

Is apartheid consistent with the olympic spirit?

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by Dr. G. M. Oza

Dr. G. M. OZA, Director of the General Education Centre of the University of Baroda (India), is well-known to our readers (Athletes, Doping and Olympism - The Olympic Ideal faces extinction - Olympic Review, no. 19 of April, 1969 and no. 42 of March, 1971) and has been good enough to send us the following article:

At the outset, I would like to highlight the non-whites' contribution in the cause of the Games, thus advocating multi-racial sports. However, although to describe individual contribution of non-whites is effective, to present an overall picture on the subject is rather impossible; in fact, the results of the past Olympic Games have necessarily been published without regard to colour or origin. I will, therefore, dwell on the apartheid policy in general.

The world is aware of "Hitler's race theory" ridiculed by the excellent performances of Jesse Owens. This shows that sport can overcome differences of human beings.

Even today, quite a number of promising athletes is undergoing hardships from racial prejudices by fellow-countrymen. Why should the fittest sportsmen struggle for survival because of their skin colour? They have every right to participate in international competitions. This would bring to prominence the best talents the world over. Unfortunately, some politicians are not incli-

ned to show positive approaches in this cause.

Undeterred by the present wave of racial segregation, the coloured men take to sport with pride, sincerity and dignity. A healthy sign in recent times is that a crusade by friendly athletes is already on its way.

As far as the author's knowledge is concerned, there seems to be no obvious findings on the superiority of the whites over the non-whites. If we have to view the problem through the eyes of a biologist or a sociologist, we may wonder whether the "colour bar" in South Africa and the U.S.A. powerfully exists as a "race bar". Persons with negroid ancestry many times match the appearance of those originating from Europe. We have not a sufficient knowledge of the role of the genes responsible for the colour of the skin, or the shape of the hair, and of those accounting for personal achievements. Henceforth, the very purpose of much practised colour bar gets defeated.

As far as apartheid in sports is concerned, there seems no likelihood of success. The Olympic principles have no room for segregation of the races, religions and faiths, and we must struggle for it.

It is the Olympic Movement - the figure-head of the sports world - which can establish peace in the continents, by assembling every four years, irrespective of their race or



nationality. I would even say that the Olympic ideal is synonymous with the democratic principles of fair play, gallant gentlemanliness, general as well as sporting education, harmony, peace, dignity. The Olympic humanism provides stimulus to the young generation of the world through "*Citius, Altius, Fortius*".

In fact, the Olympic Games face a brilliant future, since they are the only organisation which can promote better understanding in the world and bring an end to wars. If we can get rid of apartheid in sport, the Olympic family will spread all over the world.

This is to wish good luck to all the competitors of the XXth Olympic Games as well as future games.

G. M. O.

