

Olympism and “apolitism”

In its latest numbers, the French periodical “Physical Education and Sport” has given a very complete picture of the celebration of the 21st Olympiad. By way of conclusion to this Olympic report, Mr. Pierre Seurin and Mr. Joffre Dumazedier wrote two highly interesting articles that take a look into the future. Mr. Pierre Seurin, President of the International Physical Education Federation, is already well known to our readers. As for Mr. Joffre Dumazedier, Director of Educational Sciences at the Sorbonne (University of Paris V), he is well known in Olympic circles for his book “Regards neufs sur les Jeux Olympiques” (A new look at the Olympic Games), published in 1952.

Here is a short extract from the conclusion of Prof. Dumazedier’s article:

“Will people still say that Olympism is “apolitic”? Admittedly it can be exploited by an ideology aimed at preserving privilege, but the Olympic truce inherent in it is above all a rejection of certain totalitarian-type political practices. This lack of respect for the Olympic ideal can be considered just as unacceptable as the lack of respect for artistic creation shown by blind censorship, or the lack of respect for private life by an inquisitorial police force, or the lack of respect for the individual by torture. *Respect for the Olympic truce is also a policy: a policy of peace* which, like any policy, is above all a collective determination to combat everything that threatens it. In a society in which the struggles between subjugated nations and subjugating nations, between the oppressed classes and those of oppressors are becoming fiercer and fiercer, the traditional way of life and values have also changed.”