

## READ IN THE PRESS

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The world of sport being at present disturbed by several problems, we give hereunder extracts from statements made by various personalities which were published in the international press.

### South Africa and the Boycott of Negroes

Sir Arnold Lunn, who will soon celebrate his 80th birthday, has been surnamed the father of alpine skiing.

Amateur of controversy, advocate of open contests between amateurs and professionals when it comes to the most important international meetings, Sir Arnold, in a letter to Mr. Avery Brundage, President of the IOC, formulated his ideas about the South African problem as follows :-

Dear Mr Brundage,

I hope you don't think of me as hostile to your committee. I am, on the contrary proud to have contributed a new event, the slalom, to your Olympic programme. But I do feel that you and your committee are adopting attitudes which are very dangerous for the future of you movement.

The Olympic Committee could adopt one of two logical policies with regard to countries in which men are persecuted or discriminated against for religious, political or racial reasons. The committee could exclude from the Games all teams representing such countries. I believe this might lead to a real diminution of persecution. Alternatively, the committee could admit all teams, irrespective of the domestic policies of the countries entering them. But, in a century in which there has been more persecution than in any previous century, it seems to me a classic example of selective indignation to single out one country, South Africa, for excommunication.

As the IOC officially disapproved of apartheid as practised by South Africa, why did the committee ignore apartheid as practised by Germany and Russia ? The Times of 8 February 1967 published the letter signed by 252 Members of Parliament which was delivered to the Russian Embassy in London and which expressed grave concern about the difficulties confronting Jews in Russia. These MPs also called on the British Government to use its good offices to secure for Jews the same basic human rights enjoyed by other Soviet citizens.

The form of antisemitic apartheid practised by Nazi Germany was infinitely more objectionable than that practised by South Africa, for it led to extermination. If the Olympic Committee had withdrawn the Olympic Games from Germany when it became impossible to deny that thousands of Jews were being persecuted, the blow to Hitler's prestige might have been incalculable. Hitler was not so foolish as to remove the half-Jewish chairman of the German Olympic Committee until the Games were safely over.

Mr. Berge Phillips (Australia), President of the International Sports Federations, made the following declaration to the Press:-

The International Amateur Sports Federations are completely opposed to any interference in sport on political, racial or religious grounds, and the present attempted boycott of the Mexico City Olympic Games for political reasons is deplored.

International Sport cannot survive if it is used either as a tool or as a weapon for political purposes, and the decision of the International Olympic Committee to invite South Africa to compete in Mexico is a triumph for the principles for which each of the International Sports Federations stand.

The South African Sports Federations are fully qualified members of the respective International Sports Federations these sports are conducted at the Olympic Games, and as such, are qualified to compete in international competitions.

It is very noticeable that, almost without exception, the reported statements made in connection with the present controversy emanate from political sources, and not from the controlling sporting bodies who are concerned in the everyday conduct of sport for the youth of the world.

When China withdrew from the International Olympic Committee in 1958, for political reasons, thereby depriving the youth of the world's most populous country of the opportunity of competing internationally, many of the countries who are presently threatening to withdraw from the Olympic Games, in fact, criticized the actions of the People's Republic of China.

As Mr. Avery Brundage, the President of the International Olympic Committee, has stated, the Olympic Games are for individuals, not nations, and this is strongly supported by the International Sports Federations.

I sincerely hope that sanity will prevail and political considerations will not be permitted to interfere with the youth of the world gathering in Mexico City in free and unfettered competition for the glory of sport."

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The Television Network over the area of Baltimore (U.S.A.). put the following questions to its spectators:-

"Should the South African team be authorized to take part in the Olympic Games of 1968 ?"

More than 2100 telephone calls reached the T.V. headquarters between 19.30 and 23.00 hours. 70 % of the answers were positive.

Tommie Smith, 200 and 300 metres dash world champion and Ralph Boston, long jump world champion, have both taken positions on the boycott by the black militants in the U.S.

We give hereafter extracts of their statements:-

Tommie Smith

"I am an extremist when the rights of man are at stake. I neither intend to cause prejudice to the United State. nor take revenge on my country. I merely wish to emphasize an assertion which I believe is right, by acting efficiently in my field which is athletics. I would give anything for an olympic gold medal but nothing in the world can make me give up my human dignity. If I were to give up what has so far been my life, as an amateur athlete, the price to pay would be so high that I'd carry the burden for the rest of my life. Yet I have been prepared to help my people for months, by all the means at my disposal. I shall do nothing to hinder the organizing of the boycott of the Games. I shall even take part in it should it father the majority; otherwise, I shall go to Mexico, and I shall go there to win."

Ralph Boston

"Why dont I want to give up ? Because I am a Negro and proud of it. I know that all Negroes in the U.S. do not enjoy their rights everywhere as other American aliens and we must fight for our people. But there are several ways of fighting. I hate any form of discrimination. Now I do not think that Negroes are the only people to be discriminated in this country. This we ought not to forget. I consider that sports more than any other form of activity gives Negroes the possibility to express themselves. We will serve our cause better by going to Mexico than by staying at home. If they refrain from taking part in the Games, the Negroes will penalize themselves as well as do their country harm. This should be avoided. If Negroes generally boycott the Games, I shall be with them because I believe in democratic principles and because I do not want to do anything which could hinder the struggle under way."

And now, the opinion of the Chinese Government - let it be remembered that Red China has hitherto taken great care to keep away from the IOC. No IOC was ever set up or has asked for recognition in this country.

"China announces that she would support the thirty other countries which have decided to boycott the 19th Olympic Games in Mexico next October, because of the participation of South Africa.

A comment from the "People's Daily", quoted by Radio Peking considers that the decision taken by African countries was fully justified.

Moreover, in this article the Soviet Union is very harshly criticized sharing the point of view of the United States. The commentator adds that this attitude makes the Soviet Union a "traitor to the African people".

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## AMATEURISM

Jean-François Brisson was, not so long ago one of the best French athletes. He is today chief editor of the "Figaro". The following extracts were taken from a recent editorial :

"The "Killy Affair" is now shelved, and it will have been no more than another incident in the world of sport, which has already known others. For the great majority all that remains is the satisfaction of having witnessed a series of victories, which left their author the uncontested world skiing champion. It is therefore not that "affair" which is worth examining, but, on a far larger scale, the evolution of sports principles.

Good or bad, the rules of the Games were nevertheless generally known. No-one was obliged to participate if he believed that these Games excessively favoured deceit and hypocrisy. Furthermore, no-one was obliged to lay a claim to their organization.

The organizers of the Olympic Games are no doubt wrong in preferring extreme tolerance in the application of the old rules to their amendment. But, could they really refrain from protesting against transgressions proclaimed arrogantly and even implicitly approved by the French Minister of Sports, Mr. Misoffe ?

According to the opponents of Olympic Principles, a champion can only be a "full-time" specialist, entirely devoted to training and to competitions. Thus, in the name of social equity, it is the duty of the official authorities to contribute to the development and maintenance of the privileged sports elite. But only those few youngsters who have the physical capacities necessary to be able to hope to make a career in muscles - and, unfortunate corollary - those who, mentally, are sufficiently limited to withgo the advancement which normally accompanies success with academic diplomas, will be tempted to follow this path.

Since youth must have its idols, its Minister stated that he preferred those who break records on the tracks or in the swimming pools to those who break commercial records in the sale of microgrooves.

But, above all, does youth not need models more than idols ?

The popularity of a Killy or an Anquetil is no doubt better founded than that of exhuberant Johnny Hallyday or sweet Sheila, but are they more deserving than Maryse Begary, the Carolis or Victor Saulevitch, who as you may hear for the first time, are, respectively, a trapeze artist, horseback rider and an animal tamer ? Just like our champions, these acrobats accomplish risky feats, train conscientiously and make a living from sport, (but not such a good one as the former). Our colleagues of the "Soir" have never devoted an eight column, front page article to these artists, no magazine has ever taken their picture for its coloured front cover.

Alain Calmat, the skater, was chosen to be the last bearer of the Olympic Flame because this true champion has always considered it his final goal to become a doctor of medicine and not make money quickly. This is because, if necessary, he could be an idol, but also, most certainly, a model.

AND ELSEWHERE ...

The President of one of the big French all sports clubs writes :-

"Since the Games in Grenoble, I have spoken to dozens of my colleagues who are directors of French sports clubs. They all are ashamed of what has happened; of the insults which were heaped on Mr Brundage by an obedient press whose only aim is to make a lot of money by speaking of sport; of the false oaths; of the drama built up around the decision of the IOC to readmit South Africa to the Mexico Games.

We have been, and we still are, scandalized. On the one hand, because all this gives other countries a poor impression of France, and, on the other, because we realise that civil servants, without any experience of sport and without titles, may openly and with impunity ridicule and scoff at the efforts of benevolent organizers who could not care less about the sale of bicycles in Dahomey or the ski trade in the U.S., but who simply try to prepare their sons and nephews for the struggle of life by sending them to suffer on the sports ground ..."

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