

## ADDRESS BY MR. EPAM. PETRALIAS

*President of the I.O.A., Secretary General of the H.O.C.  
At the Opening Ceremony of the 12th Session of the I.O.A.,  
on the Hill of the Pnyx*

The International Olympic Academy is inaugurating today the proceedings of the 12th Session and distinguished participants from 33 countries have come, pious admirers of ancient beauty, and eager to embrace the Olympic Ideology and, inspired by the peaceful, calm and historic past of Ancient Olympia to become the adepts and preachers of its humanistic ideals.

Greece has founded the institution of the International Olympic Academy and, under the moral protection of the International Olympic Committee, is working in order to make Olympia the cultural centre of world sports.

The task is huge and in other circumstances it is doubtful whether it would have been possible to conceive its realization. Today, however, we are much closer to the fulfilment of our dreams, because we enjoy the warm and generous contribution of the state, because the General Secretary for Sports, Mr. Constantine Aslanidis, is standing on our side, a faithful believer in our ideas, a staunch supporter and grantor.

Sports have always been a social factor of major importance. Any athletic activity or event encompasses the intense desire of man for contest, victory, personal success and in it is contained the desire for supremacy and distinction, this hope which, under the philosophical breath of a great epoch of ancient Greek life, became an element of «education» and «civilization».

The desire for supremacy is fulfilled in the stadiums and fields for a few and on the stands for many, for the myriads of people and may become a guiding force towards good, wisdom and measure. The athletic event is no longer considered within the restricted regional or national boundaries ; it crosses the frontiers and becomes an event of international importance and opportuneness with cultural, moral, idealistic and pragmatic incidence.

The social influence of sports has been recognized on a worldwide scale. Since Olympism is a Hellenic institution, Greece realizes her obligations and tries, through the work of the International Olympic Academy, to fill these obligations towards sports and towards her history.

We would wish the whole world to understand that sports are a

*cultural postulate and an educational tool* and that the greater the position it holds in the educational and social system, the higher the general level, culture and intellectual and moral standing of the people will be.

In this atmosphere under constant tension in which we live, at a time when seats of fire are ready to break out in various parts of the world, millions of people turn, full of hope, to the Bavarian capital, Munich, where the last preparations for the celebration of the 20th modern Olympiad are being completed and where approximately ten thousand young people from all corners of the world will reveal and prove in noble athletic emulation what road the nations should follow, if they wish to attain peace and honest cooperation and coexistence.

It is possessed with this same spirit that we are all working in the International Olympic Academy and this is the central moral principle of our own philosophy. The Olympic philosophy.

With unshakable faith and devotion in the Olympic ideas and with the firm conviction that our country, which holds every year the sessions of the International Olympic Academy, sparing no effort or costs, is serving the Olympic Idea, we welcome here, with feelings of love and friendship, the distinguished representatives of the Nations and we express the wish that Divine Olympia, the place where the Olympic Idea lived and flourished, may inspire them, so that, on their return to their respective countries, they become the apostles of the moral teaching which springs from the institution of the Olympic Games and which I stoutly believe, will light the way towards a better life of noble pursuits.

