

The Olympic Movement: A Hostage of Two Ideologies

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The political ideologies of the east and the west have no doubt created a wide gulf that continues to threaten the peace and the solidarity of modern society. The practice of these ideologies has assumed some dimensions which are adversely affecting the existence of some established institutions, particularly the Olympic Movement and the Olympic Games. The Olympic Movement has its own definite ideology: an appreciation of the value of athletic virtue, an adherence to mankind's universal ideal, the upholding of the principles of fair competition, and mutual respect and recognition of an adversary's superiority. The Olympic ideology has its stamp on "an ideal society composed of people who have mastered the principle of know thyself", people who have self assurance, respect for others, faith in ideals, independence of opinion and action, and a correct and sound democratic attitude and behaviour.

A close look at the Olympic ideology certainly reveals that it is sandwiched by the east and west ideologies; thus the Olympic ideology becomes a hostage of the two ideologies. The philosophy of the Olympic Movement is Olympism, which Coubertin the founder of the modern Olympic Games explained as "the overthrower of partition".

Ironically Olympism has not been able to overthrow the partition between the east and the west. Rather than bridging the gap between the two blocs, it is their ideologies that are militating against the ideals of the Olympic Movement and threatening its foundation and existence.

When the youth of the world are called together every four years to participate in the Olympic Games, they are called to do so in the Olympic spirit, which is the sense of decorum, fairness, and chivalry. They are also called to assemble in "a spirit of better understanding between each other and of friendship, thereby helping to build a better and more peaceful world". But there was never a time when this peaceful coexistence was given such a different interpretation as in the events and mysteries that surrounded the Games of the XXIIInd Olympiad, vis-a-vis the invasion of the Afghanistan by the USSR. Of course, the Modern Olympic Games have known no peace since being revived in 1896.

The IOC is equal to its task; it is non-political and uncommitted. The supreme world sport body will continue to ensure that the Olympic Movement does not become a hostage of the east and west blocs.