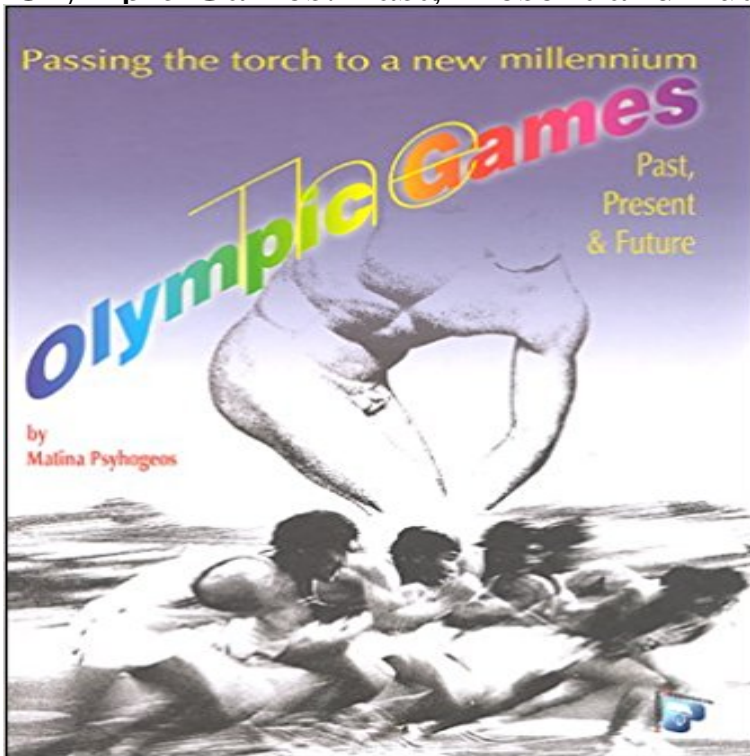


Olympic Games: Past, Present and Future



Matina Psyhogeos second book, within the last two years, was just published by her Psyhogeos Program Publications. The book is entitled :Olympic Games, Past, Present & Future , passing the torch to a new millennium. Some of the remarks and excerpts from the book, which were made upon its publication, follow: At the start of the book I was very pessimistic about the future of the Olympic Games. Scandals were erupting everywhere, IOC members being accused for pay-offs, athletes used drugs while competing and so forth. I thought then that the Olympic ideals, the noble competition were history and the demise of the Olympic Games was inevitable. Being an optimist, however, I had a hunch that through my research I would definitely find encouraging signs. The notion to deal with this subject came to me when I heard the decision of the International Olympic Committee to have the Olympiad of the year 2004 returned to the motherland, Greece. My first reaction was how wonderful it would be if the spirit of the contests could be recaptured and their execution restored the Olympic Games to their authentic lofty heights of noble competition. Was that a fantasy of mine? Was it an illusion? Is it possible after centuries of transformation, evolution, profound philosophical and ideological changeovers, profiteering, exploitation of social and financial attainment to the highest level, to return and resuscitate that dead spirit? Re-seize that lost glorious past and re-live those moments of utter idealistic transfiguration? Well, for a moment I thought it could be done. If man could achieve so much, progress so rapidly, for instance, send a man to the moon, fax an ultrasound of an embryo, within seconds, to a worried grandma, e-mail a digital photograph of a newborn baby to proud relatives, disturb all balances on earth and beyond even dare to challenge the supreme authority and power of God by

cloning and transforming the human race to something foreign, something beyond the comprehension of the human mind, why then? something so noble, so pure so supreme and idealistic could not be revised, recaptured? The answer of course is obvious. Everything is done in the name of profit. Our technology-advanced society is totally consumed by commercialism, promotion, materialism, greed and money making schemes. How then in the world should we expect our top athletes to think and expect anything different? Why should they compete for glory and an olive tree branch when large corporations promise them huge amounts of money and long-term contracts just for using their celebrated name? How could a talented young person resist the temptation of instant fame and wealth? Can anyone blame those individuals who take advantage of their God-given talent to secure their future? A future that places so many demands on them? Thinking about all these, my mind was racing to the noble idea of the Ancient Games - the best ambassadors, the ultimate diplomats which had the power to persuade all conflicting sides to cease their disputes, declare a truce, unite for a common goal and enjoy the supreme concept of friendly competition. Could that lofty spirit become once again an effectual instrument in uniting nations and bringing them closer? Could that ancient custom of the Olympic Truce be the bearer of good tidings? Why not? We are at the dawn of the 21st Century. We are an advanced, well-educated society more aware and better informed, than any other time in history, of happenings around the world, why then could not those conflicts be negotiated peacefully and harmoniously? Why could not that truce be as everlasting as the Olympic Flame? Why today's visionary athletes could not be the best ambassadors of reconciliation, bring people closer and inspire them to work towards a common goal : PEACE ON EARTH? All these along with my positive attitude and optimistic nature had me search to find

instances that will give us hope on the future of this remarkable institution: called the Olympics. As for the Olympians, although, they were crowned only with the kotinos/ the wreath made from the wild olive tree branch, they were compensated in many other ways besides being honored and esteemed and apotheosized. And, naturally, sponsors existed then. Not Coca Cola, IBM or Microsoft but wealthy Athenians/Elians and Myceneans who offered opulent presents to athletes. The most characteristic example was The Contests in Honor of Patroklos as it is stated by Homer in the Iliad, where Achilles gave fabulous presents to the victors including strong women capable of taking care of the house and the fields. Going through many instances and settings indicative of life and the thought process in ancient Greece and comparing them in a contemporary context one surmises that situations do not differ much they're simply adjusted to suit the times. Towards the end of the book I was relieved that my original concerns about the future of the Olympic Games, at the start of the new Millennium, were unwarranted. I staunchly believe that the turbulent times, violence and scandals which were caused occasionally, cannot possibly overshadow the triumphant moments, the great achievements of the still idealistic, visionary youth. The Torch is passed to a new Millennium, let us celebrate! An inspiring institution as the Olympics, not only has endured and survived throughout the centuries, it has in fact, matured and become even more compelling, more influential, more formidable. Let us then all work diligently and contribute towards that goal, with whatever talent or ability each might possess, to safeguard and preserve that sacred trust the ancient Greeks delegated to us. We all realize that the Challenge of the Ancient Olympics remains the vertex which every Olympiad, every subsequent generation attempts to approach. From that challenge and those heights come more intimate aspects, flashes of human potential and frailties. From all those revelations, the

modern mind and body are summoned to overcome fragilities and weaknesses and accentuate dormant facilities and aptitude in order to merit to contemporary times and today's competition. The Olympiad of 2004 upon its return to Motherland promises an awakening, a re-claiming of the beauty, the grace, the good and the supreme good, the perfection, the noble competition and the arete so prevalent in the Ancient Olympics. Let us relive those incredible moments of past glories and make a wish for even more implausible feats, greater instances of noble striving. Let us hope for more superior human beings who set high standards by their example- for others to emulate. The Olympiad of 2004, in Athens, pledges rejuvenation and re-awakening of fundamental principles, renewal of old values, merits and virtues. That anticipation makes us all hopeful and reassured that the Olympic Games have not lost their luster and eminence, the Olympic Flame is still aglow, illuminating all honorable ideas and notions on which athleticism was founded and stands for. We should enthusiastically cheer the future triumph and prosperity of the Olympics, celebrate their nobility and shout out joyfully: Hurray for the Olympic Spirit! Long live all subsequent Olympiads and aspiring Olympians!!

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