

IPB TRIBUTE TO LORD PHILIP NOEL-BAKER

GIVEN AT THE OPENING DINNER OF THE 4TH PEACE AND SPORT INTERNATIONAL FORUM IN MONACO (1st to 3rd DECEMBER 2010)

Your Royal Highness, Mr President, honourable guests, ladies and gentlemen,

The world needs heroes and heroines more than ever before. As we move deeper into the 21st century we will have to respond to increasing threats to peace and security, particularly from increasing militarism, resource depletion and climate change.

Such heroes and heroines will be those who have the vision to think and speak beyond the interests of national constituencies, reach out across ethnic and religious divides and act in ways which have the potential to benefit the whole of humanity.

International sport, more so than many other aspects of human endeavour, has the power to influence the world in just these ways. The authority to use that power lies largely in the hands of sportsmen and women.

One cannot talk about such matters without reference to Lord Philip Noel-Baker, a true hero of sport and peace. He remains the only person in history to have won both an Olympic medal and a Nobel Peace Prize.

Unfortunately he is no longer with us, but as a former International Peace Bureau Vice-President, we believe that his values and work in strengthening sport for peace are as important today as they ever were. He said: **“In a nuclear age, sport is man’s best hope.”**

I would like to read you a statement which we believe, Philip would have made had he been with us this evening.

Dear friends

I have lived through a period of immense social change as an Olympian, politician, peace advocate and humanist. As a young aspiring athlete, attending the London Olympics in

1908, I believed that sport was the most honourable of activities. I still believe that today. It has the power to bring about positive change; challenging prejudices, healing divisions and promoting tolerance.

I remember an incident when I was Captain of the British athletics team at the 1924 Olympic Games in Paris. A German athlete who by all accounts had not understood the umpire's warning was disqualified, but due to demonstrations by the French public, he was allowed to start again in the next heat.

More recently I watched in admiration as athletes from South and North Korea marched together under a unified Korean flag during the Parade of Nations at the opening ceremony of the 2000 Summer Olympic Games in Sydney. It was at that event too, that Cathy Freeman, an aboriginal athlete, won the 400 metre gold medal, which I believe did more to unite Australia and enable it to face up to the past than any number of Government task forces.

Such is the power of sport as a promoter not of ill will but of friendship, not of international friction but mutual respect.

The ethics we learn through sport are fundamental to society. We learnt them from Ancient Greece twenty-five centuries ago. Their education was built on music and gymnastics - indeed, Plato was very proud of having been a winner in a local games. They created the original Olympic Movement.

Thanks to the modern Games and to its founder Pierre de Coubertin, from whom I gained much inspiration, sport has spread to every corner of the world. It has carried the true spirit of fair play among the youth of every nation. It has done much to link peoples by bonds of common thought and feeling; more so perhaps even than the United Nations, whose cause I have served for many years and for whose original charter I helped draft

The values that sport teaches participants and spectators alike – of fair-play, accepting mediation, respect for rules and self-discipline - can help us tackle the factors that contribute to the perpetuation of the culture of violence.

Whilst many try to separate the two, I have always believed that sport and politics are inseparable; that both should serve the cause of international goodwill and peace.

Today, over five billion people are able to watch the Olympic Games on television. Yet there are people who continue to criticise the event - and sport events in general - as being too commercial. To them, let me say that no sports' stadium has ever cost as much as an aircraft carrier. That when it comes to creating lasting peace, I believe the kicking of a football is of much more use than firing an AK47.

From the time I attended the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 to the UN Conference on Disarmament in New York in 1982 I have always tried to work to the best of my ability - both in and out of government - to further the cause of peace and more precisely disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament which I believe to be one of the two greatest threats now facing humanity. The other is global warming which itself may lead to conflict and the use of nuclear weapons.

I have written much on the need for disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament which I believe is one of the greatest threats now facing humanity. My words are still relevant today when I say that governments should take a substantial part of the record \$1.5 trillion spent each year on militarisation, and use it for sustainable development.

As the first President of the International Council of Sport and Physical Education of UNESCO (1960), I was privileged to have played a leading role in making Governments aware of the significance of sport in education: De Coubertin's vision of everyone's 'right to play' should figure among the human rights. Working together with many NGO's I sought to draw the attention of governments to the crucial importance of sport in the developing countries in Africa, in Asia, in Latin-America.

Might I remind you, that it was Pierre de Coubertin's wish that the Games should also benefit those nations that most need economic and social development? That London will be presenting the Games for a record third time is quite an achievement; and, of course, the fact that over 11,000 athletes will compete is a far cry from the 3,000 in 1908. And whilst I congratulate the IOC on its decision to hold the Games for the first time in

South America in 2016, I look forward to the day when it is held in Africa, where it could do much to provide jobs and help combat poverty.

For this reason I am most pleased to see that Peace and Sport exists and has taken up the challenge to develop peace through sport in the world. Moreover I hope that its continuing support to NGO's working in developing countries, and post-conflict areas especially in Africa, does not go unnoticed by the international community and the world's media.

Philip Noel-Baker's achievements are plain to see.

Now, as someone holding the same position in the International Peace Bureau as Philip Noel-Baker did earlier, may I endorse these words. The world does need a new generation of heroes and heroines more than ever before to promote the values of peace through sport.

And their effort and commitment should be celebrated. IPB would like to propose the launch of a special Noel-Baker Award to recognise outstanding achievement to sport and peace, which would be subject to further discussion with his family. Other events are also being considered.

This year the IPB is celebrating its own Nobel Peace Prize 100th anniversary and it is a great pleasure to be represented at this exciting forum in our centenary year.

Let me tell you that IPB is keen to support your work. And who knows, perhaps one day soon we shall be able to nominate Peace and Sport for a Nobel Peace Prize.

Thank you and *'Bonne continuation'*

Tribute given by Dr Tony Kempster, IPB Vice-President; researched and written by Ashley Woods, IPB consultant.