



“Evolution is not Revolution”*

by Robert Parienté,
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holder of the Olympic Order

Elected President of the International Olympic Committee in Moscow in July, Mr. Juan Antonio Samaranch, who effectively took up his post at the end of October after having ceased his functions as Spain's ambassador to the USSR, has made the most of these first four months of presidential activity to gain as much information as possible, to talk with both statesmen and leaders of the sports movement, trying to become better acquainted in particular with the different sports organisation systems in the various countries and seeing for himself the place Olympism occupies in the life of these countries...

A pilgrim of Olympism, as Lord Killanin was before him, Mr. Juan Antonio Samaranch exhibits in all his contacts the diplomatic qualities which he was able to perfect during his mission in the Soviet capital. His action could be defined by an extraordinary force of conviction combined with a pragmatic nature which is equally well able to avoid obstacles as to meet them head on.

Preserve the unity of the IOC

The President is well aware of the difficulties which are awaiting the IOC at the September Congress in Baden-Baden, and of the confrontations which will not fail to arise between the different reformist and conservative tendencies which are simmering within the international sports movement...

In the foreground of the preoccupations of the IOC comes the amendment of Rule 26, which sets out the eligibility rules for the Olympic Games.

Will it be included as part of the Session which is to follow immediately after the Congress? Mr. Samaranch does not make any statements on issues such as this. He merely said :

“We have the time to settle this problem. Baden-Baden will mark, in fact, an evolution and not a revolution. We must respect what has been done up until now with the determination

to move forward while preserving the unity of the IOC. I have the feeling that Rule 26 should be handled with care and that we must arrive at a definition which is valid for all the international federations, with different bye-laws according to the actual nature of the federations...”

The question of extra-territoriality

The Congress will also have to study many other points, in particular that of the proposal of a permanent site for the Olympic Games at Olympia.

“We will decide on this point in a democratic manner at Baden-Baden. I fully intend to respect the opinion of the National Olympic Committees, the International Federations and, of course, the IOC's members”: Mr. Samaranch stated.

The important thing is peace

On 22nd May in Athens, the President of the IOC will meet Mr. Caramanlis, President of the Hellenic Republic, who is maintaining the offer of territory which assures the extra-territoriality of the IOC. It is not completely out of the question that this extra-territoriality could become a reality without necessarily making a declaration in favour of holding the Games permanently at Olympia...

Mr. Samaranch is avoiding taking sides for the moment, keeping the delicate role of referee until the right moment.

Some critics have nevertheless recently raised the subject of the risk of commercialising the Games...

Mr. Samaranch responds to this remark quite frankly :

“If Los Angeles respects the “Olympic Charter” one hundred per cent (and we have good reason to believe that this is the case), the Organising Committee will bring out the positive side of what is normally called “commercialisation”. I sincerely believe that sport and Olympism should make use of commercialisation, but that it should on the other hand avoid commercialisation's making use of sport.”

* Taken from an article published in the daily sports newspaper “L'Equipe”.