SPORT, PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

INTERNATIONAL WORKER SPORT

1913–2013

WRITTEN BY

Joseph Maguire (UK), Marion Keim (South Africa), Bruce Kidd (Canada), Nicola Porro (Italy), Seppo Hentilä (Finland) ,Kalevi Olin (Finland), Emmanuelle Bonnet - Ouladlj (France), Harald Bauer (Austria)

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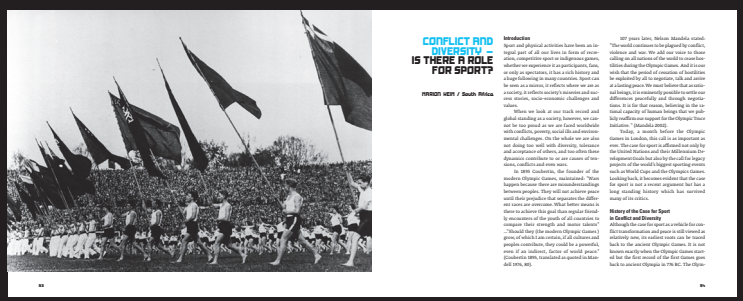
CONFLICT AND DIVERSITY – IS THERE A ROLE FOR SPORT?

MARION KEIM / South Africa

Introduction

Sport and physical activities have been an integral part of human culture since the beginning of time, and whether sport or indigenous games, whether we experience it as participants, fans, or only as spectators, it has a rich history and a huge following in many countries. Sport can be seen as a mirror, it reflects where we are as a society, it reflects society's miseries and success stories, socio-economic challenges and values.

When we look at our track record and global standing as a society, however, we cannot be too proud as we are faced worldwide with conflicts, poverty, social ills and environmental challenges. On the whole we are also not doing too well with diversity, tolerance and acceptance of others, and too often these dynamics contribute to or are causes of tensions, conflicts and even wars.

In 1894 Coubertin, the founder of the modern Olympic Games, believed that sport can happen where there are misunderstandings between peoples. They will not achieve peace until their prejudice that separates the different races are overcome. What better means is there to achieve this goal than regular friendly encounters of the youth of all countries to compare their strength and master talents" ...'Should they (the modern Olympic Games) grow, of which I am certain, if all cultures and peoples contribute, they could be a powerful, even if an indirect, factor of world peace." (Coubertin 1894, translated as quoted in Mandell 1976, 80).

107 years later, Nelson Mandela stated: "The world continues to be plagued by conflict, violence and hatred. Sport has the power to unite calling on all nations of the world to a truce hostilities during the Olympic Games. And it is true with that the period of cessation of hostilities be exploited by all to negotiate, talk and arrive at a lasting peace. We must believe that as a natural beings, it is eminently possible to settle our differences peacefully and through negotiations. It is the that reason, believing in the rational capacity of human beings that we publicly reaffirm our support for the Olympic Truce Initiative " (Mandela 2002).

Today, a month before the Olympic Games in London, this call is as important as ever. The case for sport is affirmed not only by the United Nations and their Millennium Development Goals but also by the call for legacy projects of the world's biggest sporting events such as World Cups and the Olympics Games. Although the case for sport as an evident tool for change is not always argument but has a long standing history which has survived many of its critics.

History of the Case for Sport in Conflict and Diversity

Although the case for sport as a vehicle for conflict transformation and peace is still viewed as relatively new, its earliest roots can be traced back to the ancient Olympic Games. It is not known exactly when the Olympic Games started but the first record of the first Games goes back to ancient Olympia in 776 BC. The Olym-

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Sport is a fascinating social phenomenon in society. Sport is seen to play an important role as a promoter for peace and social integration in different geographical, cultural and political contexts. Has sport prevented conflicts and tensions? The answer is no, because it is not sport that can do so; it is us, writes Dr. Marion Keim, Professor at the University of the Western Cape and an Advocate of the High Court of South Africa.

Worker sport movements are a part of the above mentioned social phenomenon. This Festschrift book describes the 100 years development, the current state and the future international sports partnerships of the International Workers and Amateurs in Sports Confederation (CSIT). It also predicts that women might be the future of sport.

This book tells us how and why the world organization having more than 208 million registered clients and members in 44 member organizations from 34 countries has grown to a player in sport for all movement in Europe, Americas, Africa and Far East.

This book is a necessary read not only for the members of the CSIT but also for everyone interested in the multidimensional functions of sport in society.

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