

IOA: The “esprit de corps” of 1975

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Predictions for the Fifteenth International Olympic Academy point to a highly favorable session. If the spirit of the participants is a measure of success, 1975 will be an excellent year.

The opening session of 1974 had merged within moments into an unforeseen closing. One hundred and seventy-five participants from forty-five countries, the Academy's largest representation, had arrived in Athens only hours before a critical situation erupted in Cyprus. Students, while attempting to assess the political significance and sympathetic to the dilemma of the Hellenic Olympic Committee, were suddenly faced with the inevitable realization—no Fourteenth Session could be held! The brief glimpse of Athens had whetted their appetites. The excitement of making friends from far corners of the world had just begun. The busy daily schedule at the Academy had been studied with anticipation.

Rising to the situation, the Hellenic Olympic Committee, in making their sad announcement of cancellation, extended a courteous invitation to those present to return again in 1975. Pending approval of their NOCs many are expected to return. The significance of this spells an unusual *esprit de corps*. Many participants having met before will renew those friendships made last year.

On the Hill of the Pnyx, near the Parthenon and overlooking the Agora, the inaugural ceremony will take place. This is indeed hallowed ground, for it was here that democracy was born. The museums and archaeological sites will bring the Olympic movement into focus. Folk dance and athletic competitions will add fun and festivity. The Academy's attractive facilities, nestled among the tree-covered hills in the vicinity of the Alpheos and Kladeos Rivers, will become familiar surroundings setting the stage for study and international interaction.

The friendships formed during the crisis situation the previous summer will be more firmly established in the spirit of Olympism. Quickly the participants will settle down to the task at hand. Two weeks of total immersion in the ideals of Olympism will prepare these '74-'75 alumni of the Academy to carry this spirit back to their homelands. They will return realizing that the Olympic Spirit is not a clearly defined set of rules. Rather, it is the “Unwritten Law” of decency, fairness and chivalry; or, according to de Coubertin's definition, it is an attitude of mind, a philosophy.

The experience at the Academy, which is stimulating culturally, will inspire the participants to exemplify and further the Olympic Spirit so that it will be a continuing influence year after year.

The Fifteenth Session of the International Olympic Academy prelude to the 1976 Olympics should be an overwhelming success.



- During 1974, the IOA library was increased by about one thousand volumes, so that today it has some 4,000 works on Olympism and relative subjects. Quite recently, the library was reorganised according to the Dewey system.

- The museum of the modern Olympic Games at Olympia, which is owned by the IOA, has also received exhibitions in connection with the Olympic Games. This museum is open to the public all the year round.