

## ***Countries where Sport has not yet evolved***

Under the expert observation of Mr. Emile Birbaum, Mr. H. L. Bonardelli, Chief Editor of the *Semaine Sportive* (Geneva-Lausanne), published at the end of 1961 a few remarks with the view to demonstrate that it is a great error to believe that the gospel of sport has been preached to all men. When the International Olympic Committee set itself the task to spread the Olympic Movement and develop sport in the new autonomous countries of Africa and Asia, it occurs to us that it would be interesting to publish a few extracts from the article mentioned above. It is indeed a known fact that, at its Session in Athens, last year, the International Olympic Committee appointed a Board in order to enquire into the problem which we now discuss. This Board consists of Comte de Beaumont (France), president, Constantin Andrianov (U. S. S. R.), Cheik Gabriel Gemayel (Lebanon), R. S. Alexander (Kenya), A. D. Touny (R.A.U.) and G. D. Sondhi (India).

Emile Birbaum compares certain prosperous countries with those where the peoples die of hunger. There are enormous portions

of the globe which still ignore entirely the benefits derived by sport. He sets the following question: 'Have you ever heard anybody talk of sport in Thibet. or of sport practised by the black populations of Central Africa, or of the primitive peoples of Australia or of Polynesia? Have you ever seen a Red Indian participate in an international competition or heard of real Indians competing? Yes, sport also has its no man's land, its waste land, its analphabetic people, its savages and its under-developped countries! It is well to remind people that we are far from having converted the whole of humanity. How are we to deal with this deplorable state of affairs? Doubtless nothing in the mean time. Sport prospers only where certain conditions prevail, the first one of them is to enjoy a certain amount of prosperity and where a certain degree of civilization has been reached. (Couldn't sport set an example and help promoting such development? *Ed.'s note.*)

'(...) When all said and done, a big gap exists and is explained by the fact that no central institution exists at the head of the

world of sport to control the various federations and the diverse sports governing bodies. The Olympic Movement effectively spreads over the whole universe (100 countries belong to it, *Ed.'s note*), but it is responsible for the organization of the Olympics every four years.

It is all it is responsible for and more than enough. It is therefore essential to give a roof to the edifice of sport organizations, a world sport's committee should be created responsible for the control of activity carried out by the International Federations (careful there, these sport bodies are entirely autonomous and would rightly resent all idea of tutorship; they actually *might give orders*, to this world committee, *Ed.*) The author goes on to say: ...'the duty of this committee would consist in intervening where there is need for assistance owing to poverty, also setting an equilibrium between the countries which have too much and those which have too little, above all its duty would be to sow the good seed in virgin soil. An enormous work of analysis and of synthesis await the attention of a governing sport organization of that order. Part of its functions would be to set statistics, send Boards of enquiries in order to investigate in the diverse regions where no sports organizations yet exist.

Just in the same way as it happened in the XVth century, when missionaries brought the symbol of the cross and preached the Gospel, walking on the trail of the conquerors of the newly discovered countries of the New World. Thus, today, the under-developed countries must be visited by the apostles of sport who will bring to the youths of these assisted territories, the necessary sport material and equipment. (Who would then finance such a committee? We know that the Board appointed by the International Olympic Committee is examining this problem and that Comte de Beaumont, its president, has travelled all over these new countries of Africa and Asia and is studying this question most thoroughly. *Editor.*) Mr. E. Birbaum thinks that it is up to the International Federations to back the founding of this world organizing body which they would supply with *financial means* and competent men. (This last condition is out of the question since the federations cannot even balance their own budget. *Ed.*) The author of this article concludes by saying: 'it is now necessary to increase the quantitative factor, terminate the conquest and provide rational physical education to the last remaining nations who ignore it. May the world governing bodies which have the power to take decision, strain every effort to this end.