

UNIVERSITY SPORT

Although not placed under the patronage of the International Olympic Committee, why should we pass under silence the Universities World Championships which have just been held in Paris? All the more so that a great step forward has been taken towards the realization of friendship and understanding between two distinct groups. This gives us a twofold satisfaction. The guarded attitude we have always assumed in the past with respect to these university contests was dictated from the fact that a split of a political origin and character had intervened in university sport. Moreover, the youth who competed in these university contests seemed very akin to the youth participating in the Olympic Games, yet very far from it. Thus, while the Democracies of the East controlled and organize their own sport movement, about twenty nations holding Occidental ideology organized and managed their own sport organization. Some of these countries such as France opted for neutrality. We think that it was actually Frenchmen who took the initiative to enter into long and patient negotiations with the view that the exponents of the two different ideologies mutually agreed to bring together the East and the West. This meeting took place in Paris this September on the occasion of the Jubilee of the National Union of French students, thus paying an implicit tribute to the country which twenty-five years ago launched the idea of holding these Games. Thanks to this organization and its sustained efforts, unity has been more or less reestablished between the students. If this unity is not yet absolute it is on the way to become so, since at the Universities World Championships held in Paris recently students belonging to U.S.S.R., U.S.A., China and Federal Germany — to cite only a few — met on the Stadium. There were 1600 students fraternizing and who came together joined by their

love of sport and this, just when one had almost given up hope that it could ever happen.

We are not very much in favour of Regional Games as they tend to expand in an alarming manner in the pursuit often of a diversity of interests. Their attraction also tends to disappear. They monopolize young sportsmen and youths during periods much in excess of the time one ought to devote to these Games, while numerous others competitions keep them away from their home or their occupations. On the other hand, we think that these students gatherings serve a further purpose, of a higher spiritual order, perhaps, when the actual competition is not the most predominant thing. The sentiments which pervade the Universities Games are sensibly nearer to those which form the basis of the Olympic Games structure and that of the Olympic Movement. These sentiments are of a social, educative and moral order and aim just as much at the development of spiritual values as they do of athletic achievements.

On this ground alone, these Games strike a sympathetic cord in us and they deserve to be encouraged and supported; on the condition, that they are conceived in this spirit of cooperation and friendly understanding between students belonging to diverse ideologies, even if they happened to be diametrically opposed. Another point worth remembering is that the principal meaning of the Universities Championships, beside their actual sporting value resides in the fact that the students' world has again found the essential elements of its unity since the representatives of two opposed ideologies have agreed to meet each other in Paris.

Envisaged under this angle, the Universities World Championships held in Paris recently may be regarded as having achieved a brilliant victory.