

INTRODUCTORY TALK

By Mr. EP. PETRALIAS (Greece)
President of the International Olympic Academy and General Secretary of the Hellenic Olympic Committee



Members of the International Olympic Committee,
Lecturers of the International Olympic Academy,
Dear Participants,

With profound and justified emotion I greet the inauguration of the work of this Session, the tenth since the establishment of this excellent institution, the International Olympic Academy. This great work has a history of its own, brief, it is true, but full of interest. Ten years ago, in June 1961, we held our first Session at an improvised camp. Torrential rain cancelled the athletic and gymnastic events which had been planned by the Higher Schools of Physical Education of Cologne and of Athens. The events took place the following day on the site of the Ancient Gymnasium, in the presence of all the members of the International Olympic Committee, and the festival was a resounding success.

I remember with the deepest emotion the noble figures of the two unforgettable pioneers of this great institution, Carl Diem and John Ketseas, and I express my sincere joy at having with us two other pioneers and close collaborators of the late founders, Mr. Otto Szymiczek, Dean of the Academy and Mr. Cleanthis Palaeologos, Deputy Dean, and I wish them both good health, so that they may long continue to offer their collaboration to our Academy, as they have done up to the present.

I should also like to mention the apostles of the Olympic Idea and our select collaborators: Prof. Dr. Josef Recia, Prof. Sisto Favre and Dr. Henri Pouret, who with their wholehearted assistance and their devoted contribution have encouraged and helped us in our difficult task every year.

I am particularly pleased to mention another select initiate of the Academy, Mr. Durantez, from Spain, who is participating as an observer at our Sessions for the tenth time, and who has been inspired by the teachings of the Olympic Academy to write a beautiful book on Olympia, in the Spanish language.

I note with pleasure the presence of the distinguished German Profes-

sor Lotz, after a ten-year absence, and I am sure that he too must be glad to see the progress made by the Academy during the last ten years. We appreciate his coming and hope that he will ever be a fervent supporter of the aims of the Academy,

I left for the end of my talk our distinguished friends and sincere supporters of our Academy from within the International Olympic Committee: Messrs. Ivar Vind, Alexandru Siperco, Gabriel Gemayel and Ahmed Touny, who greatly contribute towards the progress and development of the International Olympic Academy with their remarkable experience, their enthusiasm and faith in the ideals of Olympism.

Also, I gratefully mention Mrs. Monique Berlioux, who is in charge of the Office for Public Relations and Information of the International Olympic Committee, and to whom the International Olympic Academy is greatly indebted.

Finally, from this trône, I would like to express my gratitude to the Secretary General for Sports Mr. Const. Aslanides, for his contribution to the achievement of the aims of the International Olympic Academy. Dear Co-workers and friends,

The World Olympic Festival, celebrated every four years, is intended to remind men that they had far better apply their energy to noble ideal work than waste it on bloody and dangerous antagonisms. World athletic emulation, the recognition of an adversary's merit, the reward of assiduity and honest endeavour, that is to say of virtue, the attachment to ideals and unwritten moral laws, mutual respect, the love of liberty, such are the aspirations of the Olympic Spirit. Young people should be inspired and developed

by these ideals; that is the Olympic Light that the International Olympic Academy strives to keep alight.

The Ancient Greeks, by the spirit and by art, by the culture of the natural instinct of emulation and the apotheosis of the Athletic Games, succeeded in giving the true meaning to the concept of man and in creating the high Hellenic ideals.

If the Ancient Games succeeded in uniting the Hellenic world of those days, what is to prevent us from hoping that the Modern Olympic Games will succeed in joining the whole world in a peaceful spiritual unity?

I believe that Mankind is always advancing towards its aim, which is the creation of a human being, as happy and as prosperous as possible.

Although we are living in times of turmoil and uncertainty, I believe that the work of our Session, which is conducive to the realisation of an ideal spiritual unity of peoples, is a comforting phenomenon, that justifies manifold and favourable hopes for the future.

By the time you return to your native lands, I am sure that you will have learned a great deal as regards the real and true Olympic ideal, and that, inspired by the Sacred Altis, you will work for the propagation of these fine ideals, to the benefit of your respective Countries and to the whole of Mankind.

With these thoughts, I greet this year's Session of the International Olympic Academy, trusting that your efforts may be united and fruitful, and I declare the opening of the Tenth Session 1970.



Phases of the intramural volley-ball matches.