
Letters to the Editor

“USA AND USSR COOPERATION AND UNDERSTANDING” A READER’S VIEW

Professor Amos Tinu Oduyale, Head of the Physical and Health Education Department at Ogun State University in Nigeria, has written to tell us his reactions to the signature of the agreement on cooperation and understanding between the NOCs of the United States and the USSR in September of last year. Here are some extracts of this friendly letter.

“The signing of the agreement on September 15th, 1985 between the USA and the USSR was a landmark in the history of Olympism. President Juan Antonio Samaranch and those who were actively concerned with this epoch-making event deserve very warm congratulations and the goodwill of all the devotees of the Olympic Movement of the modern era.

A little reflection is enough to testify to the fact that H.E. Mr. Juan Antonio Samaranch is a “diplomat” of no mean order, “the World Ambassador of the Olympic Movement”. The author is not just singing the praises of the IOC President for this stupendous feat. It is far from that. H.E. Mr. Juan Antonio Samaranch had given a reality to the pronouncements that the “Olympics must go on...”

The dilemma created by the super powers reached such an alarming situation that, historians, sociologists, journalists sort of wrote off the Olympics of modern era. My doctoral adviser, an Olympic scholar, was so fed up with the recurring events of the last thirty years that he, in

an angry mood, observed that “the Olympic Games will die unless there is a reform.”

Baron Pierre de Coubertin knew what he was talking about when on October 26, 1918, in one of his letters, he said : “Olympism is an over-thrower of partitions... demands air and light for everyone... serves as a motor to national life and a focus to civic life”.

The renovator of the Modern Olympics summed it up in the 9th stanza of Ode to Sports :

“O Sport you are Peace ! you forge happy bonds between the peoples by drawing them together in reverence for strength which is controlled, organized and self-disciplined : Through you the young of all the world learn to respect one another and thus the diversity of national traits becomes a source of generous and peaceful emulation”.

For this Memorandum of Mutual Understanding, it is Three Hearty Cheers to H.E. Juan Antonio Samaranch and all the devotees of the Olympic Movement. It is the Truce of the Modern Era.

Dr. Amos Tinu Oduyale,
Associate Professor and Head of
the Department of Physical and
Health Education,
Ogun State University,
Ago-Iwoye, Nigeria

Mrs. Denise Dolan (USA) has sent us a long poem : The Fellowship of the Five Rings, “The torch is my mentor”... This ode celebrates Olympism and the ability of sport to generate friendship and fellowship between athletes. The following is an extract from Mrs. Dolan’s poem :

*When the race begins, the runner thinks he is
alone in his breaths ;
But suddenly, the one breath is divided into two,
Shared with the next runner;
As suddenly, it is one again,
A new presence is perceived by both —
each other.
In that breath, a fellowship is begun.
To the outside, they are fierce competitors from
opposite sides of the world;
To themselves, they share the moment of
discovering Heaven,
Each through the other;
And now, they share their own God,
Even though one may be an African who
has many,
And one may be an Atheist who has none;
In that second, a new religion is begun ;
A Heaven is found;
The reason for life is evident.*