



# The Olympic Movement in mourning



**G. D. Sondhi** (Member of I.O.C. for India 1932-1966).

When the first telegram of condolence arrived at Mon-Repos from the Near East, we could hardly believe it. We hoped that it was a mistake. Then another telegram came, from Latin America this time. Could it be true then? Finally we received confirmation of the sad news from the Indian Olympic Committee.

Mr. Sondhi died on the night of November 19th to 20th, 1966. The doyen of the International Olympic Committee — so esteemed by one and all for his moderation, his wisdom and his great kindness — was no more.

A great sadness followed the stupefaction we felt at the sudden, brutal news. so unlike the

man himself, to whom we are paying homage today, a homage that will not be the last, so vivid will his memory remain in our minds.

There are societies that are no longer quite the same once one of their members passes away. This will be the case of the International Olympic Committee who by losing their doyen member have lost someone quite irreplaceable. For this idealist was at the same time a realist and while his ambitions were on the continental scale — *his* continent, Asia — they were inspired by man, for man. A man like you and me, a man that Guru Dutt Sondhi, the educator, knew well.

Having become a professor, then the principal, at the college he had attended as a pupil, he promoted sport which he had enjoyed and benefited from as a young man. India is deeply indebted to Mr. Sondhi for the active part he played on the National Olympic Committee, his untiring work for its hockey federation, his creation of the Indian Amateur Athletics Association, always with the success such incomparable devotion deserved. Asia owes him its Continental Games, which were widely reported in our last "Bulletin".

We do not know whether Mr. Sondhi saw our last "Bulletin". We would like to think he had for, prepared with his help, it was devoted to his work — the Asian Games. In that number he advocated a programme, based on a lucid and comprehensive statement that only the noblest of creators are capable of achieving. A programme that the death of its author converts into a heritage and whose realization is now doubly important — because it is needed and because it will be a living memorial to him.

Affection, respect and gratitude are all mingled in the imperishable memory we shall keep of G. D. Sondhi, and we wish to extend to his wife and two daughters our deepest sympathy.



**Benedikt G. Waage** (Member of I.O.C. for Iceland 1946-1966).

On November 6th, 1966, suddenly and unexpectedly we received the sad news of the death of Mr. Benedikt Waage, one of the most faithful members of the International Olympic Committee, to which he had been elected in 1946. In welcoming him among them, the International Olympic Committee recognized the merits of a sportsman who was in turn champion of Iceland for swimming in 1911, member of the winning team in the Icelandic Gymnastics Championship in 1926, member of the winning team in the Icelandic Football Championships in 1911 and 1919, and who was also a keen athlete, skier and climber.

The active part Benedikt Waage played in these various sports did not prevent him from also taking on important administrative posts in the world of sport.

In 1915 he was elected a member of the Federation of Icelandic Sports Associations, of which he became in succession treasurer, vice-president and finally president in 1926. In 1940 the government of his country invited him to join the State Committee for Sport. To this organization he brought his vast knowledge of Icelandic and international sports problems acquired during his travels abroad, in particular at the Olympic Games in Antwerp and Berlin, where he represented Iceland, and during the many years when he was chief editor of a sports magazine.

Once he was elected to the I.O.C., Benedikt Waage followed all Olympic sessions very closely. He was quiet, discrete, modest and always friendly. A man who did not feel the need to take the floor at every discussion, since he approved the olympic principles, by which all his decisions were guided.

His colleagues and his many friends will keep in their hearts the memory of a man who, like his island, often seemed rather solitary, but whose devotion was as unlimited as his attachment to the Olympic Movement.

Deeply moved by the death of Benedikt Waage, the International Olympic Committee offers its most sincere condolences to his family as well as the Icelandic Olympic Committee, whose grief it shares.



**Dr. Joseph Wolffe** (President of the Olympic Medical Archives).

Of our first meeting with Dr. Wolffe, who came to Mon-Repos to deposit the first Olympic Medical Archives, we always remember his unwavering enthusiasm — and a gardening parable. Speaking of the work undertaken — the collection of the physiological files of olympic athletes examined periodically throughout their lives — Dr. Wolffe said : " We shall not see the fruits of our labour, but what does it matter ! We are working for the future, like the gardener who sows a seed and waters it and watches over it without ever hoping to see the tree it will grow into one day. " And he added : " Have you ever thought of the extraordinary (in the strict sense of the Word) mine of information

that the research workers of the next century will have at their disposal when they start to examine, compare and base their conclusions on a wealth of material that no research laboratory will ever be able to supply : the scientific observation of three, four or five thousand top-flight athletes ! "

A scientist and a sensitive man, Dr. Wolffe succeeded in communicating his enthusiasm to the members of the International Federation of Sports Medicine, of which he was the vice-president, then to the World Health Organization and the International Olympic Committee, and finally to the national sports leaders and the athletes themselves — the volunteers for science, as he called them. Already over two thousand young men and women have signed on and two thousand files been opened in the first chapter of a long and fruitful undertaking. The promoter of the Olympic Medical Archives will never see the flowering of the seed he planted in 1964. He died suddenly, in the prime of life, at the gateway between East and West, in Istanbul, just another port of call among the many on his travels continually undertaken on behalf of sports medicine. But his work will continue, the F.I.M.S. have promised ; and it is Dr. Wolffe's son-in-law, Dr. Colcher, who will take over the job.

The International Olympic Committee pays grateful tribute to Dr. Joseph Wolffe, and extends to his family, his assistants and the International Federation of Sports Medicine its deepest sympathy on their great loss.

# A champion

# does not reflect the physical worth of a whole people



As far back as 1925, Georges Hébert wrote " The lessons learnt from the Olympic Games since their beginning, and especially since 1912, should finally have convinced of their errors those extremists amongst sportsmen who only base their reasoning on that exceptional being, the champion, and deduce, wrongly of course, the physical worth of a nation from the number of those phenomena, the winners. " Those in charge of the various Federations, so often disappointed and embittered after major international meetings, untiringly continue with their small group of champions, actual or potential, in the conviction that the future will be more propitious. In actual fact, " The same causes produce the same effects. The same errors have the same consequences. "

Is there a possible way out of this " blind alley " ? There certainly is, provided there is no stubborn and persistent desire to demonstrate the physical and moral health of a people or nation by means of champions, often reared artificially, but, on the contrary, to cultivate that vital force which lies dormant within any social group and which only needs to be awakened. This is how the real, and great, champions are made, whose glory is the more complete since they carry within them a people's real expression and tendencies.


*by Yves Jeannotat*

" Begin at the beginning and bring physical education to youth as a whole, to the weak as well as to the strong, in a complete and useful manner, and do not limit training for sports exclusively to a minority. From this, there will arise, when they are of the right age, those suitable for international competition. "

Hébert continues by saying that " physical education must be above all a task of the schools and a subject for instruction by the teacher. A teaching doctrine with high ideals must be adopted for physical education, which will not only ensure complete physical development but will also breed men of energy with noble and generous ideals, with the idea of becoming strong in order to serve useful purposes. "

These quotations are more than forty years old but have not aged by a single day ! We have to recognise that those in charge of sporting organisations for youth at the present day, instead of making men, seek above all to make champions, and often of quite absurd sports. Instead of taking on an instructional task, they put on a show.

" It is only by giving to physical education the fundamental place it deserves in all training ", says Pierre Naudin, " that those responsible will succeed in turning out complete athletes. This is the only guarantee of success in any international



competition, and this applies also to athletics. He who practises out and out specialisation does it to the detriment of that basic resistance which is indispensable to success." Naudin also says, "To train arms or legs to stand up to one single type of test is a mistake. The athlete's body should be given complete, harmonious strength." Such a statement is not new, and can but last for a long time for it is based on good sense. Let us note, in passing, two especially striking, though very different, ways of training the complete athlete :

That of Eastern European countries, where there is no specialisation until after the young sportsman has received progressive and prolonged physical education. This continues to hold a favoured place even when the athlete has opted for a particular field or when brilliant results have already brought him outstanding honours.

That of the Americans, who go indiscriminately, and often with equal success, from one sport to another. They are adepts at the complementary sport, and their formula has often brought us up sharp and made us say that they are athletic prodigies. This is in actual fact not really the case. They are simply complete athletes !

We always come back to the same argument : men — and women — who distinguish themselves in major competitions are those who have toughened their system in such a complete manner that they can assert themselves under any conditions in sport and competition.

It is from fully-formed, complete and powerful athletes that the vest trainers choose their specialists. Action begins at the base of the pyramid ! Our youth awaits. Shall they wait in vain for the hands that are capable of moulding and shaping them, of firing their enthusiasm ?

The trainers and other persons responsible must go to the schools, to the educators. Together they may breed men who will care about becoming good citizens and about restoring, through sport, an equilibrium that is endangered by this frantic modern life. Ninety years ago, Dr. Ruffier preached that " Health has to be deserved and won ". From primary school days on, our youth must be made aware of the dangers ahead and of the joys they risk missing all their lives if they do not start off on the right road. Only by introducing our young people to an all-round practice of sport shall we discover a worthwhile elite that has nothing in common with the fallacious idea of the " champion and popular idol ".

Jean-François Brisson wrote " Let us get back to the sources ! We should not be putting the whole of youth on the sports ground in order to discover prodigious athletes capable of triumphing at international meetings. It is because we

shall send them there for their own good from their primary school days onwards that there will emerge from within their midst the most gifted, who, in addition, may triumph at top-line sport. Top-line sport is nothing but a deception if its leading figures no longer represent it as a whole but become artificial and rare hothouse plants. " A French Minister of Education has said, " Let us raise the physical standards of the nation and champions will then come forward in addition to this... " This remark is perfectly valid for many countries and if it shows us a way that is far from being easy it is nevertheless worth our while to follow it. Today, 22nd June, 1966, I chanced to see in a newspaper article a paragraph amongst various facts dealing with compulsory physical training for apprentices and students and I will give the following extract " The backwardness of all those

who, once their schooldays are over, follow sport purely as spectators — to take the best examples — appears to be all the greater.

"To win over these to the cause of physical culture when their schooldays are ended becomes therefore an urgent task, and an enormous one, too, since it is a question of convincing almost the half of today's youth ! "

In fact, this task of convincing will never be successful unless the problem is considered within primary and secondary school education. The half time teaching and sports movement, continually gaining ground in France, is perhaps one valid solution. This system can in fact claim to have made for a happier school life, to have raised strong and robust adolescents, both morally and physically, essential qualities for professional life as well as for sports. This method of teaching has the inestimable advantage of being real therapy for the weaker and handicapped, who discover with astonishment this source of health within their grasp, and a stimulus for the more gifted ones. It is no longer necessary after school days are over to have to persuade them to go to the sports field. They return of their own accord since they have progressively discovered their talents and want to put them into action by trying to find the limits of their possibilities. Because they were trained at the opportune moment, they will also be saved from falling into the trap which leads them to compete in a " contest for the best muscles " .

This conception of physical culture in the school, for the weakest as well as for the strongest, is at the very foundations — and this applies to both sexes — of a training which makes for complete and well balanced men.

Conceived of in this way, sport is a source of great joys, and these are not so numerous in life that we can afford to ignore them. Let us all therefore practise it and only then will specialisation have a completely positive sense and the success of the best ones reflect in part the value, energy and vigour of the nation.

" Between the sportsman who takes part in international meetings and the one who, without any particular ambitions, keeps himself physically fit and relaxes by means of sport ", says Brisson, " the difference will only be in degree. For both of them it is not a question of a life aim but of a complementary activity, a cherished hobby, since they both know that competition exalts but is short-lived whilst a sport that keeps one fit becomes a definite and permanent habit which gives rise to a way of life that leads to happiness. "

Y. J.

*(Excerpt from "Jeunesse forte - Peuple libre", July 1966.)*