesture of two footballers who immediately shake hands, after bumping into each other violently.

These Sporting gesture and how many others, beside, are frequent.

And I put the question to you, is this not something wonderful, this universal brotherhood of athletes, this great understanding among sporting

people, this international status of sport, is it not a supreme achievement?

Is it not marvellous, almost miraculous, that in an age, when men massacre each other with such ease, when they even set out to destroy each other scientifically (as we have seen) all this in a sort of conscious rage and with diabolical refinement, that in such an age these same men can come together from time to time in the arenas of sport — known poetically as Paradise upon Earth — in order to contest peaceably against each other then to shake hands and to rise together to their various national anthems?

Is it not almost incredible that Russians and Anglo-Saxons, after contesting a fierce but loyal and friendly contest among themselves for the intangible glory and the honorary prize of an Olympic title, or a European championship, can fraternise at the same table before either Vodka or Coca-Cola, in an age when in every other sphere, without exception, these same Russians and Anglo-Saxons are glaring rudely at each other, if they are not actually hurling bitter insults at one another or if and God forbid, they are not indulging unofficially — what a mockery that word has become — in mutual massacres upon the battlefields: these Infernos upon Earth!

Perhaps this exceptional and almost miraculous universality of sport or Olympism is due simply to the fact that sport is a synthesis of love and war, and that man is born quite definitely to fight and to love. But whether this explains the universality of sport and of Olympism, or not, it definitely exists. It is a living thing.

Here an all-important question must be answered: Has mankind in general and have sporting people in particular, really considered the gigantic importance of this outstanding phenomenon? I do not mean its mere existence, for one has only to look around to be aware of that — but of the universal gathering together of affinities for which the sporting people are responsible in the best sense of the word?

As far as can be seen they are not. Why?

Simply because nothing is done to encourage this awareness, in fact I would say that it is just the opposite, because its immense importance, like some treasure that is underrated, is not considered sacred; in fact is not always recognised by the very people, our political leaders, who should give their attention to it, BUT, who, it is sad to say, might not always have any personal or political advantage in exploiting it!

Our political leaders know only too well that, in order to remain powerful, it is often more expedient to force things apart than to draw them together, and therefore to concentrate on what will divide us instead of concentrating on what will bring us together.

May I recall that certain statesmen, or so-called statesmen, have systematically exploited this enormous importance of the phenomenon of the assembly of sporting people for utterly universal ends, by deliberately limiting its concept to national or partisan sentiment. It is this which allowed people to support the converse proposition to ours, according to which sport is held to divide individuals and peoples instead of uniting them. The condemn sport, the Olympic spirit and the admittedly reprehensible way in which some people have taken advantage of it — and perhaps will do so again in the future — in a few rare cases.

My friend, Dr. Marcel Beaujan, whose great ability in the sphere of physical education and whose deep and sincere love of sport deserve my commendation, does not believe in the peaceful influence of sport.

He quotes in support of his thesis, various newspaper articles, referring to the friction that arose during and after international football matches, he

cites the telegram that Mussolini sent to an Italian team before a match against a Spanish team, reading thus: « I order you to win ». He quotes the following passage in Duhamel's *Scènes de la Vie future*: « Football is not always a lively, airy, cheerful game, but rather something grim, ferocious and concentrated. There are about thirty men on the field on two sides. First of all they stand motionless for some time, in strange attitudes. They seem to be watching each other like wild beasts lying in wait. The ball is kicked off. Then follows a short struggle of a confused and unspeakable savagery. There is nothing of the beauty of a harmonious dance here, none of the grace of Greek statuary. No elegance, no imagination and above all no beauty other than the revolting beauty of the battlefield.

» All at once the whistle blows, the wolf-pack stops, comes together and continues to lie in wait for its victims until the next mêlée. » Obviously Mr. Duhamel has never seen such footballers as, for example, the Austrians, or the British, or the Scandinavians. The match France-Germany in Paris in October 1952 does not add weight to his arguments.

Mr. Beaujan uses other arguments of a similar nature to support his thesis. He finishes his exposé as follows: « Only organised sport, fired by a moral ideal can become an international factor in pacifist propaganda. »

Thus sport is worthless, according to Mr. Beaujan, without a predestined universal moral philosophy in existence beforehand; that, our friend assures us, is an ideal surpassing all others.

We are here in a vicious circle. For sport, the sense of fair play it creates-just as the function creates the organ — the Olympic spirit is for us, that very ideal surpassing all others, springing from fraternity and loyalty. Unfortunately the people who have perverted it for national or other purposes have not managed to condemn it for all that!

Let us oppose the friction among the footballers of Mr. Beaujan, with the fraternisation of the Russians and Americans athletes at Helsinki. It cannot be said that they were inspired by the same latent ideal, if it were not of an Olympic nature.

Doubtless it sometimes happens, and too often at that, that footballers come to blows or that one or two excited supporters start quarrelling.

Doubtless there are even some sporting officials who do not always understand their duty also ambitious people, profiteers and speculators are to be found in their ranks sometimes.

Doubtless too, there are imperfections in the organisation of sport the lack of a World Federation of Sports, different National and International Federations, amateur status variously interpreted in various sport these are the principal flaws although there may be others besides.

But these are unavoidable mistakes to be found in every sphere and this is inherent to every human action.

It is a pity that sincere friends of sport, such as Mr. Beaujan seem to find pleasure in laying stress on these faults or shortcomings. For in any case, I repeat that in answer to the friction amongst Mr. Beaujan's footballers, to his press clippings, to his telegram from Mussolini to the passage he quotes from Duhamel's book and to all his other arguments of a similar nature, we can cite: the fraternisation of the American and Russian athletes at Helsinki, the gesture of Clausen and Slyckhuis, the gestures of mutual aid between sportsmen in war and all the other fraternal gestures in sport, both great and small, that I have mentioned and finally the understanding between sporting people that is evident today in every circle, in all countries of the world...

Considering all these things of a positive nature, are not the negative attributes, as listed by Mr. Beaujan and those who share his views, a very small affair? In matters concerned more directly with the Olympic Games, I was particularly pleased to read the following passage quite recently published in a notable work written by my able friend Frank Matthys: « In spite of certain blemishes, of certain mistakes that were made, we feel that the Olympic Games ought to occupy our full attention and that they serve as a rare chance for the peoples to learn to know each other better, to understand each other more fully and perhaps to come to love one another. »

\* \* \*

From what I have set forth it can be deduced that the phenomenon of the gathering together of the affinities produced by sporting people is an example of a fact that need not be provoked, nor encouraged, nor awakened, nor yet roused — since it already exists — supporters, the press, the radio and the cinema deal perfectly with that aspect; it is almost perfectly organised already, but it is an example of the gathering of the affinities, whose organisation must be strengthened obviously to a certain extent by the supporters themselves, but above all by a ratification and by official support, both moral and material, blending together.

This is to some extent a case of the gathering together of the affinities *sui generis*, lacking only this official recognition to become a perfect example of the integral law of gathering of the affinities, of the same type as, for instance, the case of the gathering of swallows, or the members of a same tribe that I mentioned at the beginning of this exposé.

Let this official sanction come to ratify the present condition and organisation, though slightly improved, of the assembly of sporting people, let the political leaders come into close co-operation with the leaders, doctors and educators of the sporting world, let them give the latter their support and accept to consider their advice, their suggestions and their various proposals, let them agree on the sportive plane, being at last favourably disposed towards one another, and we will not have to wait long before the vast majority of people become aware of their common destiny they will then form a common front against subversive elements, just as the swallows assemble at the approach of winter and turn together to face danger or adversity like the members of one game tribe.

Then they will have become members of the great universal tribe.

As we wait for this moment, we cannot pay our respects overmuch to the majority of organisers of the sporting world, directing members of the Olympic Committees, Federations, and sporting associations, who are left practically to their own devices, yet who devote themselves, in face of great difficulties, passiveness and inertness if not actual—hostility on the part of the authorities. The at least have grasped the paramount importance of the Cause. One cannot praise them too much.

It is thanks to them and to organised sport, that young people of every country of the world can meet together in many international, yet fiercely pacifist contests, where they come to know, understand and love each other.

It is thanks to organised sport that such things exist universally, as a flag, a moral code, a technique, a language, rites and yes, one might almost say a religion.

Quite lately, the idea of a European flag has been put forward; *but does any other universal flag exist besides our own dear standard of five entwined circles, symbolizing the union of the five continents of the world?*

The sport Regulations are recognized throughout the world.

The width of a weight-thrower's circle is 2,135 metres in New York, in Tokio, in London, in Madrid and in Moscow.

In all the countries of the world, a penalty is taken 10,98 metres from the goal-mouth, a tennis court is 23,80 metres long by 10,95 metres wide and a competitor in the Decathlon receives 649 points if he runs the 100 metres in 11 8/10 seconds.

A high jumper has the right, anywhere in the world, to three attempts at each height, the hurdles in a 110 metres race are 1,06 metres high and diving is assessed by the same standards at The Hague, in Belgrade, in Los Angeles and in Leningrad.

Sporting technique is also universal. Sedgman makes the same gestures as von Cramm, Kumar, Asboth, Van Swol or Destremeau when playing a smash.

The Soviet discus lady champion Dumbadzée has the same style of throwing the discus as the Italian Consolini and the American Gordien.

All the high-speed swimmers use the crawl.

All goalkeepers have the same style for catching a goal and all pole-vaulters double themselves backwards in an inverted V over the bar.

Thanks to sport and essentially because of it, there is now a universal vocabulary, a form of speech if not an actual language.

Every young person in the world can understand when one talks of football, the terms: shoot, goal, penalty, offside; when speaking of hockey: a keeper, a drive, a passing-shoot, of a smash, of a marathon, of a western roll, of the crawl, of a starter or of fair play...

No longer is this English, it is the language of sport, a new Esperanto.

Sport has its ceremonial, its precedence and its sacred ritual.

Always, in a religious silence, at the same command from the starter Jesse Owens, MacDonald Bailly, Soukaroff, Fanny Blankers-Koen, Bally or Linssen... all kneel first of all, then draw themselves together, then suddenly unleash themselves in order to hurdle with the same rhythm towards the same goal and a common victory.

A Yugoslav, Greek or Brazilian basketball player gathers himself together before a shoot at an open goal, in exactly the same way, just as a French, Czech, Chinese, Portuguese or Korean jumper draws himself up before taking his run; or as any fencer or sabre competitor, the world over, tears off his mask and flings out his arm after having beaten his opponent in a pulverising attack.

The victorious tennis player's leap over the net has become a classic gesture, in the same way as the winning circuit of the victorious and flower-bedecked cyclist and the boxer's salute to the crowds, arms bent and hands clasped, after his victory.

Thanks to organised sport, representatives of Soviet youth, were able to come to Brussels in 1950, and to Helsinki in 1952, thus having the opportunity to realise on the spot and *de visu* that we Westerners are not so barbarous and not so backward as it is sometimes alleged.

Doubtless some of the representatives of Soviet youth will have returned home and told a few of their fellow-citizens what they saw and heard in our part of the world. At least let us hope so.

Thanks to organised sport, Soviet footballers came to play in London a good thing in itself but what is more important, they were given the opportunity of fraternising with their British opponents, these British who have been so much maligned in other respects...

Tanks to organised sport, in October 1952, the eleven best players of football of France, lined up opposite the eleven finest footballers of Germany

and shook hands amidst the applause of sixty thousand French and German spectators.

Thanks to organised sport, Yugoslav and Spanish basketball players took part in the same tournament in Brussels a short while ago.

Thanks to organised sport, Zatopek and the other men and women competitors belonging to the countries of the Eastern bloc were able to pass through the Iron Curtain.

Once this peak of sports organisation: the Olympic Games came to an end, there was no further reference to them, or rather one thought, of them, but organised politics having once more assumed its full rights, the Olympic truce being over...

Thanks to organised sport there is a capital of the world for a few short weeks every four years.

Thanks to organised sport, there took place at Helsinki, the latest city to be a capital of the world, that wonderful event when young Russians and American Youths fraternised happily together at the same table, expressing the wish, upon leaving, that they would meet again as often as possible.

But if we owe all this to organised sport and therefore to the organisers of sport, the sporting officials, we should not expect more of them than they, left as they are to themselves, can humanly give us.

Let us try not to conceal the fact that the great reconciliation of mankind by means of the expansion of the phenomenon of the universal gathering of sporting people, will never achieve (and I wish to stress this), the heights of its purpose, unless the present organisation of this assembly is strengthened by moral and material support of an official nature.

Unfortunately, most political leaders do not believe in sport. They usually think of it as unimportant, while those who do believe in it, use its towards non-universal or nationalistic ends.

The former, those who do not believe in sport, consider it as a pleasant pastime, a mild idiosyncrasy and a mere game.

« It is only a game », so say these great sportsmen, the British. But it seems to me that the British are quite mistaken.

Sport is certainly not an aim and must not be thought to have an object, but it is a great deal more than a mere game.

Mikko Kajaani, the late Finnish athletics trai-

ner, used to say that sport is a great deal more than mere sport and anybody will admit that it is a great deal more than a democratic bowling game, a bourgeois Game of croquet or and aristocratic polo-match.

Sport is a means to an end, in the same way as study. It is a means to and end on the physical plane as is studying on the intellectual and moral basis.

Only when one makes use of these two means to form oneself, does one become a man. *Mens sana in Corpore sano*, said Juvenal.

Sport is an important factor in human culture on the three planes of education: physical, moral and intellectual. We have already seen that it was a valuable source of inspiration to the artistic world. But above all it is a powerful way of drawing individuals and all peoples together as we have already seen, on the human plane and this in its most universal sense.

It is our duty to try ceaselessly and without respite to persuade our political leaders especially, as well as the remainder of our fellow-citizens, of the importance of such a means as this. When we have convinced our political leaders of the need of supporting our sporting organisations, then

Where the politicians,

Where the scientists and the Church,

And where the world of Art have all failed,

*We, the sporting, people will succeed.*

By virtue of organised sport, of our Olympic Committees, of our sporting Federations of our sports clubs, supported and encouraged at last as they deserve, we will gather beneath the standard of the five entwined circles, not only Benelux, but Europe and the whole world of men and women of goodwill. We will be building up contacts between the millions of sporting people in all countries. Creating and building up sport itself, the sporting idea and the Olympic ideal, with all our strength and in every conceivable way.

We will strengthen and increase the assembly of the affinities that all sportsmen are, in order, finally, to achieve our aim: create this World of Peace and Goodness that we all yearn for.

The motto of my own country, « Strength through Unity », will become the motto of the whole world.