

## WHY NOT AN ATHLETIC "DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE?"

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One of the most memorable events in the administration of the late President Harding was his invitation to representatives of the leading nations of the world to come to Washington for a conference to discuss Naval Disarmament. Desiring to be prepared for any future emergency these nations had entered into a frantic race each other in the building of dreadnaughts, super-dreadnaughts and battle cruisers.

At the conference the statesmen acknowledged that they could not keep up indefinitely the present competition in building and maintaining these enormous fleets, especially when it meant year after year a heavy drain upon the treasuries of the competing nations and ever-increasing burden of taxation on the citizens of the commonwealths. As a result an agreement was entered into which had as its aim the limitation or curtailment of the ship-building program. This agreement was a measure of self-defense for the signatory powers.

It seems to me from the present day trend of athletics in our colleges that the time is ripe for an athletic "Disarmament Conference." Unless some measure is taken in this direction the main purpose for which our educational institutions were founded will be placed in the background.

Most certainly do I think there is urgent need for our Negro Colleges to consider this problem seriously. We note from the present tendency that our Negro colleges are imitating as fast as they can the drift of the white colleges in athletics. Can we afford to do this? With the oldest college for colored youth less than 75 years old, have we built up a sufficient cultural background to be able to make the sacrifice of letting the present trend in athletics dominate our campuses? Again, is it desirable that we imitate the white colleges? Should we not rather work out an athletic program that meets our needs and stick to the development of that program?

What can our colleges do in such a "Disarmament Conference?"

I. Such a conference could work out plans to eliminate some bad customs that have crept into our schools during the past years, such as:

1. The centering of athletic activity in a few students in our colleges instead of having a program of physical education that will take in the entire student body. Note the personnel of the squads in the major sports in the colleges. The students from which the varsity squads are chosen would hardly represent one-sixth of the total student body. Very often we find a kind of athletic "ring." Where this is the situation all the teams have about the same personnel. Frequently you hear the crack athlete boasting of the fact that he is the proud possessor of four varsity letters.

2. The custom of inducing star players to leave one school and go to another. Attractive promises are made to students such as soft jobs to work their way through, or scholarships; the only requirement exacted of such a student is that he do well on the team. We even have instances where coaches are sent out to scout for players for their teams.

3. Check the present-day tendency to commercialize college sport. The cost of promoting the athletic program in the educational institutions mounts higher and higher each year. Student athletic fees have increased two or three hundred per-



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cent in the last 15 years; the entrance fee to see the games has increased in about the same proportion over the same period of time. At the same time the attendance of patrons has increased four or five hundred per cent. Added to this are appeals to alumni and friends annually for voluntary contributions, and yet the athletic treasuries of most colleges are nearly always empty. When the big games are staged this commercialization is seen at its height. At the present rate college sport will soon be on the low level of the ordinary sport that is exhibited for gain and gain alone.

II. Another thing that could be done in this "Disarmament Conference" would be to give to athletics its proper place in the program of the college. I think training in athletics has a definite place among the activities of a school. I think its position is a coordinate one. Athletics or physical development is only one of the essential corners in producing the four-square man.

When more money is spent on athletic stadiums and gymnasiums than is spent on science halls and administration buildings; when more time is spent to develop a crack football team than is spent in training men to become adept in parliamentary usage and the art of debate; when football coaches are paid salaries three or four times larger than those of college professors and only serving one-fourth or one-fifth of the time—if these conditions exist there is something lopsided in the program, or, in other words, too much emphasis is being placed on the athletic corner of the square. The proposed conference could render signal service in putting athletics in its proper place and keeping it there.

III. Finally, the athletic "Disarmament Conference" could work out a constructive policy to be followed in the future. This constructive policy would include:

1. A plan that would enlist every student enrolled in the school in some phase of athletics. There would be certain athletic and physical exercises that would be required of all students. Then this conference would list certain phases of athletics

as major sports such as base ball, foot ball, basket ball, etc. Each enrolled student would select one of these sports as his major. The participants in all inter-collegiate contests would be selected from that group who were majoring in that sport. For instance, the varsity foot ball team would be selected from that group who elected foot ball as their major sport, and so on with the others. This plan would tend to eliminate the present athletic "ring" we find in most colleges and would further tend to develop a larger number of students as athletes.

2. This constructive policy would include the employment of a physical or athletic director, who would have the same rating and status as the other professors. He would be a member of the faculty, taking his coordinate place in the program of the school for the development of well rounded manhood. When the athletic program is large enough the director would have associates to assist. However, the system of the high-priced coach would be abandoned for all time.

3. Another phase of this constructive policy would be reducing the schedules of all the major sports. This is one thing that is crippling both those who participate in athletics and also that much larger group who are the spectators.

In the reduction schedule I would recommend three intercollegiate games of foot ball a year. One of these games would be played early in October, the other late in October or early in November, and the third either the Saturday preceding or the Saturday following Thanksgiving Day. You will note that I omit Thanksgiving Day from the schedule. I think a serious indictment should be registered against our so-called Christian Colleges for allowing this day to become so commercialized and paganized that even in these institutions themselves that are fostered by devout persons, no time is given during the day to give gratitude to God for manifold blessings received. This conference would be taking a high moral and spiritual

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## GIVE ALL RACES EQUAL CHANCE, SAY STUDENTS

Great National Gathering Sets New Record for Liberal Thought and Attitudes.

Milwaukee, Wis., Jan. 8.—Gathered here in a great national conference December 28-January 1, twenty five hundred boys and girls, representing every State in the Union and hundreds of institutions, gave earnest consideration to the question of race relations, and on the final day by almost unanimous vote adopted the following: "I am willing to give to the members of every race the same opportunities that I have." The opposite view was then submitted—"Regarding some races as inherently inferior to my own, I favor keeping them in their places,"—and received only eleven votes.

On a previous day, Dr. Mordecai Johnson, President of Howard University, had delivered an address and conducted an open forum on race relations, which was followed by group discussions in which the whole conference participated. Dr. Johnson made a very favorable impression, as did also Rev. Howard Thurman, of Oberlin, Ohio, who spoke on another subject.

At no previous conference of like character had the delegates gone so far in their thinking about race, or reached conclusions so liberal and so nearly unanimous. Among the students present were representatives of thirty-odd racial and national groups, including many Negro students. The hotels of the city were open to all delegates alike and the relationships between the various groups were uniformly considerate and cordial.

Other subjects featured on the program were war and industry, but on these the conclusions reached by the students were not nearly so unanimous. The proposition, "I will not support any war," got 327 votes; "I am ready to support some wars but not others," received 740; "I will support any war that is declared by the authority of my country," got 95; while 356 stated that they were not ready to commit themselves.

On the question of industry only thirty-eight went on record as favoring the existing capitalistic system; 800 expressed the opinion that the present competitive economic order, based on production for profit rather than for use, is wrong; 500 thought the present system should be displaced by a cooperative, distributive system and a method of production in which the workers themselves share the control; 57 went on record as favoring communism; 385 declared that students should support the efforts of organized labor.

### ANSWERS TO THE LAST QUESTIONS

David Rice Atchison, a Senator from Missouri, was President of the United States, Sunday, March 4th, 1849. General Taylor, the President-elect, refused to be sworn into office on Sunday, which was the appointed time.

II. The largest bell in the world is the Tzar Kolokol or Tzar bell which stands in the middle of a square in Moscow.

III. The Ganges in India empties more water into the ocean than any other river in the world.

IV. The oldest recorded game law for the protection of birds is in the Bible, Deut. 22:6.

V. The highest railway in the United States is the Argentine Central in Colorado, reaching an altitude of 14,000 ft.

A notable event of the year is the Workers' Conference which will convene during the week of the 24th, at which time we are expecting to have present a number of old graduates and friends.