

# Address by Avery Brundage

*at the solemn opening ceremony,*

*International Olympic Committee, 58th Session,*

*at the Herodus Atticus ancient Theatre June 16th 1961*

It is always a pleasure for us of the International Olympic Committee to return here to the birthplace of the Olympic Movement, and we thank the President, His Royal Highness, Crown Prince Constantin, and the members of the Greek Olympic Committee, and our Greek colleagues, Angelo Bolanaki and Jean Ketseas, for inviting us and making the necessary arrangements for our session. We have many important problems to study. The Delphic oracle no longer functions, but perhaps it will be easier to find the true values which we seek

and the solution to these problems here in the pure air under the cerulean skies of glorious Hellas.

When Baron de Coubertin conceived the idea of reviving the Olympic Games, he realized that he must create an organization to conduct them. The modern Games were to belong to the world. It must, therefore, be an international and a permanent organization, and in order to succeed it must be devoted solely to the welfare of the Olympic Movement, and be free from pressure of any kind—financial, racial, religious or political. With this

in mind he constituted the International Olympic Committee, which chooses its own members, who must dedicate themselves to the promotion of the Olympic Movement, and elects them for life, thus perpetuating itself and its independence and its freedom.

Now that this organization which he founded, is approaching the ripe old age of three score and ten, it may be pertinent to review, and if the facts permit, to extol its accomplishments. Since 1896, when the Games of the First Olympiad of the modern cycle were staged here in Athens, National Olympic Committees have been formed and programs of physical training and competitive amateur sports are flourishing in almost one hundred different countries. International Federations have been created to control and promote all the Olympic sports. The vast machinery required to stage these quadrennial festivals of the youth of the world with greater and greater success has been constructed and operates with ever increasing efficiency. An Olympic code, followed on all five continents, has been adopted and the world has accepted, that, at least when the Olympic flag has been raised over an arena, Olympic rules of fair play and good sportsmanship must be observed. In a world divided as never before, teams from countries without political connections have been brought together, and at the last few Games the united team, representing the two artificially divided Germanies, has been an example to all.

The Olympic Games of 1960 were a tremendous success. Squaw Valley, despite an inauspicious beginning, by reason of the efforts of the California Organizing Committee, was a glorious festival of winter sport, hailed by participants, officials and spectators alike. The Games of the XVII Olympiad inscribed a new and constructive chapter in the history of Rome, and everyone present left with renewed faith in humanity and hope for the future of mankind. If participants from eighty different countries can take part in the most strenuous competition without untoward incident, it may yet be possible for the world, equipped with atomic bombs, to find a way to live in peace.

Preparations are under way in Tokyo for the Games of the XVIII Olympiad, and in Innsbruck for the IX Olympic Winter Games, and we expect during our session to have reports from the two Organizing Committees. We have heard that the budget of the Organizing Committee in Tokyo is 47,000,000,000 yen, about \$130,000,000. This is an enormous sum for a sport festival, but our Japanese friends plan many improvements for their Capital, largest city in the world, which together with the new sport facilities will be civic assets to be enjoyed by the community for many future generations.

Monarchies have crumbled and nations have disappeared as a result of the earthshaking social adjustments and the two World Wars of the 20th Century, but the Olympic Movement, under the direction of the International Olympic Committee one of the few international institutions that have survived, has become more and more important. and more and more followers every year, in nearly every civilized country, despite differences of

languages and customs, now subscribe to Olympic principles.

This surely is just reason for acclaim.

The one reason that has made it possible for the International Olympic Committee to direct this tremendous worldwide enterprise with such outstanding success, is the endowment of independence which was written into its charter by the Baron de Coubertin. It owes allegiance to no individual, institution, organization, or Government, and it must remain free and independent if it is to carry on successfully the great and important work entrusted to it.

Today we have the same problems that disturbed the organizers of the ancient Games more than two thousand years ago, when the Greek philosophers exclaimed against the subsidization, the proselyting, the excesses, the commercialization, and the other abuses that had corrupted the ancient Games. Failure to solve these problems contributed to their eventual abolition and steps must be taken without further delay to preserve the purity of the modern Games.

In addition, since the modern Games belong to the World and not to one country alone, as did the ancient Games, we suffer from a new and equally serious danger. The universal public interest in, and the success of the Games, has aroused the attention of the politicians, and, forgetting that they are contests between individuals and not between nations, tremendous pressures for victory are being applied, although the standing of a country is not determined by the performances of a few trained athletes. If these pressures were always exerted along proper lines, this would be all to the good, but too often they are not. It isn't training camps or subsidies or bonuses that lead to success in international amateur sport, but a sound national foundation of physical training for all, beginning in the elementary schools, and a general appreciation of the social, educational, ethical and spiritual values of amateur sport.

There is always the menace of political interference, so difficult, if not impossible, to combat at a national level. With the National Olympic Committees, the International Federations, and the International Olympic Committee, a most powerful combination, working closely together, however, Olympic regulations can be enforced regardless.

We have many problems due to the astonishingly rapid growth of the Games, since there has not been time with our organization of volunteers to educate everyone in Olympic principles. They have become too large and too expensive. At our well arranged session in Sofia, just over the border, in Bulgaria, a few years ago, it was agreed that we would study the Games of the XVII Olympiad, and that efforts would be made, for obvious reasons, to reduce the cost and to limit the size of succeeding Games, because of the physical impossibility of handling such large numbers in the time at our disposal.

The amateur question, since it deals with matters of the spirit, will probably always be with us. The Olympic Games are and must remain amateur if they are to continue. There would be no excuse for their continuance if they are not amateur. No one

—organizers, officials, or participants—can be permitted to make a profit on the Games, if they are to serve their purpose.

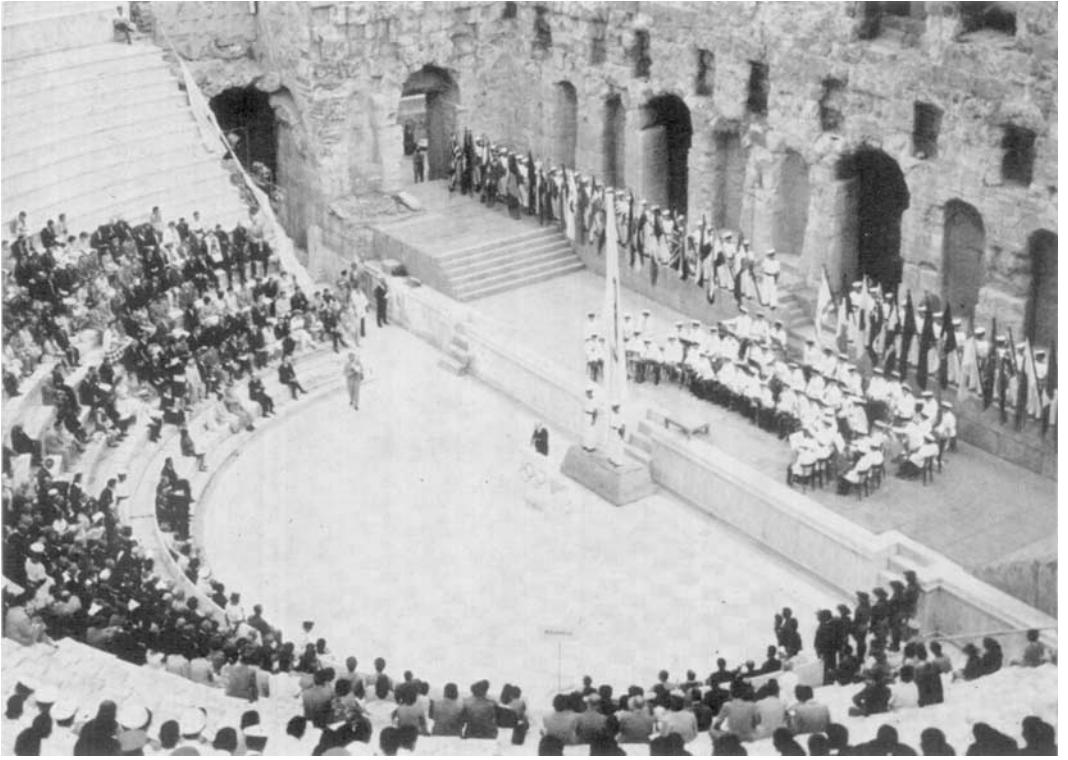
Three signatures are required on all entry blanks, and if there have been competitors in the Games who are not eligible, three persons have not told the truth. Perhaps penalties for violation of the rules, such as those used in the ancient Games, should be applied. In any event, the public must be convinced that, in sport, freedom and independence can be enjoyed only by amateurs, since paid athletes must do the bidding of those who employ them.

The International Olympic Committee was placed in charge of the Olympic Movement, with the duty to maintain its ideals and to guard and defend its principles. We must restate and clearly define our objectives and draft our rules accordingly, and there is no better place to accomplish this than in Greece, a truly Olympic country with an Olympic champion as Crown Prince.

The objectives of the Olympic Movement as designed by the Baron de Coubertin, are a broad and comprehensive development for men, in which sport, emphasizing grace, beauty and its moral qualities, play a part but only a part. Athletic games and competitions are not to be a career

—they are incidental to a symmetrical and harmonious physical, mental and spiritual development, a supplement and not a goal. One can be sure that he did not revive the Games as a commercial enterprise for profit, nor to entertain the public. He would have been horrified, after what he said about gladiators of the circus, to find the Games converted into a steppingstone to a career as a paid athletic performer. To have them used as a measure of the superiority of one political system over another was inconceivable. He would rather not have revived the Games than to see them perverted to such ends. The Olympic Games, which, in ancient Greece, were a dignified semi-religious festival, were intended to be far more than merely a world's championship. *Citius, Altius, Fortius* applies not only to the physical accomplishments, but also to the character of the participants.

We deal with matters of the spirit and it is a struggle to preserve idealistic concepts in a materialistic world, but if we remember these objectives and permit no deviation, and maintain the simplicity and dignity of the Games of the Golden Age, the Olympic Movement will continue to progress and prosper, and to set an outstanding example of peaceful international co-operation for the rest of the world.







*Athènes 1961. Mr. A. Brundage giving his speech at the Solemn Opening Ceremony.  
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