

A CHOICE TO BE MADE

SPEECH OF

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First of all may I welcome you to Lausanne, our Olympic capital, which has been the home of the IOC headquarters for nearly 70 years now. Five months ago, during our regular Session in Los Angeles, on the occasion of the Games of the XXIIIrd Olympiad, we decided to meet here for our first extraordinary Session in the history of the International Olympic Committee. It is thus the third time we have met in Session this year, following Sarajevo and Los Angeles. For its part, our Executive Board will have met five times this year and we will have held almost 70 commission meetings in addition to an International Symposium on the problems of television. Therefore, I think I can safely say that 1984 will remain in our annals as an exceptional year in this respect. It is the proof, the demonstration, that the Olympic Movement is really functioning as a team.

A MOMENTUM OF ITS OWN

So what are the reasons for this intense activity ? As in 1976, and in 1980, it is the attempts of various people to use the sports movement or the Olympic Games for ends other than those for which they were conceived. The serious problems which appeared several weeks before the recent Games provided us once more with the opportunity to demonstrate our unity and our faith in the future. The very large and unquestionable success of the Games of the XXIIIrd Olympiad in Los Angeles is a result of which we may be quite justly proud. We have shown once again in difficult conditions, that the Olympic Movement will follow its own path.

I think it would be useful to recall here that one of the main characteristics of the International Olympic Committee and its most eminent originality is without doubt the primordial element of this success and of the successive victories it has gained since its creation against wars, conflicts, tensions, political oppositions or all kinds of "appetites". What I am referring to here, as you will have understood, is its singular composition and its particular recruitment.



The International Olympic Committee was created by our founder in order to apply and preserve the principles of the Olympic Movement. Its composition, its structure, were conceived in order to avoid its falling into the same traps, into which the majority of international inter-governmental organisations have finally fallen. Our independence is obviously the guarantee of our survival. It is also the best weapon which we could use in order to resist victoriously, as we have done up to now, against the temptations and pressures of all kinds with which we are faced and which as you know, will continue to confront us. It is thanks to our particular method of recruitment that we may



claim the title of one of the oldest international organisations. Consequently, you will not be surprised by the fact that we wish to keep this title, while at the same time trying little by little to broaden our representation and integrate new elements which have since joined the victorious Olympism.

We will try to use this spirit of independence which we have withheld up to now, in order to resolve the problem with which we are faced. We did not wish to react in the heat of the moment in Los Angeles, but preferred the calm and neutrality of our "homeland". We have come here with the sole aim of learning a lesson from our experiences

and thus building a future which is stronger and more secure for the movement for which we are responsible.

DERELICTION OF DUTY

For the last three Olympiads in particular, some National Olympic Committees have decided for various different reasons, not to participate in the Olympic Games. We must realise that in doing so they are legally within their rights. There is no stipulation in the "Olympic Charter" which compels them to participate.

However, acting in this manner they are contradicting the spirit of this same "Olympic Charter" and the International Olympic Committee is thus justified in criticising them. It is our duty to remind these members of our family that they were created by Pierre de Coubertin precisely in order to facilitate and prepare the participation of their athletes in the Olympic Games and in events under the patronage of the IOC. Their basic and essential aim, as defined by our "Olympic Charter", remains the same : to organise and assure the representation of their country at the Olympic Games, to provide their athletes with the best possible conditions for participation and thus to carry out the aims of the Olympic Movement.

The refusal to participate in the Olympic Games, or the failure to try everything in order to take part, is thus not to remain in keeping with the Olympic spirit. It is a failure to comply with the fundamental duty of each NOC.

The adoption of such an attitude is also extremely dangerous. First of all, with respect to sports equity, as this means that they are forbidding their athletes to compete against their world rivals in a prestigious competition which only takes place every four years.

Secondly, with respect to its public, as the latter is thus deprived of witnessing the happenings at the Olympic Games and thus loses an occasion to become closer to the rest of the world.

Finally, regarding the sports movement itself, as such an action is to willingly put oneself apart from a certain number of decisions and meetings, it is to exclude oneself from various bodies ; to risk having one's participation in the governing bodies of the sports movement put into question. The sanction in all of these cases is immediate and probably irremediable.

An error can also be added to this transgression, when it is pretended that one's decisions stems from the careful study of the "Olympic Charter". Must I recall here that the fundamental role of the International Olympic Committee is to ensure the respect and interpretation of the "Olympic Charter" ? No one may assume this right without contravening the other rules of our Movement.

PERIODIC ADJUSTMENTS

Of course we know very well that the rules, whichever ones they are, are often imperfect and have room for improvement. At each of our Sessions we demonstrate this by patiently and carefully trying to improve them. We have, moreover, always asked for the co-operation, opinions and advice of the members of our family and very often adopted their recommendations when we have been sure that these would be of benefit to the whole of the Movement. But we have been able to keep our independence of judgement, a gage of our longevity and adaptation.

It is this independence which we must maintain and strengthen. We must not give in to any pressure, even internal, which would alienate this. We fought over this principle in order that the Games take place in Moscow in 1980. We did the same for Los Angeles in 1984.

We will do the same again in order that the Games of the XXIVth Olympiad take place as planned in Seoul in 1988. We are moreover asking the NOCs and the IFs to assist us in selecting the site of the next Games by their advice and opinions, as they did via their favourable opinions for Seoul in 1981. I should also like to take advantage of this occasion to thank publicly the International Federations and the Assembly of National Olympic Committees for the assistance and unflinching support which they have stated with respect to the celebration of the 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul. The document recently adopted by the ANOC in the presence of 152 NOCs, entitled "The Mexico Declaration", is very clear in this respect and it will give us a great deal of food for thought during our debates here.

These elements should be added to the impressive amount of observations, advice and opinions which individual members of the IOC have exchanged during these last months. I am sure that the IOC has never before been able to rely upon

such a rich and essential contribution from its members. You have understood that the time has come for the Olympic Movement to proceed with one of the periodic changes to which it has become accustomed, and which enable it to adapt itself regularly to the changing conditions of the world which surrounds it. The most difficult task which faces us now will be to decide which of the proposals put forward are the most apt to enable us to take the step forward for which we are all waiting.

There is another factor which everyone must retain : I stated earlier that the IOC was proud of its recruitment and of the originality of its functioning. But it is the IOC members themselves who guarantee this functioning and spirit of independence by faithfully respecting the commitments which they accepted upon their election and the oath which they took before their colleagues. It is only by means of this primordial and vital condition, only if the IOC members do not forget their obligations to our organisation and to the whole of the Olympic Movement that we can hope to conserve this prouddness and this unquity.

The contribution of the International Federations and the National Olympic Committees to this



procedure will be particularly important and I am happy to welcome here the Presidents and Secretaries General of their respective associations. They will thus have the opportunity to express the opinions of their organisations before the IOC Session and I do not doubt that their opinions will be taken into consideration.

This affair tends to show with brilliance that the Olympic Movement is far from being an antiquated and stagnated body, but is on the contrary very much alive and under constant modification. The very nature of the reproaches which are made to us from various sides are reassuring : going both too quickly and too slowly, sacrificing too much for modernisation while being irreducible conservatives, seems to me to indicate a spriteliness of mind, alert enough to reassure us of the good health of our Movement.

THANK YOU TO SWITZERLAND, TO LAUSANNE

Your hospitable Country, Mr. President of the Confederation, and more particularly the City of Lausanne, has had the opportunity to appreciate this health to its fullest extent. Have we not been the cause here of a certain agitation due to the fears

of some people that the IOC would impose its law on the commune in which it has its headquarters ? You know very well how these fears have evaporated due to our firm decision for dialogue and openmindedness. Compromise is a virtue which is often accorded to Switzerland. However, in this case it was not necessary for us to use it, because, as I had already announced at the very beginning, the IOC did not intend to go against the wishes of the people of Lausanne. This having been clearly affirmed, it was easy for us to reach an understanding. In several months, the new buildings of the headquarters of the International Olympic Committee will welcome you for the 91st Session of the International Olympic Committee in 1986, when the election of the candidate cities for the Olympic Games in 1992 will take place.

The conclusion of the work being carried out at present, Mr. Syndic, will make the links which have been established between Lausanne and the IOC stronger than ever before; these links, which have made your city so worthy of the title "Olympic City". Please allow me to thank you once again in public and to act on behalf of the whole of our movement in thanking your fellow citizens for their hospitality and their comprehension. Nowhere other than here would we have been able to find the calm and the serenity necessary for the work that has to be accomplished.

Finally, our thanks go to the Swiss National Olympic Committee, and in particular to its President, for their welcome and their availability. In all truth, it was not difficult for the IOC to organise this extraordinary Session in a few weeks with the assistance and support of the Swiss and Lausanne authorities. We are most grateful to them.

My friends, all the conditions necessary for the accomplishment of productive work are present here. The result is only dependent upon ourselves, upon our desire to find the best direction for the future, and not to forever repeat the past. No one can help us; it is both our strength and our weakness, as it is for all human beings at the moment of choice: may we make this choice honestly, in all sincerity and we will thus have fulfilled our duty. "

