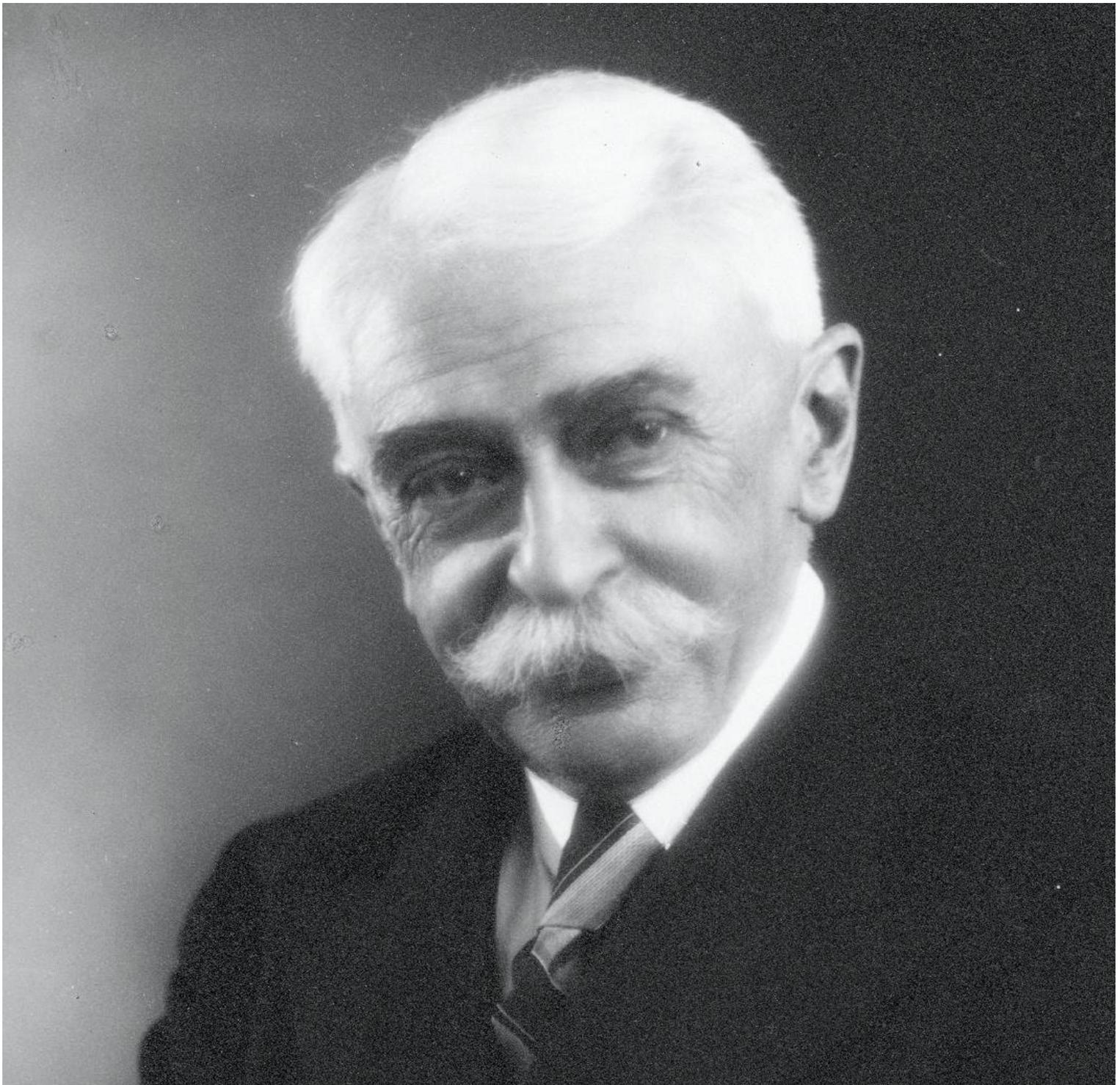


Pierre de Coubertin

Life, vision, influences and achievements of the founder of the modern Olympic Games

OSC Reference Collection
November 2023



Pierre de Coubertin - Life, vision, influences and achievements of the founder of the modern Olympic Games

Editors

Stephan Wassong



Gilles Lecocq



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Foreword by Thomas Bach

Pierre de Coubertin was a visionary like few other. His gift to the world – the modern Olympic Games – was always much more than just a sporting event. For him, the Olympic Games were a way to make the world a better place through sport and its values. This remains the overarching mission of the IOC and the entire Olympic Movement to this day.

We are forever indebted to him for the vision, strength and courage that he displayed throughout his life, and we find everlasting relevance and inspiration in his words to this day.

Through his many writings, texts and speeches, we know that his famous expression, “See far, speak frankly, act firmly”, truly represented the dedication and commitment he put into promoting sport as a universal good that serves a higher purpose for all human beings and society at large.

This dedicated Reference Document on Coubertin's works, writings and legacy represents an important and innovative step in making the ideas and achievements of this great visionary accessible to everyone. It is sure to serve as a fount of knowledge for anybody interested in better understanding how his vision to make sport a force for good in the world is as relevant today as it was during his time.

My thanks and gratitude go to the International Pierre de Coubertin Committee and its President, Stephan Wassong, and to the French Pierre de Coubertin Committee and its Vice-president, Gilles Lecocq, and all the authors who contributed to this commendable project.

This publication will make an important contribution to promoting the Olympic spirit and to inspiring people with the timeless and truly universal message of Pierre de Coubertin.

Thomas Bach



Foreword by the editors **Stephan Wassong** and **Gilles Lecocq**

Already as a young man aged around 20, Baron Pierre de Coubertin (1863 – 1937) wanted to attach his name to an educational reform with sport at its centre. This led him to think about reviving the modern Olympic Games as a tool to promote the educational value of sport for individual character development and strengthening transnational tolerance. With the support of French, English and US-American educators, politicians, journalists, sports officials and representatives of the peace movement, Coubertin realised his project at the Congress on the Re-Establishment of the modern Olympic Games, held in Paris from 16 to 24 June 1894.

Coubertin's success at reviving the Olympic Games, his intention to develop them and his continuously growing considerations to provide them with an educational, philosophical, anthropological and social basis, which have become well known as Olympism, have been researched in detail. Consequently, hundreds of monographs, books and journal articles analyse and describe Coubertin's vision, work and legacy and provide important knowledge about him as a private man, as an educator, as historian, politician, as the founder of the Olympic Movement and as an IOC President.

Despite the existence of these publications, concise knowledge on Coubertin has, however, not been easily accessible for the broader public until now.

This Reference Document, which is published in English and French, intends to fill this gap as it brings together short and concise entries on all facets of Coubertin's life and works.

It is fully accessible online, and the carefully selected topics and authors offer relevant introductory information, provide the most relevant quotes from Coubertin himself and also offer stimulus for further readings on each topic. The 60 entries vary between 500 and 1.400 words depending of the complexity of the topic, and are grouped under the following seven main topics:

- Pierre de Coubertin's Life – Early Education Stimuli and Initiatives
- Founding the Olympic Movement
- Pierre de Coubertin's IOC Presidency (1896 – 1925)
- Pierre de Coubertin Vision and Support for the Olympic Movement after his Presidency (1925 – 1937)
- Promoting Education, Physical education, Sport and Physical Activity through and beyond the Olympic Movement
- Political orientation, his Interests and Writings
- Coubertin Places of Memories.

This publication is the result of a fruitful collaboration between the IOC's Olympic Studies Centre (OSC), the International Pierre de Coubertin Committee (CIPC) and the French Pierre de Coubertin Committee (CFPC) and the contribution of internationally renowned Coubertin experts. Our profound gratefulness goes to all the authors, who have generously given their time and knowledge and worked with the editors in the most collegial manner.

Last, but not least, credit has to be given to Maria Bogner, Head of the OSC for initiating this project and to the rigorous work by the project team at the OSC, namely Jocelin Sebastiani and Martha McIntosh, who significantly contributed to the reviewing, sourcing, formatting and illustration of this document, as well as to the historical archives, image archives and the IOC's Language Services teams for the invaluable support given.

We hope you enjoy reading this document and find it useful.

Stephan Wassong

President of the International
Pierre de Coubertin Committee

Gilles Lecocq

Vice-President of the Comité
Français Pierre de Coubertin

1. Early Education Stimuli and Initiatives

1.1. Coubertin: The Private Person

Yvan & Alexandra de Navacelle de Coubertin

The main aspects and major achievements of Coubertin's public life are well known through his writings and the work devoted to him. In contrast, his personal life and family background remain relatively unknown. Coubertin was not the severe and serious character that is often presented, even if he experienced darker stages at the end of his life. On the contrary, he was optimistic, cheerful, affectionate and sometimes sentimental. Coubertin was a sportsman, a pedagogue and an historian endowed with a sharp mind and lively spirit.

The youngest of four children of Baron de Coubertin, his paternal family was from the Ile-de-France. The family received its title from King Louis the XII in 1477 and its property, the Château de Coubertin, which is near Paris. His maternal ancestors originated from the Château de Mirville in Normandy, which had been family seat since the 16th century.

Paul, the eldest brother, inherited the Chateau de Coubertin in 1893. Pierre married Marie Rothan two years later and they received the castle of Luttenbach in Alsace. Pierre and Marie Rothan had two children: Renée, the eldest, who suffered from depression throughout her life. Jacques, the younger brother, was disabled from a young age. Neither had children of their own. Meanwhile, Pierre's older sister, Marie the Comtesse de Madre, was widowed very young. Pierre subsequently folded his sister Marie and her children into his circle. He became the mentor of Marie de Madre's only son, Maurice who, though 15 years his junior, later developed into Pierre's best friend and confidant.

To fully understand him, it is necessary to place his words in the very particular context of the time. The early origin of Pierre's ideas can be traced to his upbringing within a conservative aristocracy, whose traditions and ideas were somewhat overtaken by events. The family contained diplomats (e.g. Pierre's brother-in-law Madre) or career military officers (his other brother Albert) but rarely was a Coubertin found in the liberal professions, and never in commerce or industry.

His parents were conventional but cultured and intelligent. They were royalists and supporters of the monarchy, and above all, artists. His mother, also called Marie, spoke Latin and was a devout Catholic. A great beauty, occasionally gullible, she attended to many charitable causes. The father, Charles, a handsome, somewhat cold man, was very faithful to his wife's religious principles. He was upright, cultured and an excellent painter. He produced more than 300 paintings, some of which are still displayed in museums and churches today. Charles de Coubertin was an impressionist before his time, among which are his most interesting works. He exhibited for 40 years at the Salon des Artistes in Paris where he received numerous awards including the Legion of Honour from the Minister of Fine Arts. In his later years, Pierre's father's subjects became more academic and religious, under the influence of his wife Marie.

Young Pierre spent several winters in Rome whilst his father painted a large fresco for the Pope (the work is in the Vatican Museum). His mother said he was a peaceful and cheerful child; she adored him. He made drawings along with his father and was an intelligent worker possessed of a talent for detailed observation. Some evidence of this early gift can be found in a humorous account he made at the age of 13 of a voyage and meeting with the Count of Chambord, a pretender to the French throne. Following his studies with the Jesuits, Pierre considered the military school of Saint-Cyr but was instead drawn to the new School of Political Sciences in Paris. His early interest in history and pedagogy had taken hold. As part of his formal education, he made his first trip to England at the age of 20 in 1883. Pierre was taken by the English educational system introduced by Thomas Arnold, headmaster of the Rugby School from 1828 to 1841, with its emphasis on sport composing an important part of the activities.

Behind his serious and official posture, Coubertin retained a youthful spirit, which helped to counterbalance his thought process and laborious organisational efforts. Social, cheerful and dynamic, while a young bachelor he was also given to entertaining and organising parties, which benefited from his wide social connections.

At family reunions he was a natural entertainer. He had a talent for instruments and played the piano without the need of sheet music. During his first trip to the USA (a passage which required twelve days), he decorated the dinner programs with creative drawings. Until 1885 he even kept a 'party album' with very amusing drawings and lists of guests.

He was among the first to use a new invention, the bicycle. He called his "Nini paw in the air" because one of the pedals was always up when the other went down. He was also an early adherent of lawn tennis. One of the very first lawn tennis courts was built in Mirville, where he frequently passed time during his holidays. Other vacation destinations included Étretat, a famous seaside destination near his father's villa (Pierre was president of the Étretat tennis club) and finally at the Coubertin castle with his paternal grandmother.

Pierre de Coubertin possessed a prodigious memory. He was often sentimental. He kept photos, trinkets, dried flowers, etc. He was sensitive but not susceptible. It is interesting to contrast the ardent young royalist of 20 years old and the open republican liberalist he developed into by the age of 30. He was the first of his very Catholic family to marry a Protestant, which was rare and difficult at the time. He knew how to change his mind when necessary and he often proved it.

Despite the considerable difficulties encountered in his work, he always remained the man of his youth. His nephew, Maurice de Madre the closest to Pierre de Coubertin, said: "One of the last times he came to Paris to see me, around 1935, I asked him to play the piano; after telling me that he had not played for a long time, he played with ease and pleasure" (Madre 1944)¹.

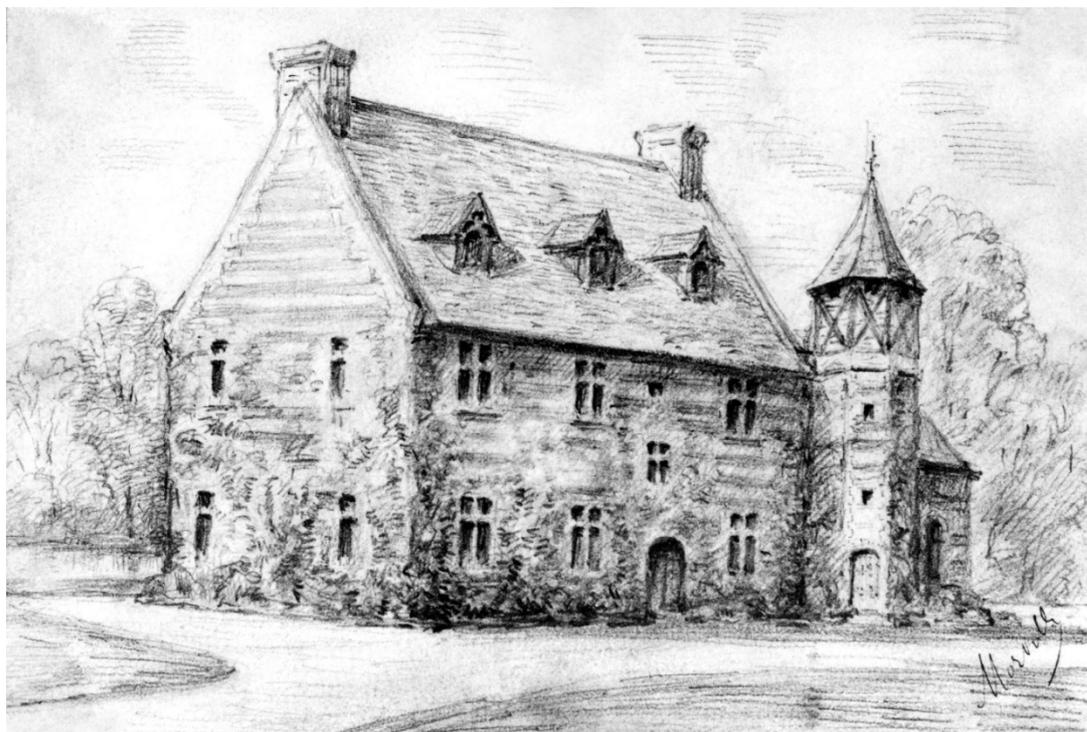
A second anecdote from Maurice serves to conclude and highlight his overlooked gaiety and charm: "he was always affectionate, his soul full of pretty sensitive corners, faithful in friendship and understanding of everything" (Madre 1944)².

¹ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the authors.

² Originally published in French, English translation provided by the authors.



Document 1: Cover page of Coubertin's diary "Album de bal", illustrated with drawings and visit cards, 1884-1885. IOC Historical Archives.



Picture 1: Coubertin's drawing of the Mirville family castle.

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1.2. Coubertin's Childhood Memories

Gilles Lecocq

Pierre de Coubertin developed sensory experiences from an early age, thanks to family trips that took him to the chalet at Étretat and its sea spray, the Château de Mirville and its Roman ruins, the Château de Coubertin and its autumnal charms, and the house on rue Oudinot in the 7th arrondissement of Paris, not far from the Invalides and the Champ de Mars, where the Eiffel Tower would soon be built in preparation for the 1889 World Exhibition³. Indeed, the 1867 Exhibition was the origin of Coubertin's first childhood memory, with the ellipse drawn in the Champ de Mars by Frédéric Le Play, the Exhibition's General Commissioner. It was during a family trip to Rome in the winter of 1869-1870 that Coubertin had the unforgettable emotional experience of exploring the ruined palaces of the ancient Caesars.

However, when he returned from Rome in the spring of 1870, he experienced considerable emotional turmoil – his sense of security was shaken by the Prussian soldiers who had taken up residence at the Château de Mirville. Coubertin would have a front row seat to watch the destruction of the railway viaduct that connected Normandy with Paris. A few weeks later, the capitulation and the peace treaty, signed in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles put an end to the Second Empire and, following a brief period of civil strife in Paris and Versailles, gave rise to the Third Republic. At the time, Coubertin was too young to have been aware of the complex issues at stake, with a war waged between two European nations intertwined with a civil war.

However, after seeing the smoke from Paris rising over the hills of the Vallée de Chevreuse, Coubertin discovered the streets of Paris literally covered in ashes. Although the house on rue Oudinot was spared, as the Château de Mirville had been a few months earlier, the war and its realities were to have a lasting effect on Coubertin's emotional memory, to the point of developing an imaginary world, never very far removed from what he experienced on a daily basis. Croatia became an imaginary haven of peace where he envisaged the foundations of a better world which would allow peaceful relations between human beings and nations: "I amused myself by imagining the creation of a conquering and civilising State whose actions would reverberate throughout Europe, and then the rest of the universe, exerting a grandiose influence in every field. Where was this State? After much hesitation, I decided on Croatia, because the name of its capital, Agram⁴, charmed me with its euphony, and no doubt also because, knowing nothing specific about the country, I found myself with a sort of blank page on which my imagination could run free" (Coubertin 2008, 61)⁵.

Coubertin's childhood in Normandy can be seen as the beginning of a series of crusades which, from adolescence to adulthood, saw him tirelessly gather men of goodwill around himself to work towards the quest for a universal pedagogy. This childhood in Normandy is comparable with Coubertin's words years later, at the ceremony organised in honour of his 70th birthday "Keep firm in the saddles, boys; strike boldly through the mist and have no fear. The future is with you" (Coubertin 1932 [1966], 123). Before entering adolescence and adulthood, Coubertin had already learnt to break through the clouds and to manage his fear. Coubertin's childhood was built around the feelings induced by family trips, war and play. The stimuli provoked by these three contrasting experiences are at the origin of the construction of multiple intelligences, from the most personal to the most universal.

³ Also referred to as either World Fairs or the Universal Expositions.

⁴ The former name of the city of Zagreb in German.

⁵ Originally written in French, English translation provided by the IOC.



Picture 2: Coubertin at six years old.

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1.3. The Origins of Coubertin's Passion for Sport Gilles Lecocq

By 1892, when he made his first public statement in favour of reviving the ancient Olympic Games, a 29-year-old Pierre de Coubertin had been competing in various physical disciplines for many years. During his time in England, he took part in rowing, boxing, horseback riding and fencing. It was in shooting that he really excelled; through this discipline, he became close with Justinien Clary, who was working to develop shooting associations in France. That same year, 1892, he refereed the first French Rugby Championship final between Racing Club de France and Stade Français. A few years later, in 1906, he wrote a treatise on equestrian fencing in collaboration with Louis Pascaud. In 1928, he recalled the salubrious benefits of rowing. Beyond Olympism, Coubertin demonstrated his ability to adapt sporting activities to various audiences, affording them a certain social utility.

Coubertin's childhood memories – those from before the age of 14 – allow us to understand some of the emotional and cultural worlds that would shape his adolescence and his choice as a young adult to devote himself to developing sport for the betterment of others. This passion stemmed from a childhood shared with his sister, seven years his senior; while his mother, who was brought up around the arts, travel and sport, played the role of teacher to her son. This was a period conducive to the development of a young intelligence that would grow, in particular, through the emotions experienced on multiple trips to Étretat, Mirville, Saint-Rémy-lès-Chevreuse and Crisenoy. Concerned with the adult world, Coubertin felt his imagination turn towards Roman and Greek antiquity, and he relished going on a family trip to Rome between the winter of 1869-1870 and Easter 1870: "I loved the holidays. The lights most of all. I was also swimming in perpetual delight. [...] We spent hours wandering around the vast Palazzo Piombino [...] Sometimes we went to play in the wonderful gardens of the Villa Ludovisi [...] The Papal Zouaves also put on maneuvers, followed by lunches on the grass" (Coubertin 2008, 42-43)⁶.

Over time, this sensorimotor intelligence was accompanied by games that became increasingly intellectual: "and, as it was hardly fashionable at the time, no one bothered to remedy this inclination by practising energetic sports [...] But my imagination had built dream worlds around me [...]" (Coubertin 2008, 61)⁷. Coubertin enjoyed dreaming up a fictitious state, of which he would be both conqueror and civiliser. Croatia, the country he chose for this game, was thus a pretext for Coubertin to be creative. "In the summer I was mainly concerned with the fleet because, at Mirville where there was plenty of water, it could enjoy a semblance of reality; I soon had about 30 small boats to maneuver" (Coubertin 2008, 63)⁸. After more than two years of Croatian reverie, the start of secondary school gave Coubertin a solid grounding in rhetoric and eloquence. This gave him the ability to turn his speeches and writings into opportunities not to fear controversy, by developing arguments based on two complementary foundations: reason and reverie.

Thus, beyond the practice of sport, which presupposes the presence of partners and adversaries who obey the same rules, Coubertin's childhood was an opportunity to find his power of imagination from playing games, which gave him access to the foundations of both universal and personal history. This leads us to conclude with the following question: What would Olympism be without the existential dimensions of a game?

⁶ Originally written in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

⁷ Originally written in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

⁸ Originally written in French, English translation provided by the IOC.



Picture 3: Coubertin with his bicycle in the south of France.

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1.4. Coubertin's Battles for Education

Jean Durry

Sport and the Olympic Movement: to pigeonhole Pierre de Coubertin and limit his work to these two areas alone, as people often tend to do, would be not to know or understand that it was education which, from the outset, formed the backbone of his whole life, way of thinking and work, oriented first towards young people, and then constantly enlarged.

Starting with a highly specific project which, at the time, was as singular as it was bold, namely introducing sport to secondary education establishments, Coubertin went on to develop a general vision which called into question every aspect of the education system.

In February 1889, his Association for the Reform of School Education in France proved premature. But within his restive mind, the subject always remained present. In 1901, in his 320-page *Notes on Public Education*, he addressed all the facets of the problem, adopting Danton's phrase as his own in his preface: "After bread, education is the primary need of the people" (Coubertin 1901, 1)⁹. In the work, he put forward "the principle of a new method" (Coubertin 1901, 18)¹⁰, which would require "ignoring all preconceived ideas" (Coubertin 1901, 319)¹¹: synthesis that has become impossible due to the accumulation of fragmentary knowledge must be replaced by a key analysis that can be applied to all situations. In his conclusion, he stressed that this did not concern "France alone [but] all civilised countries" (Coubertin 1901, 319)¹².

Perseverance was one of Coubertin's most marked character traits. In 1906, he founded the Association for the Reform of Education, with men such as astronomer Jules Janssen and Gabriel Lippmann (Nobel laureate in Physics in 1908), with whom he developed new secondary education programmes, made public in 1910 in the form of a 30-page brochure. Their aim was to provide, over the course of 60 lessons, a panorama "encompassing the whole of the material world and human evolution" (Coubertin 1910, 170)¹³. Each piece of information would follow on from and answer the previous one, providing meaning to the education delivered.

In 1912, in the second of a three-part work for adolescents, *Éducation intellectuelle. L'analyse universelle*, he was back on the attack to equip children with this tool, to become familiar with it, then everything will be possible for them. At the end of four years of global conflict, his horizons became increasingly broad: "Open the Doors of the Temple [of knowledge]!" (Coubertin 1918,1)¹⁴, he urged the wealthy classes, even as he henceforth advocated "All Sports for All" (Coubertin 1919, 343)¹⁵.

Whether it was the People's Universities (1919), which became the Workers' Universities (1923), the creation of the Universal Pedagogical Union (Union Pédagogique Universelle - UPU) (1925), with an international conference in Ouchy (from the 14th to the 18th of September 1926) on 'the educational role of the modern city', or affirming the 'right of access to sport' for everyone and the 'right of access to general knowledge', he continued to plough the same furrow.

It was for the UPU that he gave the final form to his 'ten-branch torch', codifying in a different way the edifice built with Lippmann: the four "notions which delimit the very existence of the individual – astronomical, geological, historical and biological; the three notions upon which his mental and moral

⁹ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

¹⁰ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

¹¹ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

¹² Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

¹³ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

¹⁴ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

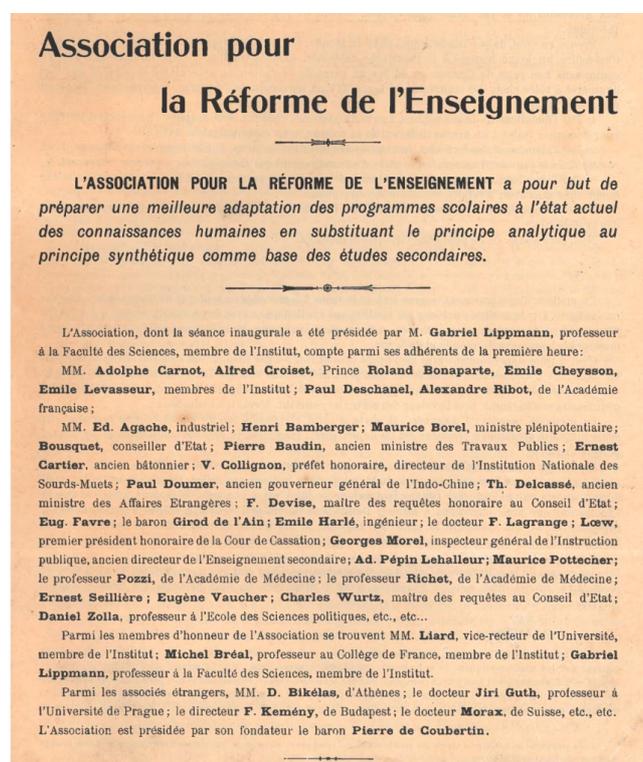
¹⁵ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

development depend – mathematical, aesthetic and philosophical; and finally the three notions that dominate his social life: economic, legal, ethnic and linguistic" (Coubertin 1929, 9)^{16 17}.

Towards the end of his life, he appreciated the fact that, on the 20th of January 1937, tribute was paid on the 50th anniversary of his pedagogical activity to the "years of burrowing away to prepare [...] a reform [...] that would be both radical and prudent" (Coubertin 1937, 12)¹⁸, as he put it in his address to his "dear comrades" from the association of former pupils of the day school on Rue de Madrid on the 7th of March that year. And that would in fact be the last speech published in his lifetime.

In all honesty, what was the result of these Sisyphean efforts, and what remains of them now? The reality is that the ideas put forward by Coubertin – who remained an outsider due to his lack of university qualifications – had zero influence on education systems; and which educationalist ever talks about them today?

But one day, someone will blow on the embers and a spark will rekindle the fire. In this field, as in others, the time has certainly come to restore Coubertin to his rightful place.



Document 2: Cover page of the programme of the Association for the Reform of Education in 1906. IOC Historical Archives.

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¹⁶ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

¹⁷ For social life, Coubertin notes three notions but cites four.

¹⁸ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

1.5. The Influence of Philhellenism

Dikaia Chatziefstathiou

Hellenism and the ancient Greek values of body, mind and spirit, which had been re-invented in 18th and 19th century Europe, represented a binding power for Europe's unity and authority. There are several explanations about how Pierre de Coubertin discovered Hellenism, such as the influence of his family, the reading habits of his time, his school education at the Jesuits School St. Ignace in the Rue de Madrid in Paris, his interest, and life-long personal studies. However, according to Coubertin's own admission, his time at the Jesuit College influenced him the most. The study of antiquity provided the means to attain that unity of body, mind and soul (the threefold harmony of Hellenism), of community and individual, the Greek ideal of humanity. The effects of Classicism were evidenced in education where the sons of the 'ruling class' were sent to schools in which the classical studies of Hellenism, Latin and Roman studies were embraced. Although class conflicts were taking place mainly on an economic basis, ideologies, which would guide and inform the new classes, were equally important. Thus, the struggle for power was apparent in Europe's private or boarding schools where the pupils were moulded to become the next generation of the ruling class through the teachings of ancient Greek civilisation.

Bowen (1989, 162) attributes this 'wholehearted embracing' of Hellenism to "the new and powerful role that Hellenism offered in the ideological maintenance of the ruling class". Hellenism was linked, by Coubertin, to the International Congress of Paris for the Re-establishment of the Olympic Games (1894), where the audience consisted of representatives of the ruling class across Europe. Such linkage opened ways of communication with the addressees and heightened the possibilities for success of the new project. "A subtle feeling of emotion spread through the auditorium as if the antique eurhythmy were coming to us from the distant past. In this way, Hellenism infiltrated into the whole vast hall. From this moment, the Congress was destined to succeed. I knew that now, whether consciously or not, no one would vote against the revival of the Olympic Games" (Coubertin 1931 [1997], 21-22).

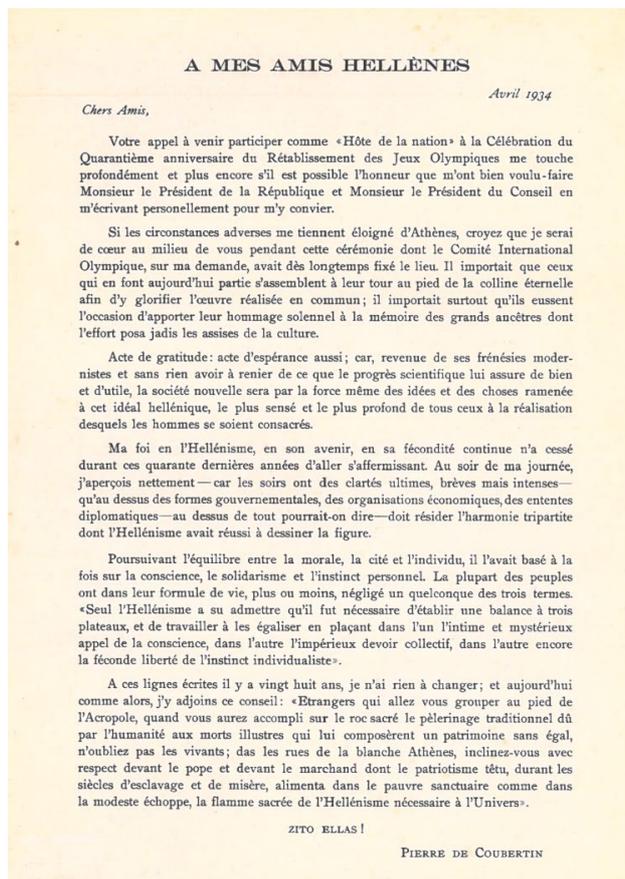
Later in the same year, speaking to the literary society in Athens, Coubertin recalled his delegates listening to choirs singing the hymn to Apollo, unearthed at Delphi. "Then in a sacred hush, for the first time in two thousand years choirs sang the hymn to Apollo unearthed at Delphi. The effect was deeply moving. In one of those mysterious glimpses that music sometimes gives us of lost worlds, for a few seconds those gathered at Paris perceived Greek antiquity in all its splendour. From that moment on, Gentlemen, the Greek genius was among us, transforming a modest congress on athletic sports into a quest for moral betterment and social peace. My goal had been achieved" (Coubertin 1894 [2000], 533).

Coubertin, being enchanted with the Greek antiquity, associated an international sports competition with the ancient Olympic Games and the values of Hellenism. "Of all measures tending to this desired end, only one seemed to me at all practicable, namely the establishment of a periodical contest, to which sporting societies of all nationalities would be invited to send their representatives, and to place these meetings under the only patronage which could throw over them a hallow of greatness and glory: 'The patronage of Classical Antiquity'! To do that, was to re-establish the 'Olympic Games': That name forced itself upon us, it was not even possible to invent another one" (Coubertin 1896, 4).

"I rejoice that I have been given the opportunity to begin preaching the second part of the Gospel of Sport among a Hellenic community, as I did the first in times past, and that I thus have the opportunity once more to place my endeavour under the patronage of that civilizing force whose past merits every honour and whose future deserves every confidence – Hellenism" (Coubertin 1918 [2000], 269).

Tomlinson (2004, 48) underscores the point that Coubertin, in an attempt to fulfil his grandiose plans, "excelled at hyperbole, hailing his 1894 Congress in Paris as the moment when a 2,000-year-old idea

was restirred". By associating the modern Olympic Games with the ancient tradition of Hellenism, Coubertin claimed continuity and expansion of impact and importance of the Olympic Movement and Games in modern era. Throughout his writings, Coubertin emphasised the perpetuity of classical Greek antiquity using expressions such as: "Hellenism's immortal glory" (Coubertin 1929 [2000], 567) and "eternal Hellenism" (Coubertin 1936 [2000], 579). In this way, past, present and future were bridged through the event of the Olympic Games, tracing the longevity of Hellenism across time.



Document 3: Message "A mes amis Hellènes" [To My Greek Friends], April 1934. IOC Historical Archives.

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1.6. The French Mentors of Coubertin, an Independent Spirit

Alain Arvin-Bérod

Though it was the influence of his French and international mentors that fuelled Pierre de Coubertin's vision, his vision cannot be reduced to the sum of their ideas. In many ways, this makes his work unique – even visionary. His strong desire to respect history was coupled with a fascination for modernity that fostered his openness towards social and global developments. His chosen mentors thus signpost his unique and innovative pathway, rather than the influence of dated 'trademarks'. In fact, Coubertin's independence was his defining characteristic from an early age. At the age of 16, for instance, he discovered the ancient Olympic Games in Father Caron's classes at the Jesuit school. Despite his passion for those long-lost events, he couldn't just copy them. His first mentor – beside his family history – took shape in this education, which was to be the fuel for his ideas. At the age of 25, he was already a leading voice in educational reform in France. This is where his French mentors came in. He credited philosopher Frédéric Le Play, one of the founders of modern sociology, for his paternalism, which he defended as a means of reform: "The illustrious man of whom I have come to speak on behalf of those who are pursuing the triumph of his ideas in France – Frédéric Le Play – was neither a dreamer nor an ideologue" (Coubertin 1887, 1)¹⁹. This is the speech that Coubertin gave in tribute to Le Play at the Société Nationale Française in London in 1887.

Coubertin, a committed humanist, read and reread Alexis de Tocqueville, a former centre-left parliamentarian and firm opponent of Napoleon III. Tocqueville had understood since 1828 that the rise of democracy was unstoppable. This was another key aspect of Coubertin's philosophy – his focus on democracy and cosmopolitanism.

When he took an interest in the notion of sport for all, he found himself drawn to the ideas of liberal Catholics such as Bishop Dupanloup. In a lecture given on the 26th of January 1889 to the Association pour l'Avancement des Sciences, Coubertin said: "All those who are concerned with education have read the works in which the eminent Bishop of Orléans, Bishop Dupanloup, summarised his thoughts on his experience relating to youth training" (Coubertin 1889, 4)²⁰. With education as the driving force behind his project, Coubertin was also strongly influenced by Jules Simon, a moderate Republican parliamentarian who was elected Prime Minister of the Third Republic. Delivering a speech to the General Assembly of the Unions pour la Paix Sociale founded by Le Play, Simon referred to sport as a source of self-improvement not conditioned by one's profession, and which is one's prerogative and cannot be replaced. As a result, sport was linked with the notion of basic rights. In 1888, an enthused Coubertin created the Comité pour la Propagation des Exercices dans l'Éducation, which was chaired by Simon himself, with Coubertin serving as general secretary.

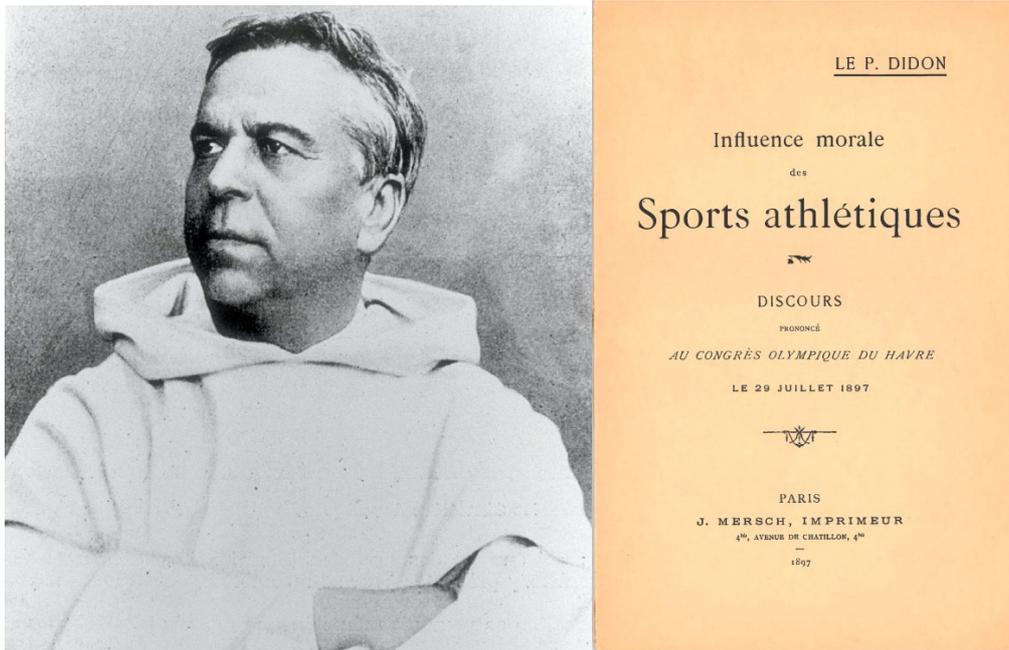
In 1890, impressed by a Dominican priest who made no secret of his Republican ideals, he paid Father Henri Didon a visit. Father Didon, prior of the Collège Albert le Grand, welcomed him to Arcueil. Coubertin, 27 years his junior, himself reported on this historic meeting, which marked the advent of the Olympic Games: "I told him [...] about the great desire we had to see a school association founded in Arcueil whose young champions would compete with those from the lycées. 'Go and found it, I'll be there!' replied the Prior" (Coubertin 1909, 55)²¹. On the 7th of March 1891, the first Arcueil Championships took place, organised by Coubertin and Didon: *La Revue athlétique*, run by Coubertin, recounted the event in April 1894, quoting Father Didon and his motto, 'citius, altius, fortius'. The phrase was put forward to the IOC in 1891, which adopted it as the Olympic motto. The two men teamed up for the Athens Games; Coubertin invited Didon to celebrate the Olympic mass, the preacher having travelled to Greece with a 'school caravan'. A year later, in 1897, Coubertin asked Didon to open the second Olympic Congress in Le Havre. Thus, although he had several mentors, it

¹⁹ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

²⁰ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

²¹ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

was Coubertin through whom the recognition of sport in education was to become a foundational principle of the International Olympic Committee.



Picture 4: Portrait of the Dominican Father Didon.

Document 4: Cover page of a speech from Father Didon at the Olympic Congress, le Havre, 29 July 1897. IOC Historical Archives.

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1.7. The Impact of English Public School Life on Coubertin's Olympic Idea

Katarzyna Deberny & Jörg Krieger

Public school life in England had a profound impact on Pierre de Coubertin and his intentions to revive the Olympic Games. Coubertin's interest in the English education system largely stemmed from his critical views on the heavily theoretically orientated French education system that he wanted to reform. The book *Notes sur l'Angleterre*, written by French philosopher Hippolyte Taine, in which the author describes the inclusion of individual and team sports in everyday school life in English public schools and the positive impact of sport on the value systems of the pupils, inspired Coubertin. In this way, the role of sport at English public schools became a starting point for his educational campaign, with the Olympic Games at its centre.

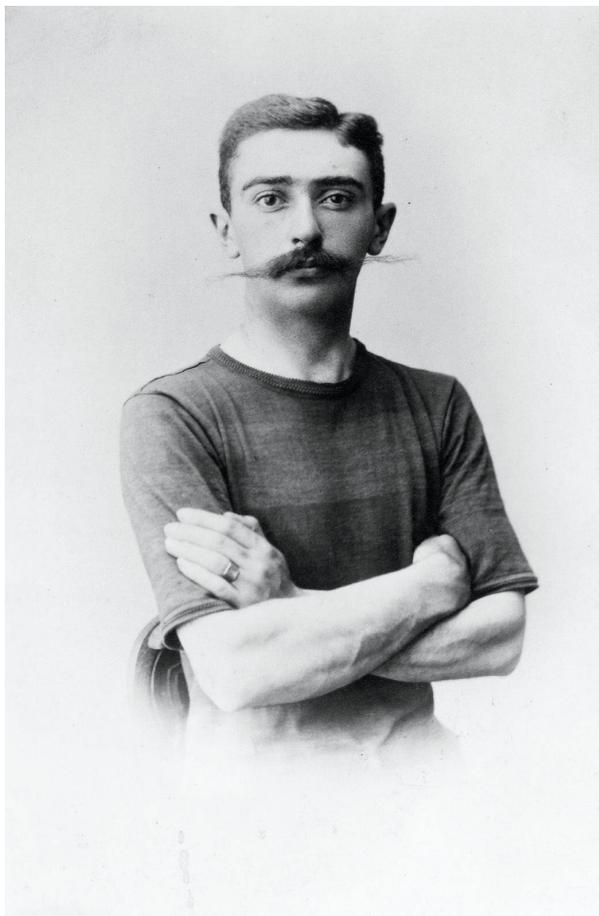
Coubertin undertook several research trips to England between 1883 and 1887, during which he visited several public schools to witness the sporting activities first hand. He reported his observations in various publications, highlighting the role of sport to educate, shape characters, promote physical fitness, teach morals and enable spiritual sensitivity. For example, in a speech published in the 1889 report by the Association française pour l'Avancement des Sciences, he said: "The purpose of these athletic games, as they are called there, at first seemed to be to entertain the children while improving their strength. Ensuring cheerfulness and health within the school is already an enormous advantage. Yet here is something quite different: if you wish to find the cause of the exceptional social hierarchy among children, you will discover that sport has made it possible, by providing them the *material on which to base their enthusiasms* [italics in original], which is lacking among our students" (Coubertin 1889 [2000], 128).

Recognising the positive effect of schoolyard games, Coubertin became an advocate of sporting practices at English schools and attempted to implement the same strategy in French schools. He struggled to convince the leaders of the French education system about the usefulness of sporting activities in schools. However, he implemented many of the principles of extra-curricular sport at English public schools in his formulation of a 'pédagogie sportive'.

In his writings, Coubertin often emphasised the role of the former headmaster of Rugby School, Thomas Arnold, in the implementation of sporting activities at the schools. Coubertin became fascinated with Arnold after reading a French translation of Thomas Hughes' novel *Tom Brown's School Days* that idealised Arnold's role in the realisation of the moral effects of sport. Deeply affected by the book, Coubertin labelled Arnold as the "greatest educator of modern times" (Coubertin 1894 [2000], 536). However, whilst Arnold supported the establishment of literary, sports, political and artistic societies in schools to enable a holistic education, many developments occurred only after Arnold's death in 1842.

Public school life impacted the shaping of Coubertin's Olympic idea in various ways. According to his own reports, Coubertin realised the close connection between sporting and intellectual education during his visits to England. This link became a cornerstone of his Olympic project, since he highlighted the harmonious connection of body and mind that he had witnessed at the public schools and that public school graduates transferred into their professional lives. Coubertin had a similar educational objective for the Olympic Games, as he intended for the athletes to enhance their social and moral character traits through their participation at the event. Moreover, Coubertin realised the potential of using role models to expand the reach of his educational objectives. Since the public school pupils came from the English upper classes, they usually took on important roles in politics, economics and the military after graduation and attending prestigious universities such as Cambridge and Oxford. In those positions, they benefitted from the morals they had learned through sport and spread them to the masses. Coubertin intended for the Olympic athletes to similarly become role models for their communities.

In summary, one of the reasons Coubertin established the modern Olympic Movement was that he wanted to contribute to the education of the modern citizen. He first became familiar with such a sport-orientated approach through his readings about English public schools, which he later visited to study the impact of sporting activities on the pupils personally. Coubertin saw this as confirmation that sport could have a positive impact on the moral and social character of individuals and based his own pedagogical concepts on sport. Thus, sport at English public schools had a crucial influence on the formation of the Olympic Games.



Picture 5: Coubertin in 1889.

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1.8. Coubertin and Gymnastics: A Project of Social Value

Pierre Philippe-Meden

After 1870 and the defeat at Sedan, the fear of degeneracy hung over France. A number of gymnastics activities were designed to address health, social and educational issues. Pierre de Coubertin explained: "Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as 'French gymnastics'. This name was given to a hybrid system where the German influence first dominated with its strength exercises, followed by the Swedish influence with its flexibility exercises". (Coubertin 1902, 245)²². Thus, Coubertin, as a connoisseur of German and Swedish gymnastics and with considerable experience in Great Britain, should be considered as a pathfinder who dedicated himself to useful social work²³.

Following the Brussels Olympic Congress and the publication of *Gymnastique utilitaire* (1905), Coubertin founded the Société des Sports Populaires (1906) to encourage people to practise lifesaving, defence and locomotion exercises, and to encourage the creation of suitable facilities. Théodore Vienne, a patron of the arts and a sports socialist, turned his magazine *L'Éducation physique, revue sportive* into a communication tool for Coubertin. President of the Débrouillards²⁴, a sort of gymnastics baccalaureate organised by the Société des Sports Populaires and in which Coubertin himself was involved, Vienne led a delegation to consider the results put forward by Georges Hébert, a French educator, gymnast, and promoter of a natural physical education method admired by Coubertin. Vienne attests to Hébert's skill in transforming heavy, stiff men into true athletes who could run, jump, wrestle, swim and climb.

A future member of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), Melchior de Polignac offered Hébert the position of technical director of the Collège d'athlètes in Reims (1912-1914). In 1912, Coubertin wrote about this college: "After Stockholm, the French babbled and shouted incessantly – and without results, one would be tempted to say, if it had not been for the interesting creation of a 'Collège d'athlètes' in Reims, from which we can expect great things but on condition that the work is done there in the shadows, without crowds and without noise." (Coubertin 1913, 13)²⁵. The college was inaugurated on the 19th of October 1913 in the presence Coubertin and French President Raymond Poincaré. Coubertin saw in this formula of "gymnastics in the fresh air" (Coubertin 1912, 3)²⁶ an experiment to be developed in France.

On the 8th of July 1931, in *Le Sport Suisse*, Coubertin recalled the key role of gymnastics events in the "The obligatory and sacrosanct programme of the Olympic Games" (Coubertin 1931 [1966], 120). He indicated the "Desirability of the unification of so-called gymnastics and sport clubs" (Coubertin 1932 [1997], 235). Coubertin wanted to unify these groups in order to put an end to the disputes he had been working to resolve for years.

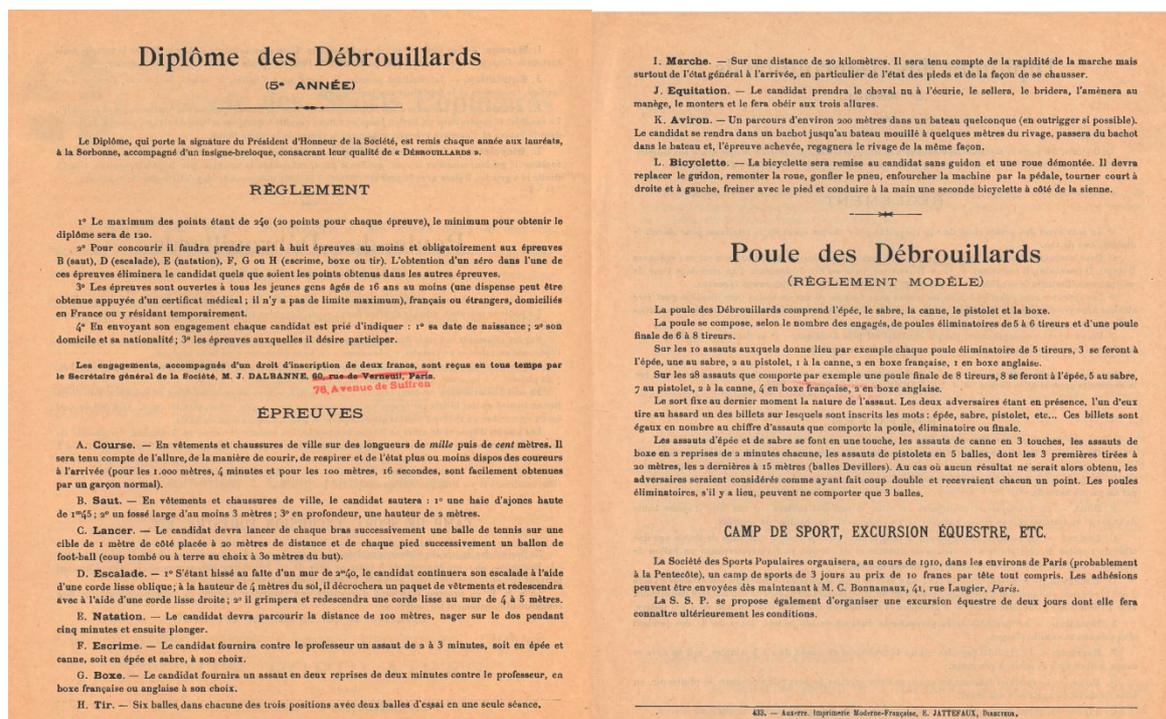
²² Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

²³ Numerous magazines were to provide an opportunity for dialogue and disputes between the various conceptions of socially useful gymnastics that were developing in France before the First World War. Reading the *Revue des jeux scolaires et d'hygiène sociale*, *L'éducation physique*, *La culture physique* and *Le Gymnaste* allows us to identify the role played by the *Olympic Review* in envisaging gymnastics events at the Olympic Games. These publications can be consulted at <https://gallica.bnf.fr>.

²⁴ A débrouillard – a resourceful person – is "a boy who is dexterous with his hands, quick to exert himself, flexible of muscle, resistant to fatigue, with a quick eye, a firm decision, and trained in advance for those changes of place, profession, situation, habits and ideas made necessary by the fertile instability of modern civilisations". (Coubertin, *L'éducation physique au XXe siècle*, *Le Figaro* 1902, 03). Text originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

²⁵ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

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Document 5: Rules and event of the Diplôme des Débrouillards, 1910 (pages 3 and 4). IOC Historical Archives.

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1.9. Coubertin in America in 1889 and 1893: A 12,000-Mile Odyssey Critical to the Birth of the Modern Olympic Games

George Hirthler

On the 21st of September 1889, the 26-year-old Pierre de Coubertin set sail from Le Havre for the first of his two trips to the United States. Formally, he was on a mission from the French Ministry of Education to study the model of sports integration at colleges and universities in the new world; informally, he was building a network of influential educators, sports leaders and public figures who would support his evolving but emergent vision for a new international competition.

An insightful social and political critic, he would arrive on the shores of the US well prepared for his mission. He had read Alexander de Tocqueville's 1835 classic *Democracy in America* and studied the US Constitution in detail under Émile Boutmy at the École Libre des Sciences Politiques in Paris. He was familiar with the young nation's institutions, values and character. More importantly, in four previous trips to England for the same basic purpose, he had visited dozens of British public schools and universities and formed a philosophy of physical education – based on the model cultivated by Thomas Arnold at Rugby – that provided a comparative framework for analysing the discoveries ahead.

He also possessed detailed knowledge of the sporting programmes and activities at the 90 US colleges and universities that had responded to his international survey in 1889. And, above all else, he had formed a close and vital friendship with William M. Sloane, a distinguished professor of history at Princeton University, the head of its Athletics Committee and a Francophile who would publish a definitive four-volume biography of Napoleon in 1896. Some historians assume Coubertin and Sloane sailed across the Atlantic Ocean together on that 1889 cruise. Whether they did or not is incidental to the visionary quality of their partnership, which would be central to the launch, development and ideological substance of the modern Olympic Movement through its first 30 years.

Not long after Coubertin arrived in New York City, he departed by train for the Boston Conference on Physical Education at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where a robust gathering of 2,000 sports-minded educators were mainly focused on debating the relative merits of the German versus the Swedish systems of gymnastics. As the last speaker, Coubertin let it be known that neither system would rule the future of collegiate athletics – but sporting games and competition based on the 'Arnoldian regime' would. He was right, of course, and he was the only speaker who emphasised the educational value of sport and its character-building role – two points which became foundational in his emergent Olympic vision.

From Boston, he began a 4,500-mile odyssey that along the way took him north to Quebec, Canada, west to Chicago, Illinois, south to New Orleans, Louisiana, and Saint Augustine, Florida, and then back up north to Princeton, New Jersey, and New York City, taking him across the campuses of more than 20 colleges and universities en route. With introductions from Sloane, he met university presidents and physical educators, listening to their views but also offering – like an evangelist – his vision for the future of sport in education and the rising tide of sporting internationalism.

In the American South, his indignation rose at the examples he saw of the way in which Blacks were treated, and in his report on the trip he would write sarcastically that: "If the Southern states are stupid enough to uphold this brilliant legislation much longer, one must believe that they will pay for it dearly in the end, unless the federal government decides to get involved and whip them into shape like naughty children" (Coubertin 1890 [2000], 96).

By the time he left America, he would count among the network of influential people who would support his work the presidents of Harvard, Cornell and Johns Hopkins: Charles W. Eliot, Andrew D. White and Daniel C. Gilman, respectively, and the future president of the US, Theodore Roosevelt, who

shared his perspective on the transformative power of sport in the lives of the young. That's a quite an accomplishment for a 26-year-old Frenchman.

Coubertin's second trip to the US in 1893 would be driven by an entirely different agenda – the revival of the Olympic Games. While he continued his study of sports in education, he concluded his trip with three weeks of planning at Sloane's home in Princeton, where they outlined in detail the goals, programmes, commissions, entertainment, banquets and sports demonstrations that would characterise the International Congress of Paris for the Re-establishment of the Olympic Games held in June 1894, which would successfully resurrect the modern Olympic Games.

His travels took him all the way to San Francisco where a newspaper, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, reported his intention to revive the ancient Olympic Games in a modern form. From California – where he visited Stanford and other universities – he travelled across the Southwest through Texas on his return journey, covering nearly 7,000 miles on this second trip.

One of Coubertin's last meetings in New York City was orchestrated by Sloane to introduce the revival of the Olympic Games to the powerful amateur sports leaders of America. That meeting failed to gain any traction as James E. Sullivan, the ambitious head of the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU), emerged as one of the Baron's arch enemies across the next decade.

Nevertheless, after the 1894 Congress in Paris, Sloane led the formation of an American Honorary Committee for the Olympic Games and recruited to it the president of the United States, the presidents of Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Columbia and John Hopkins along with Albert Shaw, the editor-in-chief of the highly influential *American Monthly Review of Reviews*, who would become a champion of Coubertin's political writing and use his publication for a full-throated endorsement of the Olympic Games.

And then, with Sloane driving the development of the first US Olympic team to the inaugural Olympic Games Athens 1896, a handful of American athletes seized the opportunity and set the young nation on a path of sustained Olympic glory, with that first team of 10 athletes, which amongst them won 20 medals, including 14 gold.

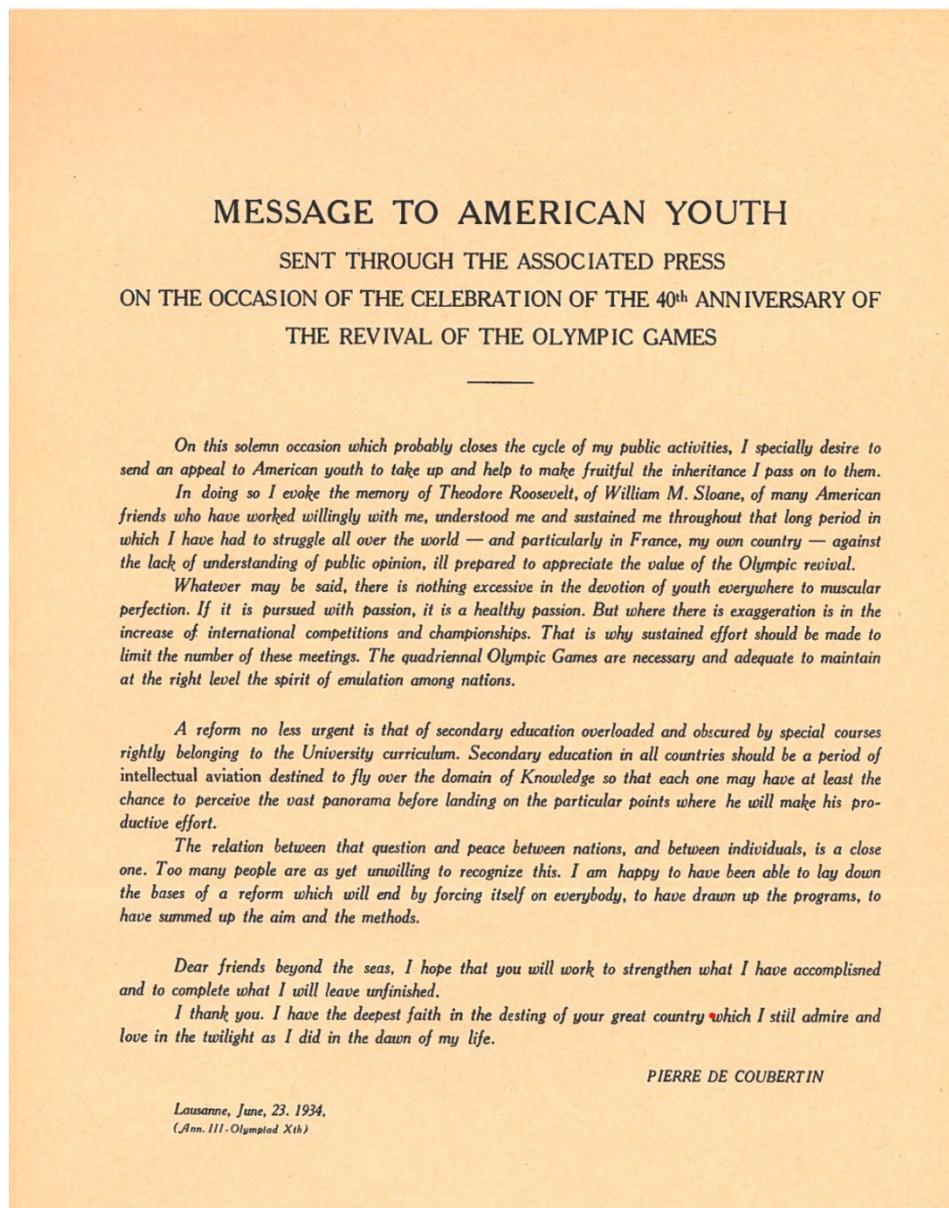
As a result of the US response to the clarion call of the Games, Coubertin's gratitude and love for America remained strong till the end of his life. On the 23th of June 1934, in celebration of the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Games, he issued *A Message to American Youth*, recalling those who had supported his grand quest:

"... I evoke the memory of Theodore Roosevelt, of William M. Sloane, of so many American friends who have worked willingly with me, understood me and sustained me throughout that long period in which I have had to struggle all over the world [...]" (Coubertin 1934, 1).

The closing words of his message make it clear how his hopes for the Olympic future were rooted in the US.

"Dear friends, beyond the seas, I hope that you will work to strengthen what I have accomplished and to complete what I will leave unfinished.

[...] I have the deepest faith in the destiny of your great country which I still admire and love in the twilight as I did in the dawn of my life" (Coubertin 1934, 1).



Document 6: Message to American Youth, 23 June 1934, celebration of the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Olympic Games. IOC Historical Archives.

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1.10. The Promotion of Physical Exercise in French Schools

Alain Arvin-Bérod

Educational exercise

The promotion of physical exercise in French schools could be summarised by the 1869 decree signed by Minister Victor Duruy on the teaching of gymnastics in "secondary schools and public colleges". This was followed by the George Law of 1880, which made sport "compulsory in all public schools for boys", to be extended to public schools for girls in 1882. This was one of the first significant steps in the development of this new aspect of education, now the responsibility of the State. In France, a form of gymnastics was adopted by the military under the impetus of Colonel Francisco Amorós y Ondeano. At the time, gymnastics – a discipline imbued with the prestige of its ancient origins – comprised a diverse range of exercises, practiced for various purposes and in various parts of Europe, particularly in Germany and Sweden. Local athletic initiatives began to emerge; for example, as early as 1850, school retreats combining physical exercise, culture and education were organised during summers in Geneva.

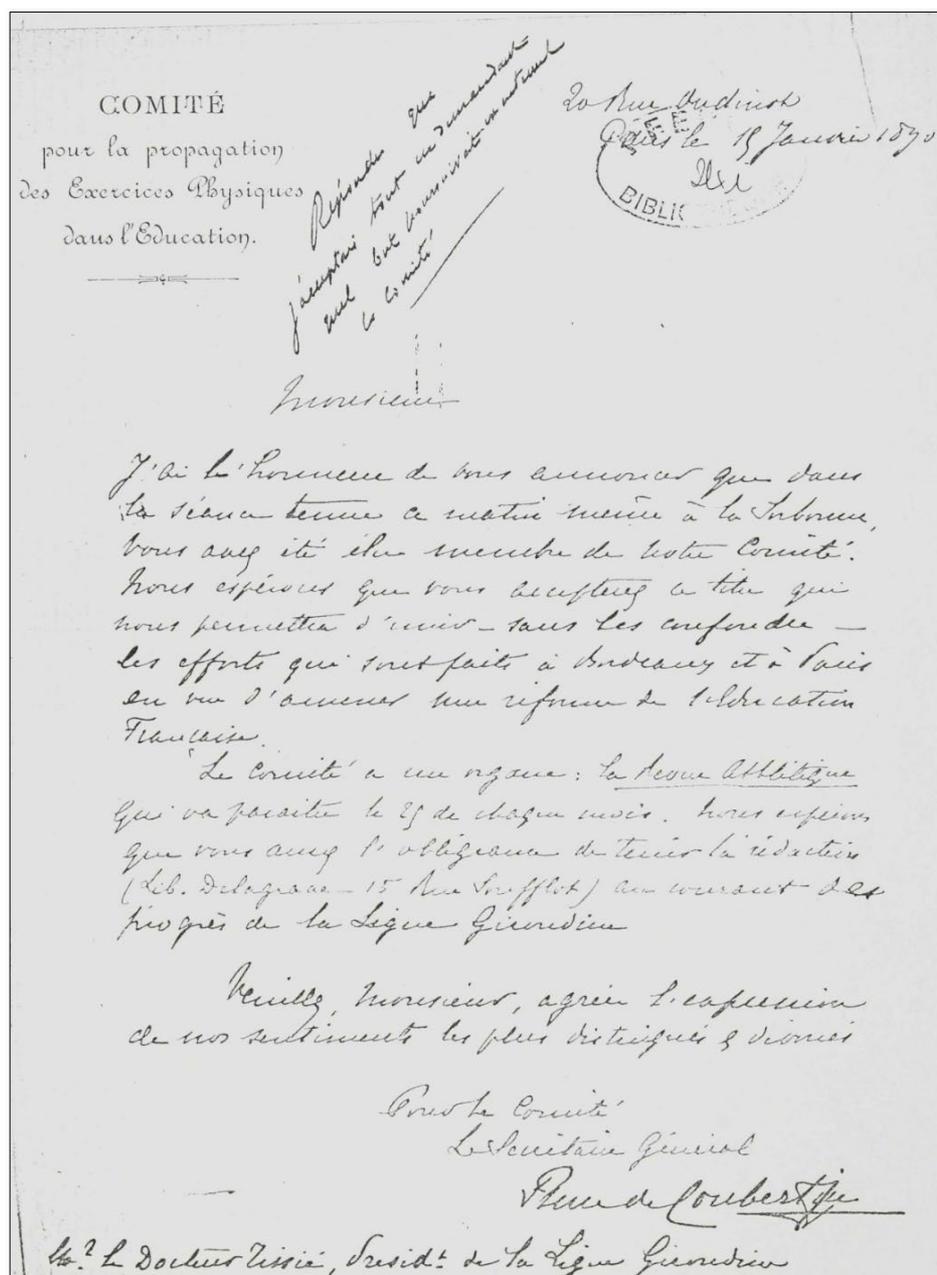
Competitive pedagogy

Rodolphe Töpffer organised school excursions as a way of breaking away from the traditional rhythm of school, nurturing initiatives such as the French Alpine Club's 'school caravans' from 1874 onwards. As early as 1861, the Ministry of Public Education officially recommended that headteachers in large towns and cities – with particular emphasis on regions where fresh air and space were in short supply – set up annexes in the countryside. Inspired by public schools in the United Kingdom, the Michelet and Lakanal secondary schools, located on the outskirts of Paris, and the École Monge and École Alsacienne, located in central Paris, introduced sport into their curricula. It took Pierre de Coubertin very little time to obtain the agreement of Georges Morel, Director of Secondary Education: "He immediately issued me a letter which would open the doors to all the lycées in France" (Coubertin 1909, 12)²⁷. In 1890, the Union sportive du lycée Michelet organised the first rugby football championships, in which both public and private secondary schools could participate, in keeping with Coubertin's wishes. At the same time, there were educational excursions throughout the Alps, as far as Genoa and Venice. The 'school caravan' programme centred around hiking excursions for pupils. Some went to Egypt, to Olympia, and notably to the first Olympic Games in Athens in 1896. Having been invited by Coubertin himself, the 21st caravan from Arcueil, led by Henri Didon – the father of the Olympic motto ('citius, altius, fortius') – took its pupils to the revived Games, with a stop in Olympia. Didon had discovered the Olympic Games at the Petit Séminaire du Rondeau in Grenoble in 1848. The idea of educational reform gained ground with pedagogical advances aimed at educating the elite.

Promoting physical exercise: a battle that goes right to the heart of education

The fierce competition between Catholic secondary schools and state schools to attract children from wealthy families meant that the range of physical activities offered to boarding students was quite extensive. Towards the end of the 19th century, new movements emerged in the field of physical activity for educational purposes, extending beyond the realm of school sport and into civil society. Philippe Tissié in Bordeaux created the Ligue Française d'Éducation Physique, while Paschal Grousset established the Ligue Nationale de l'Éducation Physique. The two men organised youth sporting events called 'Lendits', which proved to be a short-lived success. These promoted traditional games rather than English sports. Grousset defended the idea of the Olympic Games being purely French, which met with opposition from Coubertin. On the 1st of June 1888, Coubertin established the Comité pour la Propagation des Exercices Physiques. Its aim was to promote physical exercise, games and sports among the whole French population, particularly in public and private secondary schools. It was these educational advances, often promoted by Coubertin himself, that helped to popularise sport, which Coubertin helped to internationalise with the creation of the IOC.

²⁷ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.



Document 7: Letter from Coubertin to Dr Philippe Tissié, with the heading of the Comité pour la Propagation des Exercices Physiques, 15 January 1890. IOC Historical Archives.

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1.11. Influences of World Exhibitions and the International Congress on Physical Education in 1889

Stephan Wassong

Pierre de Coubertin's self-confessed passionate interest in contemporary history was directed not only towards the national context, but also included references to a slowly emerging internationalism. Whilst the fields of political, educational and social conflicts during the French Third Republic were relevant topics for Coubertin's national interest, the World Exhibitions, also referred to as either World Fairs or the Universal Expositions, stimulated his interest in contemporary internationalism.

The first World Exhibition, commonly known as the Great Exhibition, was held at the Crystal Palace in London in 1851. It was – like all subsequent World Exhibitions – a platform for international exchange in the fields of technology, science and culture. According to the British society magazine *The Spectator*, it was a peaceful competition of knowledge, which is why the World Exhibition was also referred to as the Olympic Games of Industry.

Coubertin was fascinated by the international flair radiating from the fourth World Exhibition in Paris in 1878, which he visited at the age of 15. The 26-year-old Coubertin showed personal commitment at the 1889 World Exhibition in Paris, where he organised the Congress on Questions of Physical Education as Secretary General. Jules Simon, who held the offices of Prime Minister and Minister of Education of France in the 1870s, was responsible for the overall management of the Congress. The fact that the Eiffel Tower was decorated with the colours of the French tricolour and the names of 72 international scientists symbolised, for Simon, the fact that there were no conflicts of world views and nationalities at the World Exhibition. This was undoubtedly a formative thought for Coubertin.

In accordance with the objectives of the World Exhibition, Coubertin gave the Congress an international character. As part of the preparations, he initiated a worldwide survey on the role of physical education. As shown in the publication by Walter Borgers and Dietrich Quanz (1996, 84), the invitation letter for the survey was introduced by Coubertin as follows:

"During the Exposition of 1889, in the month of June, a congress will be held in Paris for studying the aims and advantages of athletic sports and games and their physical, moral and social effects on education. We greatly hope that you will be able to attend the congress and give us, on this important question, such information as your experience in educational matters will suggest. At all events, we hope you will be kind enough to write and send us an answer to the following questions:

- What are the games played in your school or university?
- How many hours do the boys play a day? – a week?
- What about riding – gymnastics – fencing – military drill – rowing – bicycling?
- Are the boys allowed to form sporting associations?
- Have they a debating society and of what kind?
- Do you believe in athletic games improving companionship – morality – temper – work?
- What are the subscriptions, extra fees.... paid for the games and sport?"

Coubertin submitted a detailed report in the Congress proceedings on the responses to the survey from the USA, England, Canada, Australia and many other very remote colonies. He was thus able to demonstrate an impressive worldwide interest in the topic of sport and education.

He received 90 replies from the USA alone, enabling him to obtain comprehensive information about sports and gymnastic activities at schools and universities in the country. The most distinguished report was submitted by Harvard University, with around 1,021 students surveyed. However, as early as 1888, Harvard had carried out a similar study to evaluate the effects of athletic and gymnastic exercise on academic achievements. In his report, Coubertin gave priority to the outcome of the Harvard

University study, as it was mentioned that the level of the examination results had increased proportionately with the increase in students taking part in sport and gymnastic exercises, and that those students who did not had achieved the lowest grades.

As an additional part of the Congress programme, Coubertin organised athletic and fencing competitions between schools in Paris to support the topic of the Congress. The international element of the practice units was emphasised by the presentation of basic elements of Swedish gymnastics directed by Sweden's Viktor Gustaf Balck.

The Congress co-organised by Coubertin was one of the first to discuss the topic of sport and education internationally; the same can be said of the worldwide survey, which played a pioneering role in the academic field. This clearly underlines how early Coubertin's educational thinking was internationally orientated.



Document 8: Paris 1889, commemorative diploma of the World Exhibition awarded to Coubertin. Olympic Museum Collections, Lausanne.

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1.12. The Influence of World Peace Congresses on Pierre de Coubertin's Educational Thinking

Stephan Wassong

Pierre de Coubertin's points of contact with the emerging peace movement should be seen in the context of the World Exhibition²⁸ of 1889 in terms of time and personal relationships. In Paris, preparations were under way for the 1st Universal Peace Congress. It took place during the World Exhibition, immediately after the International Congress on Physical Education organised by Coubertin and Jules Simon.

Simon also chaired the Universal Peace Congress, planned by Frenchman Frédéric Passy and Englishman Hodgson Pratt. Passy was co-founder of the Société des Amis de la Paix in Paris and awarded the Noble Peace Prize in 1901; Pratt was the founder and chairman of the International Peace and Arbitration Association. In Paris, and through Simon's contacts, Coubertin had the opportunity to discuss with Passy and Pratt the importance of education in establishing peaceful internationalism among nations. This also motivated Coubertin to publish a review of the Universal Peace Congress with his essay *L'éducation de la paix*.

It was above all the 3rd Universal Peace Congress, held in Rome in 1891, which crystallised Coubertin's sporting and educational intentions on the international level. According to the statements made by Pratt at the Congress, students in Europe and the USA should be made more sensitive to intercultural views. Pratt interpreted this as an important basis for building tolerance of other cultures. This should apply in particular to students, who were future thinkers and even leaders of national and international politics. Pratt's scheme, in part, aimed to support student exchanges between Europe and America by establishing annual university conferences. An international gathering would give students an opportunity to become acquainted with the culture of other nations. Artistic, sporting and intellectual competitions planned for such educational exchanges would create an informal atmosphere to make intercultural learning as easy as possible.

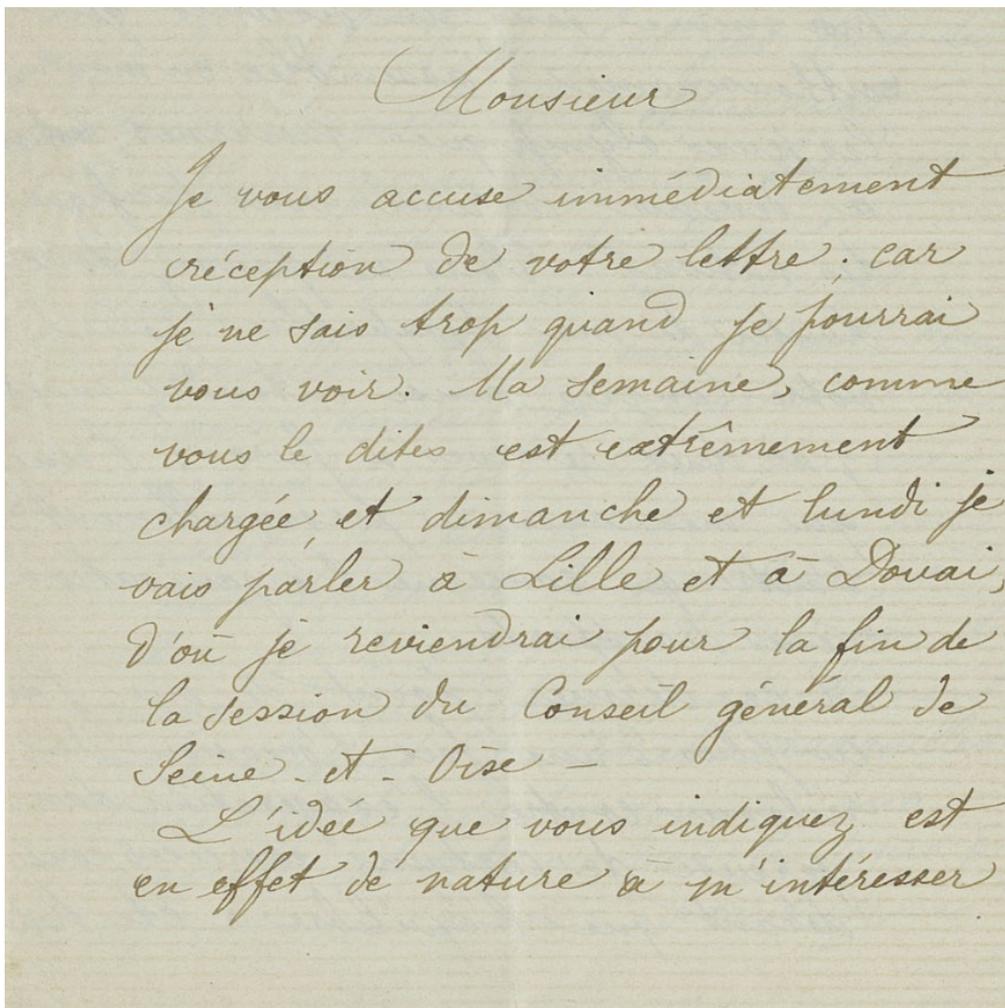
As demonstrated, Coubertin dealt with the congress report from Rome. Pratt's recommendations helped Coubertin to consolidate his understanding of sport as a good platform for the intercultural exchange of experiences. For Coubertin, relevant prerequisites were the fact that sport was already enjoying increasing popularity worldwide, and developments in the transport sector made it easier for international competitions to be held. Coubertin addressed this in his speech, entitled *L'athlétisme. Son rôle et son histoire*, delivered at the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) in Paris in 1891. The content of his speech has parallels with the one that Coubertin delivered at the Sorbonne in November 1892 on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the Union des Sociétés Françaises de Sports Athlétiques (USFSA). At the end of this speech, Coubertin informed the public for the first time about his intention to revive the modern Olympic Games.

Although the 1891 speech did not reach this ambitious objective, it still had an effect. In connection with Coubertin's analysis of Pratt's recommendations at the 3rd Universal Peace Congress, the speech, with its content on the increasing popularity of sport and the modern means of transportation to facilitate international sport gatherings, can be viewed as an impetus for Coubertin to implement concrete practical initiatives. In 1892, Coubertin and William M. Sloane, a university professor at Princeton University and promoter of Coubertin's early Olympic ideas, invited athletes from American universities to a sporting event in Paris. To this end, Sloane and Coubertin founded the American Committee. The visit to Paris and the return visit to New York, Boston and Chicago, then still to be planned, were not just about comparing sporting performances but also about the opportunity to generate intercultural knowledge and consequently mutual respect between French and American students.

²⁸ Also referred to as either World Fairs or the Universal Expositions.

On a small scale, the goal of this student sporting exchange can ultimately be considered a blueprint of Coubertin's broader vision of creating the Olympic Games as a platform to establish transnational tolerance as an antidote to processes of national alienation. This idea, which Coubertin had entertained at least since the World Peace Congresses in Paris in 1889 and Rome in 1891, became an important core element of the Olympic Movement from the very beginning. Already after the successful staging of the Games of the I Olympiad Athens 1896, Coubertin mentioned the following, which bears a clear resemblance to the basic recommendations of early Universal Peace Congresses:

"Should the institution [Olympic Games] prosper, - as I am persuaded, all civilized nations aiding, that it will, - it may be a potent, if indirect, factor in securing universal peace. Wars break out because nations misunderstand each other. We shall not have peace until the prejudices which now separated the different races have been outlived. To attain this end, what better means than to bring the youth of all countries periodically together for amicable trials of muscular strength and agility?" (Coubertin 1896, 53)



Document 9: Letter from Frédéric Passy to Coubertin, 04 April 1894 (extract). Passy expresses his support to the ideas of the modern Olympic Games. IOC Historical Archives.

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1.13. The Creation of the Union des Sociétés Françaises des Sports Athlétiques: the Birth of the French Sporting Movement

Alain Arvin-Bérod

Amateur sport is one and indivisible, according to the Union des Sociétés Françaises des Sports Athlétiques (USFSA) in 1895. Sport emerged in France in the 1870s. In 1887, it acquired its very own benchmark institution, the USFSA, which survived until 1920 and represented 30 glorious years for sport at national level. From an initial membership of just 50, it grew quickly and steadily – from 450 clubs in 1903 to 1,700 in 1913, with 270,000 members! The association of sportsmen, mainly from Paris, was set to expand nationwide. This Parisian army of artists who boxed, lifted weights and excelled at fencing or gymnastics – as Guy de Maupassant derisively described it – would soon be passé.

The USFSA, which grew out of the Union des Sociétés Françaises de Course à Pied, created in 1885 by the Racing Club de France and the Stade Français, was the institutional crucible of French sport. It wanted sport to be "united and indivisible, to promote the expression of athleticism, according to the principles of amateurism". Its president, Georges de Saint Clair, was committed to English sports and education, and was surrounded by young leaders, some of them 20 years his junior, such as Pierre de Coubertin, who became Secretary General of the USFSA, as well as Jules Marcadet, Frantz Reichel and Charles Brennus – all illustrious figures who helped develop French sport. Demetrius Vikelas, a representative of Greek gymnastics and future International Olympic Committee (IOC) President, was an honorary member. The USFSA campaigned for the inclusion of tennis and football players, and was committed to promoting school sports associations. It has represented France within the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) since its inception.

When the history of sport is written, its legacy will be shared by the French Olympic Committee and the Comité National des Sports.

The Union's founding principles gave the sporting movement a genuine institution created by the athletes themselves. Coubertin was the driving force behind the USFSA's development; this explains its success, though some of the Union's leaders feared that competition would penalise the clubs. After Coubertin established the Comité Olympique Français (COF) in 1894, Reichel and opposing leaders created the Comité National des Sports (CNS) in 1908. The national sports federations thus sought recognition for their own aspirations to develop beyond French borders and beyond Olympic values. Coubertin understood the need to develop the COF's independence, while maintaining regular links with several leading members of the CNS. In 1913, the COF reconciled with the CNS, with the two institutions sharing a head office and a president, Justinien Clary, a future IOC Member. After the First World War, this rapprochement resulted in the IOC organising the Olympic Games Paris 1924 and the International Winter Sports Week the same year in Chamonix. It was not until 1972 that the two organisations merged to form the Comité National Olympique et Sportif Français (CNOSF), thus vindicating Coubertin's vision of maintaining peaceful relations between the fundamental values of Olympism and the *raison d'être* of the International Sports Federations and National Sports Federations.

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2. Founding the Olympic Movement

2.1. Coubertin and Antiquity

Christian Wacker

The valley of the former sanctuary of Olympia was tranquil and quiet only until the middle of the 19th century. The ruins lay hidden under a layer of sand up to five metres thick when the German archaeologist Ernst Curtius started to vehemently promote the idea of excavating Olympia. He approached the Prussian Emperor Wilhelm I several times, and the Emperor finally supported and financed the excavations between 1875 and 1881. Before that, a state treaty had been concluded between Prussia and the Greek Government (the 25th of April 1874), under which all the finds had to remain in Greece. In only six years, and only during the winter months, almost the entire area was excavated, with many hundreds of Greek workers, military organisation and horse-drawn carts to transport the sand away. The rediscovery of the cradle of sport, the sacred grove of the Olympic Games, made waves internationally, which admittedly also affected Pierre de Coubertin. In his famous statement, which is only documented 21 years after the first edition of the modern Olympic Games, he relates the achievement of the reintroduction of the Games to this rediscovery. "Germany had brought to light what remained of Olympia; why should not France succeed in rebuilding its splendours?" (Coubertin 1909, 89).

Coubertin had ample opportunities to be inspired by Antiquity, such as during a visit to the Charles Waldstein Museum of Archaeology in England in 1886; or at an event to mark the 1889 Paris World Exhibition²⁹, in which Paul Monceaux gave a lecture on the results of German excavations in Olympia. The latter happened before Victor Laloux's first, utterly imaginative reconstruction of the Temple of Zeus in a room of the Petit Palais, which must have made a lasting impression on Coubertin, who was presumably present in person. In that same year, he visited Much Wenlock, at the invitation of William Penny Brookes, where he got to know the local Wenlock Olympian Games with their antique-like equipment. As is well known, Coubertin was not a scholar of Antiquity. His knowledge of the classical world stemmed from his schooldays at the Paris Jesuit College. Although he had received the usual degree of education in the humanities for his time, even in the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) founding year, he owned only seven books on classical topics. Coubertin's achievements are undoubtedly in another field, but not in ancient scholarship and sports history.

An aura of Ancient Greece was also chosen for the International Congress of Paris for the Re-establishment of the Olympic Games, which in 1894 sealed the deal for the introduction of the modern Olympic Games. An ambience common for the time was obviously created that did not attempt to make any direct reference to the Games but was due to the situation. Coubertin also left no doubt during the deliberations of the Olympic Games Commission that he did not intend to create a copy of the ancient Olympic Games. In one article of the same year, he underlined: "Modern, very modern, will be these restored Olympian Games. There is no question of reviving the old-time dress and manners [...] It is only the idea embodied in them that can revive, and it must be adapted to the needs and the taste of the present age" (Coubertin 1894, 184)³⁰ Coubertin was aware that one could not, and did not want to, bring the ancient world back to life. Rather, the International Olympic Games he strove for were to "[... be based] on a foundation that satisfie[d] the requirements of modern life" (Coubertin 1909, 90).³¹

After the Congress, Coubertin travelled to Greece in the autumn of 1894 for exploratory talks with the royal family, as well as representatives from politics and sport. A visit to Ancient Olympia at the end of his programme seems to have been organised as a kind of social event. Coubertin, who visited

²⁹ Also referred to as either World Fairs or the Universal Expositions.

³⁰ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the author.

³¹ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the author.

Olympia only twice in his life (1894 and 1927), "[...] roamed [...] about between the ruins" as he later confessed in his *Olympic Memoirs*. (Coubertin 1932, 28)³².

The American School of Classical Studies in Athens also allowed Coubertin access to the ancient world before and during the Olympic Games 1896. The archaeological representative of the United States was the only institution of its kind that actively supported the Games. By contrast, both the German Archaeological Institute, which had led the excavations in Olympia, and the École Française d'Athènes showed no interest. Charles Waldstein, who had established the American School of Classical Studies in Athens and had known Coubertin for years, supported his plans. He opened the doors to various ancient sites in Athens to him and accelerated the renovation of the Panathenaic Stadium. The American School took advantage of both the 1896 and the 1906 Intercalated Games for events and tourist excursions. On the sidelines of the athletic programme, the US representatives offered opportunities to get closer to the ancient world and study it on the ground. For Coubertin, the ancient world and Ancient Olympia possessed only an exemplary character. He wanted to create something new and modern, which he masterfully and sustainably succeeded in doing after a difficult few initial years. And he was not lacking in self-irony. Shortly after the Games of the I Olympiad Athens 1896, he wrote in *The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine*: "The Olympic Games which recently took place at Athens were modern in character [...] because in their origin and regulations they were international and universal, and consequently adapted to the conditions in which athletics have developed at the present day. [...] Their creation is the work of 'barbarians'" (Coubertin 1896, 39).



Picture 6: Olympia, the temple of Hera.

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³² Originally published in French, English translation provided by the author.

2.2. Coubertin's Perception of the Pre-modern Olympic Games

Annett Chojnacki-Bennemann

Pierre de Coubertin is commonly recognised as the father of the modern Olympic Games. Though it is important to clarify that, a long time before his birth, there were already initiatives throughout Europe and Canada which pursued the goal of reviving the Olympic Games, in very different ways. However, British and Greek initiatives were probably the most interesting ones for Coubertin and his ideas. The activities in Greece can be traced back to 1835, when the then-Minister of the Interior, Ioannis Kolettis, presented a memorandum to King Otto I, entitled *Sur l'instruction des solennités nationales et des jeux publics à l'instar de ceux de l'antiquité*. This document, which contained a detailed plan regarding a programme and costs to revive the Olympic Games, can be seen as a cornerstone for the approaches in Greece in the 19th century. Also of importance are the later Olympic events financed by the Greek merchant Evangelis Zappas in Athens. Zappas was inspired by the poem of the Greek poet Panagiotis Soutsos *Dialogue of the Death*, in which he proposed a revival of the ancient Olympic Games. The Zappas Olympics took place in Athens in 1859, 1870, 1875 and 1888/1889.

Besides Greece, there were also significant approaches to adapt the Olympic Games in England and, since Coubertin travelled there frequently, there is no doubt that he was aware of these activities. The first British initiative was the so-called Cotswold Games, which had been established as early as 1612 by Robert Dover. Probably one of the most important sources of inspiration was the initiative of the English physician William Penny Brookes. Brookes established the Wenlock Olympian Class in 1850 in the small town of Much Wenlock. His aim was to "promote [...] moral, physical and intellectual improvement [...]" (Wenlock Olympian Society 2023). Between 1850 and 1860, 11 Annual Meetings or Much Wenlock Olympian Games took place. Brookes continued to develop his activities and initiated the formation of both the Wenlock Olympian Society in 1860 and the National Olympic Association in 1865. Although Brookes' activities were limited to the national level, he was aware of what was happening internationally. Thus, he corresponded with Zappas and donated a Wenlock Prize for the first Zappas Olympics in Athens. Afterwards, in 1881, he publicly suggested in the Greek press an International Olympian Festival to be held in Athens, but due to the Greek Government he failed with this initiative.

Coubertin and Brookes met for the first time in 1890 after Brookes invited him to Much Wenlock. In the run-up, Coubertin co-organised a congress on physical education at the Paris World Exhibition³³ in 1889 and promoted it in the British press. In response to this announcement, Brookes sent Coubertin extensive information and newspaper articles about his work and the Much Wenlock Olympian Games. In October 1890, Coubertin visited Much Wenlock, where Brookes staged an autumn Annual Meeting especially for him.

Coubertin was enthusiastic about the event and especially the ceremonies. Brookes informed him in detail about his ideas and about the Zappas Olympics in Athens. Coubertin planted an oak tree and became an honorary member of the Wenlock Olympian Society. Brookes became an honorary member of the Olympic Congress of Paris for the Re-establishment of the Olympic Games at the Sorbonne in 1894 and, until his death in 1895, he remained in touch with Coubertin. The importance of this encounter and the meaning for Coubertin also became evident in an article he wrote two months after his visit to Much Wenlock:

"The fact that the Olympic Games, which modern Greece has been unable to restore, are being revived today is due not to a Hellene, but to Dr W. P. Brookes. He is the one who began them 40 years ago. At age 82, still alert and vigorous, he is still organising and running them" (Coubertin 1890 [2000], 281).

Without doubt, there are many parallels between Brooke's ideas and those of Coubertin.

³³ Also referred to as either World Fairs or the Universal Expositions.

It becomes clear that both are also concerned with educational and moral goals and not only with physical exercise. This can be seen, among other things, in the framework competitions of the Much Wenlock Olympian Games, with the aim to also promote mental skills, such as reading, writing and arithmetic. This approach can also be found in the art and literature competitions of the modern Olympic Games (1912-1948).

Coubertin, as an educated, intellectually curious and well-travelled person, intended from the beginning for there to be a renewal and not just a replay of the ancient Olympic Games. Likewise, in contrast to the many early, national initiatives, his focus had been international from the very beginning. Unlike his aforementioned predecessors, such as Brookes, Coubertin was strongly influenced by the emerging peace movement of his time. From the very beginning, he particularly aspired for peace among nations with his idea of the modern Olympic Games. In this regard, he wrote in 1896:

"Wars break out because nations misunderstand each other. We shall not have peace until the prejudices which now separate the different races shall have been outlived. To attain this end, what better means than to bring the youth of all countries periodically together for amicable trials of muscular strength and agility?" (Coubertin 1896 [2000], 360).



Picture 7: Portrait of William Penny Brookes (13 August 1809 – 11 December 1895).

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2.3. The Founding Speech of the Olympic Movement

Stephan Wassong

The fifth anniversary of the Union des Sociétés Françaises de Sports Athlétiques (USFSA), which had been founded as an umbrella organisation for the promotion of sport in France, was celebrated on the 25th of November 1892. Pierre de Coubertin organised the ceremony in his capacity as secretary general of the USFSA. He believed that it was important to start the jubilee with various sporting events and school sport competitions, which were held from the 20th to the 24th of November. The actual ceremony was reserved for the 25th of November, with the aim of raising public awareness of the growing importance of sport in and for society. The choice of the Sorbonne as the conference venue was to lend academic value to the event. The aim was to be achieved on a political level through the commitment of the President of France, Marie François Sadi Carnot, as patron of the anniversary celebration.

The celebration was attended by representatives of sports organisations and – at least in part – by politicians from the government and city authorities. Literary and music performances cleverly embellished the festival programme, which comprised speeches about sport in antiquity, the Middle Ages and at the time. The latter period was analysed by Coubertin in his speech delivered at the end of the ceremony. The conclusion of his 14-page manuscript noted the following important points:

"As for athletics in general, I am ignorant of its destiny; but I wish to draw your attention to the important fact that it presents two new features (...). It is democratic and international. (...). As for the second, it opens an unexpected prospect to us. (...). Let us export rowers, runners and fencers; this is the free trade of the future, and the day that it is introduced into the mores of old Europe, the cause of peace will receive new and powerful support.

That is sufficient to encourage me to think now about the second part of my programme. I hope that you will help me as you have done thus far, and that, with you, I shall be able to continue and accomplish, on a basis in keeping with the conditions of modern life, this grandiose and beneficent work: the re-establishment of the Olympic Games" (Coubertin 2020 [1892], 44).

These lines are powerful even when read without any reference to the other parts of the speech. However, the historical importance of the last lines becomes obvious when they are put in context, for the following two reasons.

The first is that Coubertin informed the public for the first time about his idea to revive the Olympic Games. The audience was surprised about his idea and reacted moderately. However, despite the passive reaction, the topic had been addressed officially and recognised by a sport-orientated public. This probably paved the way for Coubertin's success in 1894, when it was decided to re-establish the Olympic Games at a Congress in Paris.

Although Coubertin mentioned his idea to revive the Olympic Games only in the last sentences of the manuscript, he cleverly choreographed the climax right from the beginning of the speech, the analysis of which clearly illustrates the second reason regarding his intention to re-establish the Olympic Games.

Coubertin started by describing German and Swedish gymnastics, their origins and development. He explained the main differences between the two gymnastic systems. He identified the main objective of German gymnastics in relation to military training and that of Swedish gymnastics from a health perspective. For him, both systems fell short of making a significant contribution to character education. Coubertin reserved this for sport, which, in those times, was used as an umbrella term for track and field, swimming, football, hockey and other team games. Unlike gymnastics, sport included a competitive element.

Coubertin continued by concentrating on the development of sport and the fact that it should be regarded as an educational tool for the development of valued social and moral character traits, including honesty, loyalty, respect and striving to achieve. In his view, the values learned in sport could be easily transferred to professional and private situations. He argued that the educational role of sport was originally coined in academic contexts at English public schools (private, mainly boarding schools), from which it spread throughout the world. Coubertin referred to countries of the Commonwealth, the USA and also to France, supported by data collected through an international survey, which he himself carried out in 1889 to analyse the increasing reputation of sport in educational settings. He did this for the International Congress on Physical Education, which he co-organised during the 1889 Paris World Exhibition³⁴.

In his speech, Coubertin stressed the fact that sport had developed into an international phenomenon and that it was enjoying increasing popularity worldwide. For Coubertin, this was the motivation for expanding the educational impact of sport by adding an international dimension to it. He clearly referred to this at the end of his speech, and this is vital in terms of understanding the reason behind Coubertin's intention to revive the Olympic Games.

Coubertin argued in favour of bringing athletes from different nations together to make sport international, an objective facilitated by innovations in the transport system at that time. Coubertin recognised this and encouraged advocates of sport to use it to their advantage.

After further analysis of this part of the speech, one could assert that, for Coubertin, the aim of the Olympic Games should not be athletic competition alone. According to him, the Olympic Games should provide an opportunity to communicate with representatives of other nations and learn more about their cultures, thus reducing mistrust and prejudice against other nations, which was regarded as one of the driving forces behind the outbreak of armed conflicts. Coubertin's considerations are further developments of the general educational recommendations developed at the Universal Peace Congresses since 1889 to promote transnational processes of understanding.

It becomes clear in the speech that Coubertin proposed the establishment of the Olympic Games to stress the educational value of sport in general and to serve as a platform for strengthening transnational understanding in particular. In his speech in 1892, he laid the educational foundations of the Olympic idea. These foundations continue to uphold the uniqueness of the Olympic Movement and its mission to build a better world through sport. This is the historical relevance of the speech.

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³⁴ Also referred to as either World Fairs or the Universal Expositions.

Conférence faite à la Sorbonne
au Jubilé de l'U.S.T.S.A. Nov. 1892

Les expériences pluriennes ont dans le monde moderne
trois capitales : Berlin, Stockholm et Londres, — d'où
sont sortis ~~les~~ pour rayonner ensuite sur d'autres
régions trois systèmes basés sur des idées bien
connues du monde antique, ^{incomplètement} ~~incomplètement~~
admirées par le moyen-âge et la renaissance et
~~la guerre~~ que trois mots résument : la guerre,
l'hygiène, le sport. Je voudrais ^{en} préciser très
rapidement les traits caractéristiques, indiquer leur
marche à travers le ~~présent siècle~~ temps présent
et vous désire enfin la part de la France dans ce
grand mouvement qu'on si a si justement
nommé : la renaissance physique.

I

Le siècle qui ^{debuta si tristement et qui} s'achève ~~est~~ ^{est} dans une paix troublée et
incertaine et dont ~~les~~ ^{le} début fut ~~marqué~~ ^{marqué} par ~~des~~
~~événements~~ ^{tristement} succédait à un siècle de grande
activité intellectuelle et de véritable inertie physique.
Il y aurait peut-être lieu de chercher dans ce contraste
les causes premières de certains de ces déséquilibres.
Ils sont tout nous souffrent ~~encore~~. Mais cela n'est
pas de notre domaine. Constatons seulement que
partout à ~~la~~ ^{la} fin du ~~XVIII~~ ^{XVIII} siècle,
les passions violentes, les jeux virils sont passés de
mode et que les hommes vont chercher ailleurs
~~des~~ distractions et le plaisir. L'Angleterre elle-même
présente sous ce rapport un aspect bien fait pour
surprendre. Ce n'est plus l'Angleterre des Tudors ~~qui~~
vivait dans le plein air et en goûtait toutes les
ivresses, et ce n'est pas encore l'Angleterre de Thomas
Arnold et des créateurs de l'éducation athlétique.
C'est un ^{peuple} indécis ~~chez~~ lequel des brutalités
natives ~~étaient~~ ^{implent} une sorte d'amollissement ~~étrange~~
qui pourrait bien être la préface de la décadence. ~~Il~~
Napoléon n'allait venir pour rendre à la consolider
la grande Bretagne, comme le vent du nord arde un
désert. En France, les passions ~~se~~ sont dévotées, on
y échange des serments, mais on n'y force plus.
Le temps est loin où le sire de Gouberville possédait
~~ses~~ ballons, sous les plâtres du Chteau, les deux arches
après midi.

Document 10: The Olympic Manifesto (page 1). Speech from Coubertin on the re-establishment of the Olympic Games. Original manuscript of the Conference at the Sorbonne for the jubilee of the USFSA, Paris, 25 November 1892. IOC Historical Archives.

2.4. The Congress on the Re-Establishment of the Modern Olympic Games

Dietrich Quanz & Stephan Wassong

Pierre de Coubertin organised an international congress on physical education in Paris as early as 1889. Five years later, he staged another international congress, considered to be the starting point of the Olympic Movement. The official institutional body for the organisation of the International Congress of Paris for the Re-establishment of the Olympic Games was the Union des Sociétés Françaises de Sports Athlétiques (USFSA). In his organising efforts, Coubertin was supported by William M. Sloane, a professor at Princeton University, and Charles Herbert, then Honorary Secretary General of the Amateur Athletic Association (AAU) in England. In 1894, Sloane also became one of the founding members of the International Olympic Committee (IOC). Whereas Herbert spread information about the congress in England and throughout the Commonwealth, Sloane disseminated it on the two American continents. It was made clear right from the outset that the establishment of the modern Olympic Games should not be a mere copy of the ancient Olympic Games. However, references to the aura of the glorious ancient sport festival were thought to have contributed to support for the Olympic project.

The Congress was held in Paris at the Sorbonne from the 16th to the 24th of June 1894. The venerable university was chosen deliberately to lend academic weight to the theme of the Congress. Among the 2,000-odd participants, there were 58 French delegates from 24 sports organisations and 20 delegates from 8 countries. A group of students from the French branch of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) were also thought to have attended. The list of 50 honorary members was comprised of eminent personalities. Although Coubertin was aware that almost all of them would be unable to attend the Congress or would be present only for a few hours, he put down their names. His intention was to stress that the project of re-establishing the Olympic Games was linked not only to sport itself, but also to its impact on education, culture, society and transnational understanding. The individual profiles of the honorary members as educators, progressive-minded politicians, diplomats, scientists and members of the peace movement supported Coubertin's assumption.

Thematic focal points included consideration of the reintroduction of the Olympic Games and regulations for the admission of amateurs to the Olympic competition. A separate commission was formed for each subject area. The joint consultation of both commissions took place on the last day of the Congress. It was decided to re-establish the Olympic Games, hold the first edition in Athens in 1896 and found the IOC with 15 members from 12 different nations (Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Bohemia, France, Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, Italy, New Zealand, Russia, Sweden and the United States of America). The majority of the members of the newly founded IOC were all active in the fields of education and physical education in their respective home countries. Other important decisions taken at the Congress, which later became known as the first Olympic Congress, were related to the appointment of the Greek writer Demetrius Vikelas as the first President of the IOC and agreements on a set of amateur rules.

The latter had to be established because they represented a 'sine qua non' in terms of planning the significance of the Olympic project. The role of sport as an educational tool firmly anchored in society through the Olympic Games was a central concern. For Coubertin and other congress delegates, this could be realised only through the acceptance of amateur rules, enabling Olympic sport to maintain its integrity and thus its educational appeal. This appeared to be contrary to professionalism, geared only towards financial profit. Coubertin emphasised this in his article entitled *Le rétablissement des Jeux Olympiques*, published only a few days prior to the congress, probably as a gentle reminder to all of the delegates.

Through the internationalisation of the Olympic Games, Coubertin saw the possibility of creating a platform for the intercultural exchange of experiences between athletes and spectators with a view to

reducing national prejudices. Although this vision was mentioned in the gala speech delivered by the highly regarded senator Baron de Courcel on the occasion of the opening ceremony of the Congress, no further discussions on this topic were planned by Coubertin. However, one should not erroneously assume from this that he did not give priority to viewing the Olympic Games as a potential tool for peace education right from the outset.

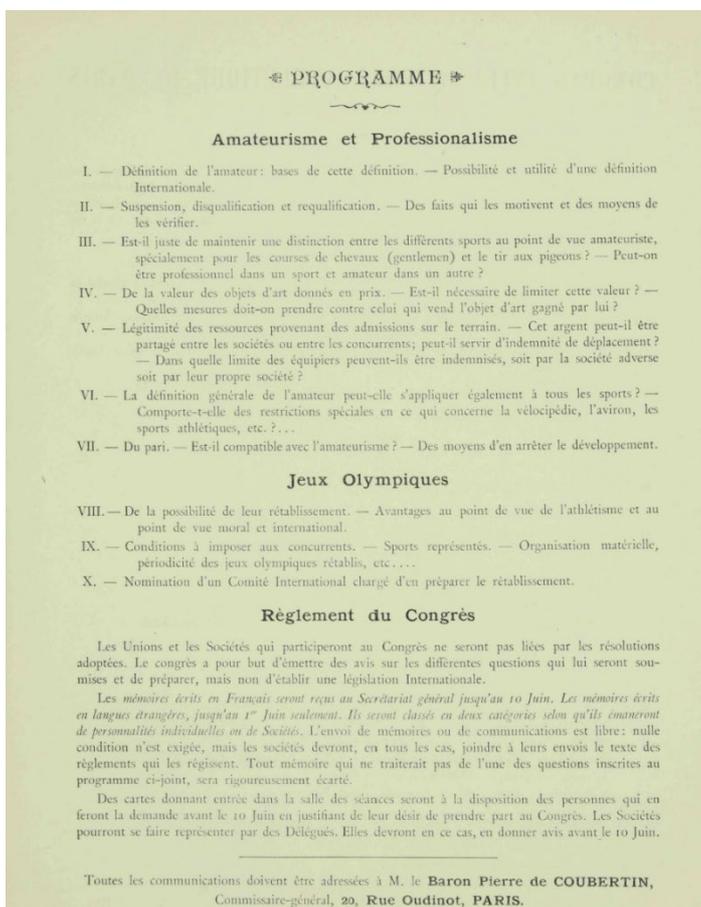
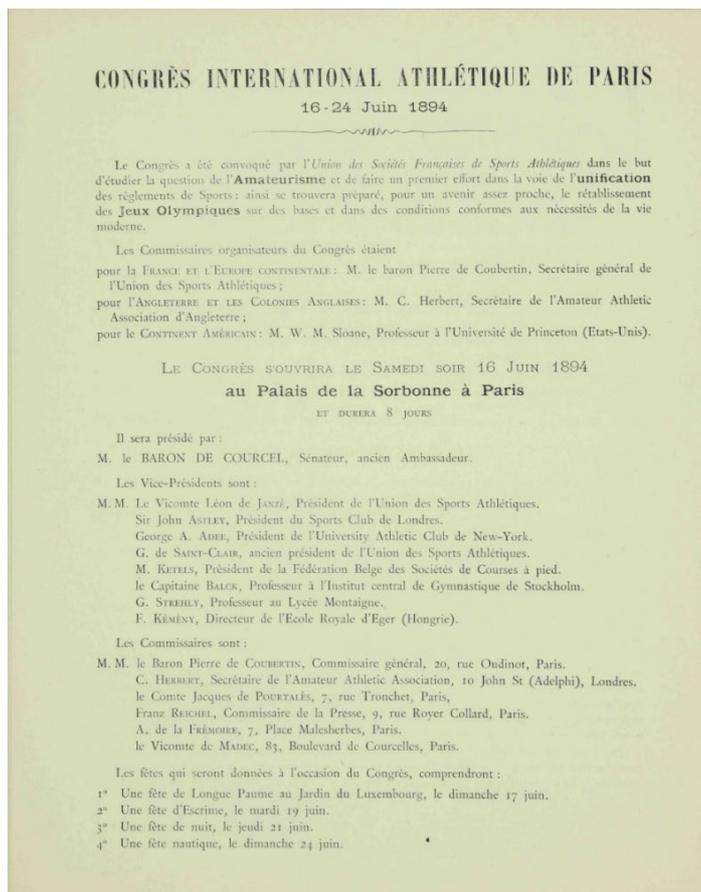
Twelve of the 50 names listed as honorary members of the Congress were active supporters of the societal peace movement whose institutionalisation on the international level began in 1889 with the organisation of the first World Peace Congress in Paris. Although the majority of those people were not present at the 1894 International Congress of Paris for the Re-establishment of the Olympic Games, Coubertin already had personal contact with leading members of the peace movement and analysed their educational thought. This is particularly relevant in relation to Coubertin's knowledge of the decisions of the 1891 Universal Peace Conference in Rome. There, the representatives of the different nations had been encouraged to establish personal contacts in order to initiate the process of getting to know and consequently respect one another. Coubertin took up that idea, and it became a central motivation for him to promote international contacts through sport. He believed that the re-introduction of the Olympic Games in a modern form as a world festival of sport should serve as a means of realising this objective in a dignified manner. Coubertin exchanged thoughts on this with Sloane as early as 1889 in Paris, and then on joint study trips to the USA in 1889 and 1893. Thus, he determined that Sloane should be assigned not only an organisational function in the implementation of the 1894 Congress, but also a content-related role that had to be developed.

In terms of organisational aspects, the social programme of the Congress in 1894 was cleverly arranged by Coubertin. It contributed to the successful running of the congress with a large number of events. These included fireworks, torch races, banquets, sporting competitions and demonstrations of sporting disciplines. Coubertin thought it highly appropriate that the first recital of the famous Hymn to Apollo be performed at the opening ceremony of the Congress. The hymn itself had been discovered during excavation work in Delphi in 1893. It was transcribed by Théodore Reinach and set to music by Gabriel Fauré. The performance with 12 choristers from the opera was to be the glorious highlight of the opening ceremony and encourage the delegates to discuss the re-establishment of the Olympic Games positively. Coubertin noted the following:

"The opening meeting on Sat. June 16th had an audience of 2000 people. At its conclusion the Delphic Hymn to Apollo was sung. The Congress, opened under such happy auspices, brought forward its most characteristic project. The idea of the revival of the Olympic Games came triumphantly to the front" (Coubertin 1897, 7-8.).

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Document 11: Programme and rules of the International Congress of Paris for the Re-establishment of the Olympic Games, June 1894. IOC Historical Archives.

2.5. The Difficult Path Towards the Organisation of the Olympic Games Athens 1896

Konstantinos Georgiadis

Through his historical references to the revival of the Olympic Games, Pierre de Coubertin noted that the conditions had matured for his "grandiose and beneficent work: the re-establishment of the Olympic Games" (Coubertin 1892 [1994], 79). The industrial revolution and scientific inventions had improved the quality of citizens' lives, reduced travel time and facilitated communication between individuals and peoples.

The peace movement and the creation of the International Peace Bureau in 1891 and philhellenism as an ideological movement, the founding of the Red Cross (1863) and the Esperanto Movement (1887), the start of the Universal Expositions (1851), and the excavations at Olympia and Delphi, and their impact on the press of the time, are important factors that guided Coubertin's vision for the revival of the Olympic Games.

Coubertin travelled to England and the United States. Through his travels, he sensed and realised the need to create common sports components and rules as a basis for international sports exchanges. On the 25th of November 1892, during the festivities to mark the anniversary of the Union des Sociétés Françaises de Sports Athlétiques (USFSA), he publicly voiced his idea of bringing back the Olympic Games.

A year later (1893), he met with Professor William Sloane (Princeton University) and Charles Herbert (Amateur Athletic Association England) and implemented the proposal of the USFSA: the organisation of an International Congress of Paris for the Re-establishment of the Olympic Games in 1894.

The Congress took place in 1894. In the final programme it was named Olympic Congress – the proceedings started on the 16th of June and concluded on the 23rd of June. The Panhellenic Gymnastic Club was represented at the Congress by the author Demetrios Vikelas. Coubertin gained a valuable friend and colleague in Vikelas, who resided permanently in Paris.

On the last day of the Congress, Vikelas took the floor at the plenary session, and expressed the wish for the First International Olympic Games to be held in Athens – a proposal that Coubertin had supported in the Commission for the Revival of the Olympic Games. Unanimously, the plenary session of the Congress accepted the two proposals: the re-establishment of the Olympic Games and the choice of Athens for the first edition.

Vikelas showed extraordinary commitment to the revival because he believed that he was living in a period which would be historic for his country. Coubertin set out for Greece and, the day his ship arrived in Piraeus, the Greek Government and the Zappas Olympia & Bequest Committee, which had not made their positions known until that time, announced in the press that they had decided not to support the staging of the Games because they could not meet the obligations it would engender.

Coubertin's visit got the initial intended results, making Prime Minister Charilaos Trikoupis more conciliatory and winning the favour of Crown Prince Constantine. Coubertin then focused on public opinion once more. On the 16th of November 1894, he gave a speech in the lecture hall of the Parnassos Literary Society to an audience of 700 to 800 people from all social classes of Athens, analysing the concept of the revival of the Olympic Games. He stated the perspective of the new Movement. When he mentioned the choice of Athens as the city to host the first revived Games, Coubertin attributed historical but also sentimental reasons to the decision. He expressed his own feelings but also, since he knew he was addressing Athenians, he said: "The honor of engaging in the struggle and the hope of being crowned victor at Athens, at the foot of the Acropolis, [...] What other festival could be worth that?" (Coubertin 1894 [2000], 538).

From the beginning, the Crown Prince had been well disposed towards the concept of the Games' revival and holding them in Athens. Moreover, after many meetings with Coubertin, three days after the speech at Parnassos, he agreed to become President of the Committee of Support for the First International Olympic Games.

As soon as Crown Prince accepted the presidency, he assigned to Coubertin the role of chair for its first meeting. It was on the 24th of November 1894 that 29 invitees, who were deemed to be members of the Committee, met at the Zappeion Hall for the first time. Coubertin set out to the assembly his programme for the first edition of the Olympic Games, and it was accepted unanimously.

The organisers' idea for the opening of the Olympic Games to take place on Easter Sunday 1896 was to combine the celebration of the revival of the Games with the celebrations of the 75th anniversary of the independence of Greece.

Overall, the Games were funded entirely by contributions. George Averoff, a benefactor from Alexandria, Egypt, donated 920,000 gold drachmas for the restoration of the stadium in full, using Pentelic marble, and later, in his will, a tenth of his fortune for the completion of the work. The Panathenaic Stadium, the velodrome, the shooting range and the lawn tennis courts constituted the first Olympic architecture, and the first major sports facilities in Athens.

Coubertin viewed the Games through the prism of the internationalisation of sport. The birth of an institution and the development of its structures were expected to create many reactions and tensions among those involved. The first reactions came from England regarding the rules that would apply, while Germany's participation in the Games created greater problems, especially as the major German clubs had not been invited to the Congress in Paris in 1894.

An article by Olympic Games 1896 director Konstantinos Manos argued that all clubs that included paid gymnasts in their ranks should be excluded from the Games. The issue of amateurism and professionalism was shaking the Olympic Movement for the first time. Finally, thanks to Coubertin's delicate handling of the situation and after consulting the UFSA, the issue was overcome, at least for this edition.

The Games began with the opening ceremony and the reception of King George, who declared the opening of the Games in the crowded Panathenaic Stadium. The Olympic anthem, with lyrics by Kostis Palamas and music by Spyros Samaras, was performed for the first time by a large choir accompanied by a philharmonic orchestra, made up of musicians from all over the country.

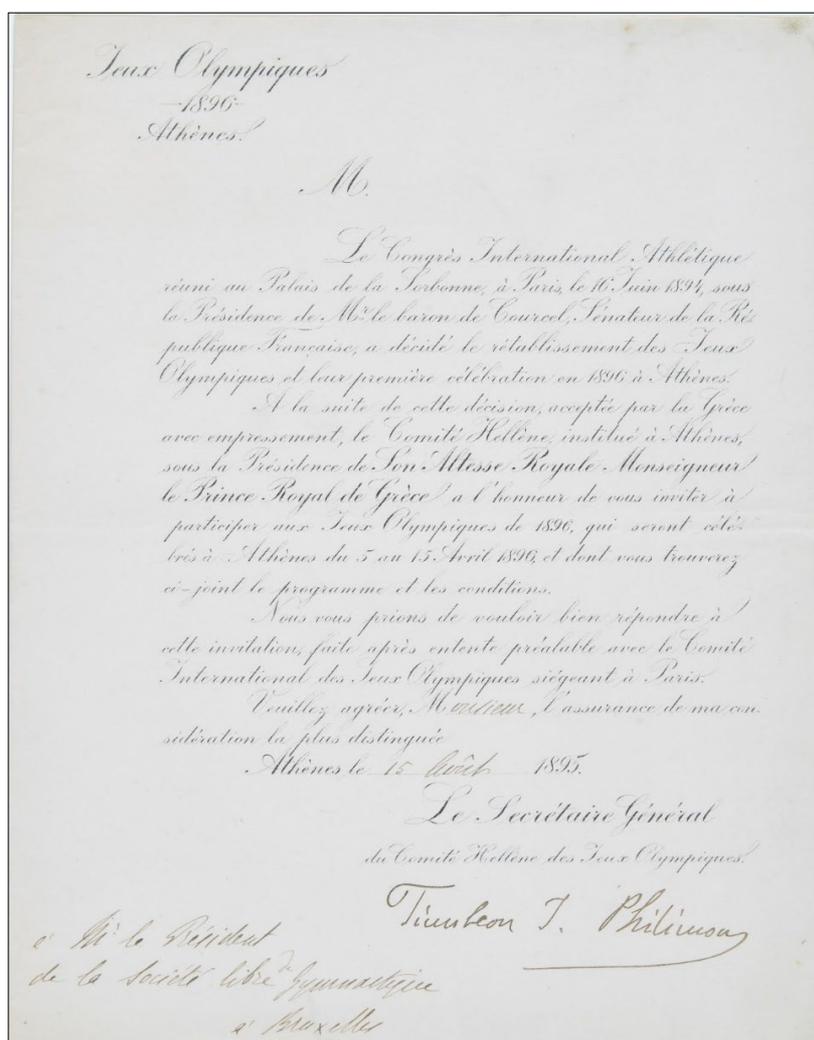
Vikelas's personal friend, the Hellenist Michel Bréal, suggested that there should be a marathon and expressed his desire to present a cup as a prize. Spyros Louis was the winner. The 100,000 spectators who had gathered in the stadium and the surrounding hills welcomed with cries of excitement the winner, who in the final metres to the finish was accompanied by the two Greek princes, who ran along with him.

The Organising Committee managed to coordinate the Games within a relatively short space of time. Around 160 Greek and 81 foreign athletes from 14 countries took part according to Manos, and 43 events were held. Established Greek artists Nikolaos Gyzis and Nikephoros Lytras had been responsible for the diploma and the gilded commemorative medallion respectively, while French sculptor Jules Clément Chaplain had crafted the silver and bronze medals that were given to the athletes who finished in first and second place, respectively.

It can be argued that, thanks to Coubertin, the idea of excluding the working class from the Olympic Games was unanimously rejected, the Games were held every four years under the name Olympic Games, and common components in the concept of amateurism were found.

This first celebration of the modern Olympic Games was a gathering of athletes based on national representation. In a global political system, the creation of the nation-state favoured the establishment of the institution of the Olympic Games as a benevolent force of mutual understanding, peace and concord between peoples, as had been the case in ancient times between the city-states.

Coubertin would remain the driving force behind the effort to secure the Games' lasting ignition and stabilisation for the next 30 years. After the Olympic Games 1896, he took up the presidency of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), as had been decided in 1894, in order for the Games to be hosted in Paris.



Document 12: Official invitation to the Athens 1896 Olympic Games, 15 August 1895. IOC Historical Archives.

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2.6. The Invention of the First Marathon Race

Bernard Maccario

On the 10th of April 1896, as the first Olympic Games to be held in modern history drew to a close, around twenty competitors lined up at the start of the marathon race. The new event was named after the Battle of Marathon in which the Greeks fought the Persians more than 20 centuries ago (490 BC). Beyond matters of pure sport, it was for cultural reasons that this race ended up being included on the Olympic programme.

On the face of it, there was no reason to include a long-distance running event in the first edition of the modern Games. There was no distance of this kind in the ancient Games, where the longest race, the *dolichos*, was no longer than 5,000 metres. What is more, at the end of the 19th century, long-distance races were the domain of professional athletes, and subject to betting, meaning they did not conform with the amateur code upon which the modern Olympic Games were founded.

The initiative was taken by Michel Bréal, Professor of Comparative Grammar at the Collège de France and a member of the Institut de France. A fervent Hellenist, he was also firmly civic-minded, particularly in relation to causes dear to Baron Pierre de Coubertin, namely education, for which he actively defended several reforms, and world peace. It is therefore hardly surprising that he was one of the guests at what became the International Congress of Paris for the Re-establishment of the Olympic Games, held at the Sorbonne from the 16th to the 23rd of June 1894. Nor that he was seated on the Baron's right at the banquet that closed the Congress.

In his letter to Coubertin dated 15 September 1894, Bréal refers to the "ancient flavour"³⁵ of a "Marathon race at the Pnyx" (Bréal 1894, 3)³⁶. A race that he proposed to endow with a silver cup to be awarded to the first runner to arrive in Athens from Marathon. He could have added 'if he does not die', in reference to Lucian of Samosata's account of the race of Pheidippides, the messenger who, at the end of the Battle of Marathon, reached Athens, at the cost of his life, to announce the victory of the hoplites led by Miltiades over the invading Persians.

Although the versions of Herodotus and then Plutarch provided other interpretations of the events, Lucian of Samosata's version, written six years after the Battle, has remained in posterity. Throughout the 19th century, it was a source of inspiration for many artists, such as Jean-Baptiste Corot, in 1834, with his sculpture *The Soldier of Marathon Announcing The Victory*; Luc-Olivier Merson, in 1869, with his painting *The Soldier of Marathon*, depicting Pheidippides in agony; and Robert Browning, one of the most famous English poets, who published a poem in 1879 entitled *Pheidippides*.

Presumably, all these influences led Bréal to choose this story and thus suggest the idea to have a race on this now legendary route, allowing us to compare the courage and stamina of young men at the end of the 19th century with that of the athletes of ancient times – could they achieve a similar feat? A challenge which, in 1896, would not have been taken lightly, and "was wildly ambitious for the day. It was enormous distance – between 42 and 44 kilometres – and likely to be considered unreasonable even by the technicians" (Coubertin 1932 [1997], 46).

Despite these initial reservations, Coubertin eventually agreed to create the event and – as a special dispensation – to permit a cup to be awarded to the winner in addition to the medal. With the exception of having the finish line on the Pnyx (the hill in Athens where the messenger is said to have made the announcement), which was replaced instead by the Panathenaic Stadium, Bréal's dream became a reality. The race lived up to his expectations: no other event whipped up the same level of excitement, which was amplified by the fact that it ended up being a huge triumph for the Greek athletes taking part. They finished in the top three places and the winner, Spyridon Louis, became a

³⁵ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

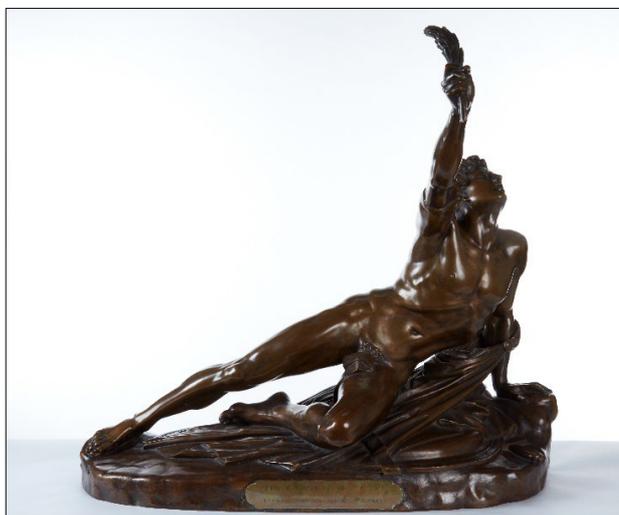
³⁶ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

legend in his own right, establishing a direct and special link with Hellenic antiquity. The spectacle of this victory gave rise in Coubertin to the lasting belief "that psychic forces play a much more active role in sport than is generally believed" (Coubertin 1932 [1997], 47).

After this initial celebration, through the Olympic Games that followed, the marathon would retain the significance that makes it the most historically, culturally and dramatically important Olympic event.



Picture 8: Athens 1896, view of the Panathenaic stadium for the men's marathon.



Picture 9: Challenge trophy given to the winner of the marathon at the first three editions of the Games. Olympic Museum Object Collections, Lausanne.

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3. Coubertin's IOC Presidency (1896-1925)

3.1. Coubertin and the IOC Presidency

Jean Durry

"I know that your work is inspired by a lofty idealism based on the noble ideas of Baron de Coubertin, your founder and first President"³⁷ (Haakon VII 1935, 8). With these words of tribute in 1935, at the opening of the 34th Session of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in Oslo, Haakon VII of Norway was royally wrong! Although he personified the Committee that he had led for no less than 29 years (1896-1925), and while he was unquestionably the instigator and soul of the Olympic Movement, Pierre de Coubertin did in fact have a predecessor.

During the initial Congress at the Sorbonne (16-23 June 1894), after obtaining approval for the creation of the IOC and the idea that the re-established Games should be held successively in all the capitals of the world, with "The presidency belongs by right to the country in which the next Olympic Games are to be held" (Comité International Olympique 1894, 1), Coubertin found himself outpaced. He had intended the first edition of the modern Games to be held in Paris on the threshold of the 20th century; but the general enthusiasm meant that no one wanted to wait any longer than 1896. Thus Coubertin proposed Athens, for which Greece's Demetrius Vikelas, who was attending the Congress, thanked him in a cordial letter in the evening of the 19th of June 1894.

Vikelas, a former businessman turned historian and man of letters, ipso facto became President of the International Committee for the Olympic Games, which held the first meeting of its few members at his apartment (21 Rue de Babylone in Paris) on the 24th of June, with Coubertin becoming General Secretary. Despite initially knowing nothing about sport, Vikelas devoted all his talent and energy to organising this first edition of the Games, which in the spring of 1896 would prove an unexpected success with the public. This encouraged Greece, supported by public opinion and the press, and with the backing of the German and American teams, to call for Athens to become the permanent host of the revived Games.

But barely a few hours after the Closing Ceremony on the 15th of April 1896, Coubertin, alone in his room at the Hotel Grande Bretagne, had the courage to send the King an 'open letter', of which he also sent copies to the international press, making his views clear from the start: "Sire, upon becoming President of the International Committee for the Olympic Games, I wish my first act to be an expression of gratitude" (Coubertin 1896, 67)³⁸. There was thus zero doubt in his mind that the next Games would be in Paris rather than Athens. And history proved him right.

With the third Games granted to the USA, originally Chicago, but then transferred to St Louis in Missouri, the new President should automatically have been American. However, in 1901, William Milligan Sloane declined this responsibility. To ensure 'desirable unity and cohesion', Coubertin agreed to continue as President, with a term of office, considered as being 10 years, lasting until 1907.

There was another principle on which Coubertin was intransigent: the absolute independence of the IOC, which he had built from the ground up, and whose members were co-opted, free from any interference and pressure, refusing any form of subsidy, and free from political powers or any kind of association. The grand master of the Olympic Movement, whose archives were kept in one of his trunks, then had his term of office renewed without demur for another 10 years (at the 1907 Session in The Hague).

One wonders how he managed to serve as President whilst continuing to pursue his many other activities. Not only did he oversee the running of the IOC, which had no secretariat; he also chaired the

³⁷ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

³⁸ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

Sessions, held annually as of 1904, and took detailed minutes of them. He edited and produced the *Olympic Review*, on a monthly basis as of 1906. In addition, he organised Congresses, in Le Havre in 1897 and Brussels in 1905; and Conferences in Paris, in 1906, and Lausanne in 1913, where, with little support from his colleagues, he strove to show that, above and beyond mere competition, sport and Olympism were of educational and cultural significance. With the 1912 Games in Stockholm in the glow of the endless summer light, and the Congress to mark the 20th anniversary of the reestablishment of the Games, in June 1914 in Paris, bringing together the 29 National Olympic Committees and the 10-or-so existing International Sports Federations, Coubertin might have had grounds for thinking that he had accomplished his life's work, for the most part funded from his own personal fortune. But on the 28th of June 1914 in Sarajevo...

When the First World War broke out, Coubertin was 51, and did his utmost to be called up for active service, but in vain. Even so, he regarded himself as a soldier, and divided his time between Paris and Lausanne, to where he unilaterally decided to move the IOC headquarters. This he did on the 10th of April 1915. But considering that the captain should not leave the Olympic ship, he strove to maintain links and cohesion. Although he asked Godefroy de Blonay to serve as interim President (the 1st of January 1916), he nonetheless quietly remained in control. On the 22nd of May 1917, Blonay informed him that a unanimous vote had renewed his presidential term for a third period of 10 years, but Blonay continued as interim President. A few weeks after the Armistice was signed on the 11th of November 1918, Coubertin's prerogatives were officially restored.

The success of the 25th anniversary of the Games' reestablishment (the 5th of April 1919, Lausanne), and the holding – against the odds – of the Games of the VII Olympiad in Antwerp in 1920, were the sign that the Olympic Movement had survived the Great War and was alive and well. But the times were changing. Between 1920 and 1923, no fewer than 32 new members joined the IOC; and of the 14 founding members who unconditionally supported him, only Sloane and Jiri Guth-Jarkovsky remained. For their part, Henri de Baillet-Latour, Blonay and Sigfrid Edström thought that the Committee should have an administration and a structured secretariat, criticising Coubertin's authoritarianism and omnipotence.

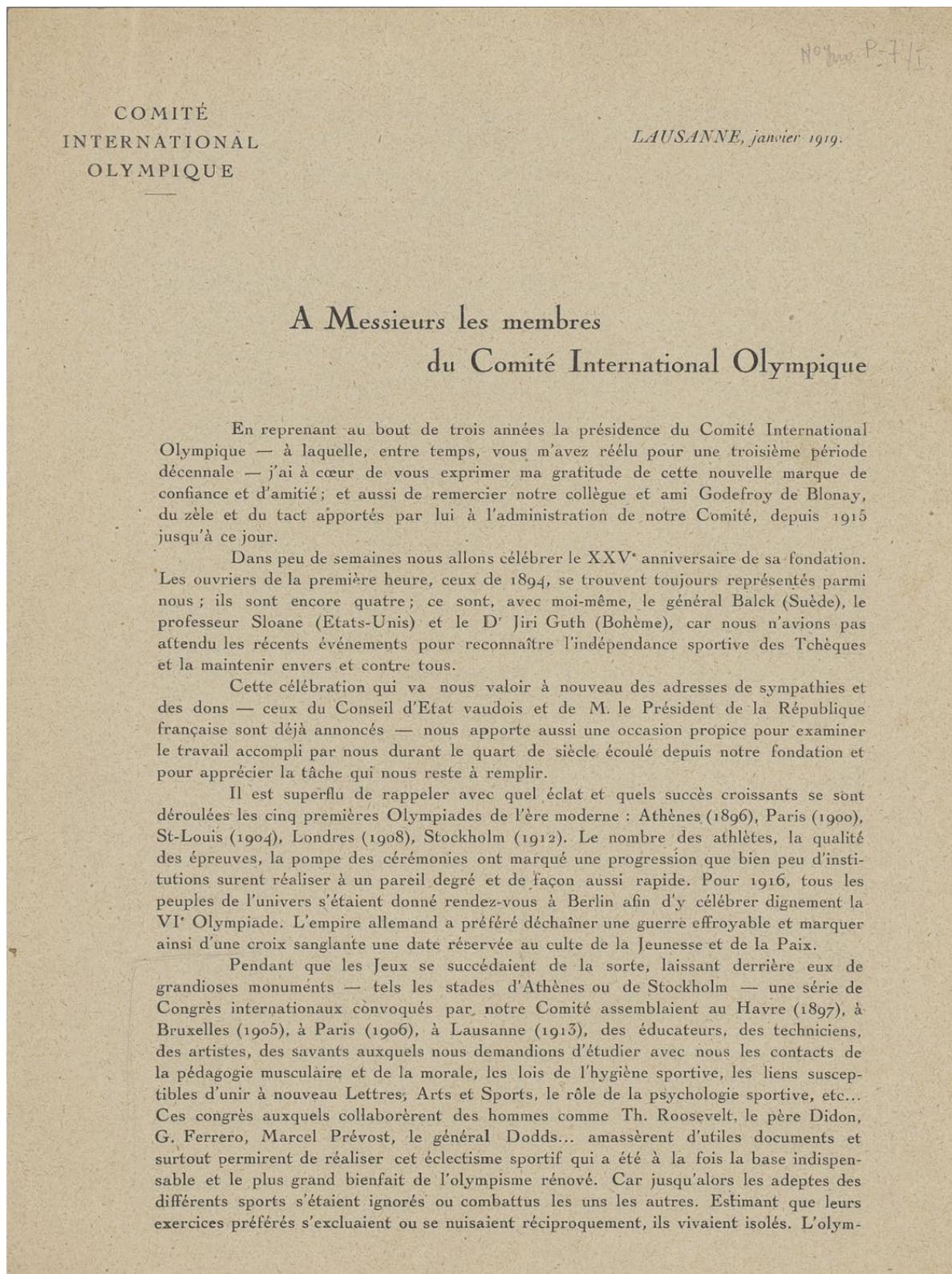
In his circular letter of the 12th of March 1921, which he later described as a "a coup d'État in all its splendour" (Coubertin 1932, 166)³⁹, to ensure that the 30th anniversary of the Games would be held in Paris in 1924, Coubertin linked this wish to the unexpected announcement of his forthcoming retirement. These Games of the VIII Olympiad would be his swansong.

On the 28th of May 1925, during the Session before the double Congress in Prague, Baillet-Latour became the third President of the International Olympic Committee, elected with a relative majority in the second round for a term of eight years. The postal votes also counted in the first round: Baillet-Latour had received 17 votes from the 65 IOC members; and in second place was –Coubertin, despite his having expressly stated that he was not a candidate, with 11 voters unable to countenance the idea that he could no longer lead the Olympic Movement.

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³⁹ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.



Document 13: Circular letter from Coubertin to the IOC members, January 1919 (page 1). IOC Historical Archives.

3.2. Coubertin's Olympic Congresses

Junko Tahara

The Olympic Congresses are defined in the *Olympic Charter* under Rule 4. Congresses are convened by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) President and bring together representatives of the constituents of the Olympic Movement. It has to be noted that Congresses have a consultative role only. At the time of the revival of the Olympic Games by Pierre de Coubertin, conferences on physical education and sport were rare in France and in many European countries. Coubertin had grand dreams and devoted all his time and effort to finally bringing about the first Olympic Games of the modern era, which took place in Athens, Greece, in 1896. However, Coubertin had a much broader vision about the real purpose of the revival of the Games. In his view, the goal and the task of the IOC was not only to organise the Olympic Games but also, and most importantly, to contribute to the development of mankind through sport. An Olympic Congress was the most suitable forum for the discussion and promotion of his goals. Coubertin wrote in general of the rationale for holding Congresses: "The International Committee has, of course, organised congresses, not at regularly scheduled dates, but only when there were serious grounds to justify such initiatives. According to the statutes, the Committee is [...] to hold or organise any and all exhibitions and, in general, to take any appropriate steps to orient modern athleticism in desirable directions. These are the reasons why the Congresses of 1897, 1905, 1906, and 1913 were held" (Coubertin 1913 [2000], 451).

In this sense, the Olympic Congress, together with the Olympic Games, was another landmark that shaped the Olympic Movement, and it continues to do so to the present day. The first Olympic Congresses dealt with topics which were important for the development of the Olympic Games and promotion of the educational value of sport. Distinguished experts from various sciences, as well as sports officials, educators, technicians, artists, academics and celebrities, were invited to discuss current issues and the future of the Olympic Movement. During the years of his presidency (1896-1925), Coubertin organised eight Olympic Congresses. The purpose of these Congresses was to elucidate sport in the fields of education and science and to establish the connection between body and spirit, including links with literature and the arts. The latter, concentrated on the operations at the Games, such as eligibility and the rules for participation. Each Congress was a means for him to take the pulse of the Movement and push forward some of his ideas. The following are the main topics of each Congress.

- **The First Olympic Congress** (1894, Paris). The First Olympic Congress was entitled the 'International Congress of Paris for the Re-establishment of the Olympic Games. Two fundamental decisions were made at this Congress: to organise the first Olympic Games of the modern era in Athens in 1896 and to create an International Committee for the Olympic Games. Coubertin mentions this Congress as an IOC meeting in the first *Olympic Charter* published in 1908. However, the *Olympic Charter* of 1923 refers to this meeting as the first IOC Congress.

- **The Second Olympic Congress** (1897, Le Havre). The second Congress had two main topics: hygiene and education, and the practice of sport. Because of the low number of foreign participants, most of the discussion covered the promotion of physical education and sport in French schools. Coubertin wrote of his plans for the Congress: "To take that direction immediately after the Games was to remind people of the intellectual and philosophical character of my idea, and to place the role of the IOC, right from the start, very much above that of a simple sports association" (Coubertin 1931 [1997], 51-52).

Coubertin wrote of the outcome of the Congress: "As for the results that I had hoped to achieve, I was completely successful. The members of the international Committee had gathered in the right conditions to give them a feeling for their stability and usefulness, at the same time" (Coubertin 1909 [2000], 368).

- **The Third Olympic Congress** - 'International Congress of Sport and Physical Education' (1905, Brussels). This Congress enjoyed large international participation and followed up on the content of the previous Congress, thus discussing the organisation of sporting activities in different schools and for all social groups.

- **The Fourth Olympic Congress** – 'Consultative Conference' (1906, Paris). The fourth Olympic Congress introduced art and literature to the modern Olympic Games and regional athletic competitions. It was resolved to propose to the IOC to add to the Olympic Games contests in five categories: architecture, sculpture, painting, literature, and music. They would take place on an equal footing with the sporting events. These artistic competitions were maintained from 1912 until the 1948 Games. Coubertin's focus on the potential to link the arts and sport were mentioned in his opening speech: "[...] our purpose is twofold. On the one hand, we must organise the dynamic involvement of literature and the arts in the restored Olympic Games. On the other hand, we must work toward incorporating them modestly and within reasonable limits in day-to-day athletic events at the local level. Gentlemen, let us not doubt our success. Nor let us doubt that our task will require much time and patience" (Coubertin 1906 [2000], 611).

- **The Fifth Olympic Congress** – 'Psychology and Physiology of Sports' (1913, Lausanne). The aim of this Congress was to elucidate physical exercise on a scientific basis, and to develop the concept of an educational psychology of sport from a variety of perspectives. In writing about this Congress, Coubertin grouped it with the Congresses that had already been held: "The Congress of Lausanne will, in a sense, hallow the longstanding efforts of the *Revue Olympique* to make of Olympism 'a whole system of physical, intellectual, moral and aesthetic education'. In so doing, it will continue and complete the work of the previous Congresses" (Coubertin 1913 [2000], 452).

- **The Sixth Olympic Congress** – 'Unification of Olympic Regulations and Conditions for Participation' (1914, Paris). The main topic of the sixth Congress was the organisation of the Olympic Games and the definition of individual responsibilities of the IOC, National Olympic Committees (NOCs) and International Federations (IFs). The 20th anniversary of the revival of the Olympic Games was celebrated along with the creation of the International Olympic Committee.



Picture 10: Sixth Olympic Congress held at the Sorbonne, Paris 1914.

- **The Seventh Olympic Congress** – 'Modification of the Olympic Programme and Conditions of Participation' (1921, Lausanne). This was the first Congress held after the First World War. Following the results of the previous Congress in Paris, the seventh Congress analysed amateurism, the organisation of the Olympic Games, the competition programme and the Olympic Winter Games.

- **The Eighth Olympic Congress** – 'First International Pedagogical Olympic Congress' (1925, Prague) and 'Technical Olympic Congress' (1925, Prague). Two types of meetings were organised: pedagogical and technical meetings. The former were intended to show that the Olympic Movement had other important areas beyond mere technical issues. These special aspects were particularly dear to Coubertin, and were included at his wish: the participation of women, the revival of the 'ancient gymnasium', the promotion of fair play and the spirit of chivalry, cooperation with universities, etc... The latter mainly discussed the new definition of amateurism and laid down rules. This was also Coubertin's moment of farewell to his IOC presidency. In his Olympic Memoirs, he underlines: "I felt that my role was over, I was aware of leaving my successor a privileged and unassailable situation" (Coubertin 1932 [2000], 220).

Coubertin attracted many prominent figures to his movement by having them lecture at important events. Father Henri Didon, known for his Olympic motto 'citius, altius, fortius', gave a lecture at the 2nd Congress and a 'communication' submitted by former US President Theodore Roosevelt was presented at the 5th Congress. The participation of these prominent personalities proved to the public that high-ranking figures were following with conviction the development of the modern Olympic Movement. It also proved that the Olympic Movement played a role far beyond that of a simple sports organisation.

And to impress intellectual circles not associated with sport, Coubertin courageously chose academic institutions as meeting places: the Congresses of 1894 and 1914 were held at the Sorbonne; the Advisory Conference of 1906 at the Comédie Française; in 1905 at the Academy of Sciences building in Brussels; and in 1913 in the Senate Hall of Lausanne University.

The IOC subsequently followed Coubertin's idea to convene Olympic Congresses to create a platform for discussion and dialogue with various target groups on issues affecting the Olympic Movement.



Document 14: Paris 1914, poster of the 20th anniversary of the re-establishment of the Olympic Games, 6th Olympic Congress. Olympic Museum Collections, Lausanne.

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3.3. Coubertin as an Advocate of Amateurism

Nelson Todt

"Here it was again – the same old question!" (Coubertin 1931 [2000], 653). This sentence by Pierre de Coubertin, published in his book *Olympic Memoirs* in 1931, refers to a theme that was a key element of modern Olympism for a long time: amateurism.

Coubertin mentioned on the subject of amateurism: "Personally, I wasn't particularly concerned. Today I can admit it; the question never really bothered me. It had served as a screen to convene the Congress designed to revive the Olympic Games" (Coubertin 1931 [2000], 653).

Despite this retrospective point of view, it is noteworthy that the topic of amateurism was important for the philosophy and the educational mission proposed by Coubertin. In April 1894, he wrote: "Sport can only produce good moral effects, can, indeed, maintain its existence, only as it is founded upon disinterestedness, loyalty and chivalric sentiment." (Coubertin 1894, 600)

Thus, it is possible to understand why the issue of amateurism was widely debated in the early days of the Olympic Movement. It is worth remembering that Coubertin chose two major themes for the last session of the International Congress of Paris for the Re-establishment of the Olympic Games at the Sorbonne on the 23rd of June 1894: one on Amateurism and the other on the Olympic Games, with the first certainly being what attracted athletic associations from all over the world to the event.

A quote from Coubertin reinforces this idea: "Personally, convinced as I am that amateurism is one of the first conditions of the progress and prosperity of sport, I have never ceased to work for it [...]" (Coubertin 1900, 808). He further submits that sport leads straight to this human ideal: the victory of the will.

In Coubertin's view, the ideal athlete was someone who competed for the love of the sport, not for financial gain or personal glory. Coubertin rejected professionalism in sport because he believed that it undermined the purity and integrity of athletic competition, prevented athletes from all backgrounds from competing on an equal footing, and detracted from the moral and social value of sport.

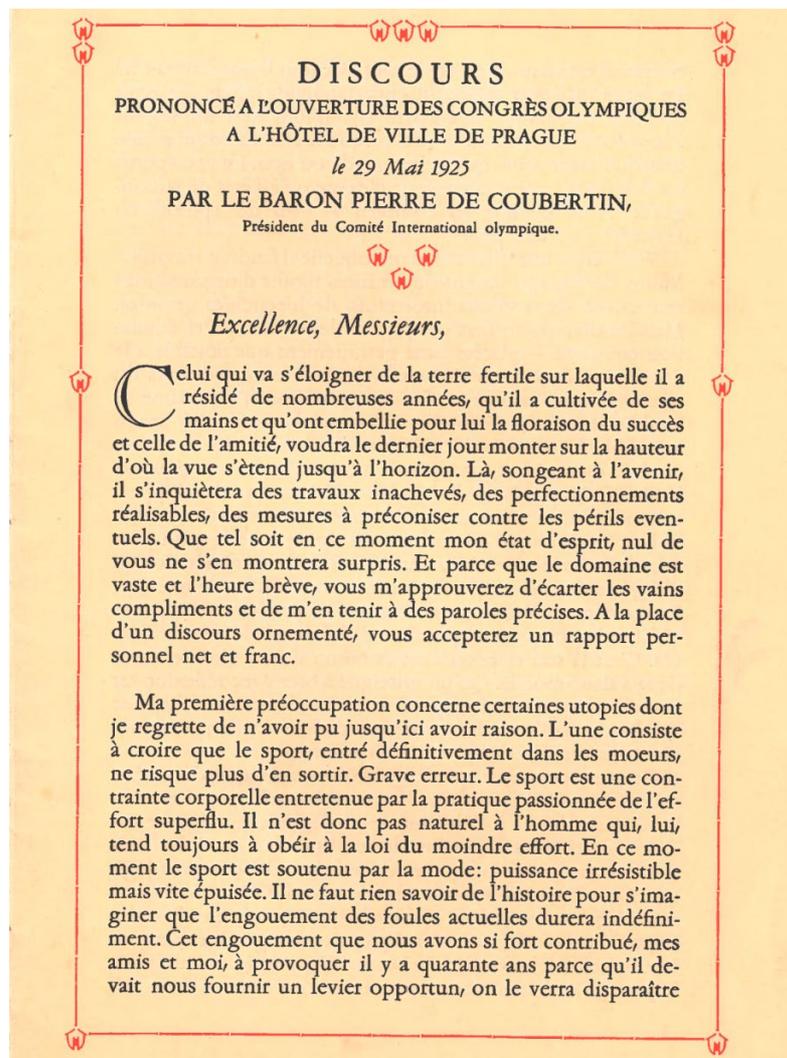
He wrote in the *Revue Athlétique*: "It is the word 'amateur', taken not in the sense of 'admirer', but in opposition to professional and serving to designate a man who engages in an exercise, in any work, for the pleasure and satisfaction that he finds therein" (Coubertin 1890, 388).

Ever ahead of his time, in *The North American Review* of 1900, Coubertin understood the great challenges that the subject would involve, considering: "As different countries have not the same definition of an amateur, one can imagine the difficulties that arise when it is proposed to include representatives of all nations in the same competition. In regard to this point, the conditions are not the same for all branches of sport" (Coubertin 1900, 808).

The issue of defining the term amateurism was also addressed in a speech delivered by Coubertin (1925) at the Olympic Congress in Prague in 1925. At the time, he felt that it would be more important to ensure compliance with the rules that were being disobeyed than to write a definition and that, to this end, sports federations were responsible for dealing with this.

The complexity of the issue of a definition has been widely discussed by Hart Cantelon (2007, 84), who points out: "A selected reading of relevant scholarship leads one to conclude that the concept 'amateurism' is highly dependent upon social/historical factors that contoured the amateur/professional debates in different time periods." The same author goes on to say: "It is also important to remember that conflicting and/or oppositional views of the world make problematic any message that implies universality."

Following the Olympic Games in Berlin, towards the end of his life, Coubertin granted an interview to André Lang for the 27th of August 1936 issue of *Le Journal*, stating: "[...] The Olympic idea must be allowed to spread freely, without fear of the passions or the excesses that produce the excitement and enthusiasm that have to be there. Trying to force athletics to fit into the confines of mandatory moderation is a utopian pursuit. As for the dispute about amateurism and the indignation some feel regarding the Olympic Oath, pardon me while I laugh! First, there is not and never has been any such thing as amateurism. Second, there is not a single word in the Oath, which I wrote very carefully, that refers to amateurism. These are childish disputes. Only the Olympic spirit matters. All the rest is of trifling importance" (Coubertin1936 [2000], 521).



Document 15: Opening speech of the 8th Olympic Congress in Prague, 29 May 1925 (extract). IOC Historical Archives.

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3.4. Challenges of the Early Olympic Games

Jörg Krieger

Pierre de Coubertin is most well-known for the establishment of the modern Olympic Games. Even though the event is based on its ancient predecessor, Coubertin had not intended to merely revive the ancient Olympic Games. Rather, he considered the modern Games would be a prestigious, international platform to spread and emphasize his educational intentions and expectations for elite sport. Coubertin wanted to educate the participating athletes on the social and moral character of the athletic role model, an experience that they could then pass on to society as a whole. According to Coubertin, the event should be a festive occasion and a celebration of the athletes' sporting excellence in a four-year Olympic cycle. However, the execution of the first editions of his Olympic project proved to be immensely challenging.

Organisational challenges, mainly in the form of economic issues, shaped the preparation phase for the inaugural edition of the Games, held in Athens in 1896. Together with the first IOC President Dimetrius Vikelas, Coubertin successfully campaigned for financial support from the Greek royal family and private individuals to keep the Olympic project alive. For example, the Greek businessman Georgios Averoff provided a generous donation for the refurbishment of the Panatheniac Stadium to provide a fitting location reflecting the Games' ancient heritage. Coubertin also ensured the integration of ceremonial events, such as the closing ceremony that integrated the awarding of medals. The participation of 241 athletes from 14 nations must also be considered a success for Coubertin, who tirelessly lobbied international sport officials to send teams to Greece. After this edition, he rejected a Greek proposal to organise the event permanently in Athens. The international dimension was too essential for his educational intentions. Instead, he suggested that Greece could organise a series of quadrennial intermediate sport events in between the internationally organised Olympic Games.

Following the success of the first edition in 1896 in Athens, the Olympic Games entered a transformation process, but not in Coubertin's sense. His Olympic vision was barely recognizable at the second and third editions of the Games. The reason was their integration in World Exhibitions⁴⁰. Coubertin's original intention to link-up the Olympic Games Paris 1900 with the Paris Exhibition was to provide a larger platform for his Olympic project. However, the local French organisers were not keen on acting on Coubertin's behalf and thought a sporting event with ancient roots to be outdated. As a result, there was very little association between the sporting competitions and the Olympic Games. The events stretched from March to October 1900 and the characteristics of some of the events, such as the awarding of trophies (instead of medals), prize money (in fencing) and the first participation of women (in four sports) were in stark contrast to Coubertin's original intentions.

The Olympic Games 1904 had originally been awarded to Chicago (USA) but were moved to St. Louis (USA). The Organising Committee in St. Louis opted to stage the Olympic events in conjunction with the Louisiana Purchase Exhibition for financial reasons. Following the experience of Paris, Coubertin was not fond of associating Olympic Games with a World Exhibition again. As was the case for Paris, Coubertin criticized the missing festive character and the lack of recognition for the Olympic events. He did not travel to St. Louis for the Games and delegated the whole responsibility of the organisation to the local Committee. The competitions were again stretched over several months and mixed with other sport events in stark contrast to the sporting excellence Coubertin had intended to be on display at the Olympic Games. Thus, whilst the link with the Exhibition secured the preservation of the four-year Olympic rhythm and the continuation of the Games, the compromise coerced Coubertin's event into a secondary role.

The Olympic Games transformed again after 1904. The next milestone in the early Olympic Games' history were the 1906 Athens Intercalated Games, which Coubertin again did not attend. However, it

⁴⁰ Also referred to as either World Fairs or the Universal Expositions.

was here that his ideas came to the fore again. The sport competitions took centre stage, the Games were the most international to date, and the Greek organisers succeeded in implementing ceremonial elements. For the first time, the Western press reports referred extensively to an 'Olympic' event and therewith contributed to rising global awareness of the Olympic Games even though Coubertin in his writings refused to acknowledge them as such.

London (Great Britain) stepped in as host of the Olympic Games 1908 after a withdrawal of Rome (Italy) and for the third time the organisers merged the Games with a World Exhibition. Even though this again meant a months-long stretch for the sporting competitions, the Games stand for the slowly beginning consolidation phase of the Olympic Games since the organisers made the sport events – other than in 1904 and 1908 – the feature attraction. With athletes from 22 participating countries, the event also took a major step towards internationalisation. Disputes on rules and officiating disrupted the harmonious sporting competitions, but Coubertin was satisfied that his international Olympic Games' concept was recognisable at last.

It was at the Olympic Games Stockholm 1912, the last before an eight-year break due to the First World War, at which the public witnessed for the first time an autonomously and very-well organised sport event. This edition was more compact, with fewer sports, and held within two weeks, with an Olympic stadium as the site for most events. Teams of international judges ensured fewer disputes between a record 28 participating countries, as in the Coubertin's sense of the competitions displaying a brotherhood of nations. Coubertin was in constant exchange with the Swedish Organising Committee to provide input but also feedback on proposals. It was in Stockholm that Coubertin saw his idea to include art competitions realised – an attempt to merge 'body and mind' at the Olympic Games to stimulate further educational experiences. He also pushed for the introduction of the modern pentathlon as a discipline to reflect the ideal, complete athlete. Finally, the Olympic Games began to closely resemble Coubertin's vision for the Olympic Games.

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3.5. Olympism After the First World War

François Félix

Olympism's contribution to the emergence of a new world order

The Great War was not yet over, and Pierre de Coubertin was already trying to get the International Olympic Committee (IOC) back on its feet. In a letter to Henri de Baillet-Latour on 27 February 1919, he suggested organising "a real wartime Olympics, marked by serious joy, speed and a calm will" (Coubertin 1919a, 8)⁴¹ in Antwerp. However, in addition to the Russian Revolution, the partition of the Ottoman Empire and the emergence of a global influenza pandemic, the sporting order was shaken by the emergence of a new sporting diplomacy. What's more, as experienced by soldiers returning to civilian life, society had changed: gender roles, in particular, had changed, as many women had taken up work outside the home.

Signed on the 28th of June 1919, the Treaty of Versailles redrew the map of Europe: new countries were created, which had to be integrated into the community of nations and therefore into the IOC. In the *Tribune de Genève* on the 8th of December 1919, Coubertin outlined solutions adapted to the new post-war realities: "to go beyond defending the interests of a social class and promote an ideal of justice" (Coubertin 1919b, 5)⁴². On the 10th of January 1920, the League of Nations was founded in Geneva. Its aim was to achieve universal peace through the parliamentary management of world affairs. On the 16th of January 1920, the League's council held its first meeting at the Quai d'Orsay in Paris, under the chairmanship of Léon Bourgeois, who went on to win the Nobel Peace Prize in December of the same year. It was with particular mistrust that Coubertin followed the emergence of this new institution, especially as "A French politician and a French journalist were waging a fruitless campaign to hand over the Games to the League of Nations, which had only just come into being and had not yet found its feet." (Coubertin 1931 [1997], 185). In a letter dated from the 15th of November 1920, Coubertin nevertheless welcomed the creation of the League in a letter to the President of its Assembly, Paul Hymans: "The IOC cannot allow a woman it can rightly call its big sister to settle in its immediate vicinity without offering her its tributes and best wishes" (Coubertin 1920, 1)⁴³.

The VII Olympiad (Antwerp, 1920)

During the Opening Ceremony, the Olympic flag that had been created by Coubertin was raised in the Olympic Stadium. Similarly, the Olympic oath was taken for the very first time by an athlete on behalf of all competitors. Finally, as symbols of peace, doves were released into the sky over Antwerp. And so, from the 14th of August to 12th of September 1920, the first post-war Games were held in Antwerp, Belgium. German, Austrian, Bulgarian, Hungarian and Turkish athletes were excluded; however, 29 nations were represented – a new record. The joint refusal of the IOC and the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) to include women's athletics events prompted the young Fédération des Sociétés Féminines Sportives de France, led by Alice Milliat, to organise the first Women's World Games in 1922. As IAAF President, Johannes Sigfrid Edström ensured that, after the Antwerp Games, the Fédération Sportive Féminine Internationale would gradually move towards reconciliation with the IOC.

After the First World War, physical activity and sport enjoyed an international boom, largely due to the increase in available leisure time. This gradual democratisation of sport gave rise to social demands for equal access to competitions. This led to a proliferation of national federations on different continents, as well as the accelerated development of International Federations (IFs). In 1921, the IFs' demands led to a division of roles between them and the IOC: as the umbrella organisation for world sport, the IOC ensured the continued existence of the Olympic Games, while the International Federations had the power to define the nature of the competitions themselves.

⁴¹ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

⁴² Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

⁴³ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

At a time when a new world sporting order was emerging, Coubertin asked himself the following question in 1923: *Où va l'Europe ? [Where is Europe heading?]* He expressed some concern about Europe's decline in relation to other continents: "Finland, Poland and Romania are now the border states of Europe. One day, that barrier will fall. What will we find behind it? A piece of Europe to be re-annexed, or the irreducible Asia, as represented by its permanent outposts?" (Coubertin 1923, 18)⁴⁴. In 1900, Coubertin was already sensitive to the future of empires and nations in Europe, with a question mark over Russia, a "formidable unknown which may claim the Ruthenians as its legitimate sons" (Coubertin 1900, 5)⁴⁵.



Picture 11: Paris 1924, Opening Ceremony, Coubertin with the Prince of Wales, the count de Clary, the baron de Blonay and Sigfrid Edström.

⁴⁴ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

⁴⁵ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.



Picture 12: Paris 1924, postal card from the Olympic Games.

The VIII Olympiad (Paris, 1924)

When the Games of the VIII Olympiad opened in Chamonix as International Winter Sports Week on the 25th of January 1924, Coubertin had not yet seen the major significance of this new event. On the other hand, he wanted to make the Paris Games "The finest and most perfect that had ever been celebrated" (Coubertin 1931 [1997], 192). As Coubertin announced: "On the eve of the Games in Paris, the IOC would number 62 members and 45 countries. The 'small, older brother' of Lausanne would for the moment exceed in number the big youngster sister in Geneva" (Coubertin 1931 [1997], 203). While the IOC Session was held at the Palais du Louvre in Paris in June and July, the official opening of the Summer Olympic Games took place on the 5th of July at Colombes Stadium. Initially envisaged near the École Militaire on the Champ de Mars, the stadium was ultimately situated on the outskirts of Paris, following financial negotiations with Racing Club de France. Justinien Clary, the French Olympic Committee President, and Frantz Reichel, its Secretary General, were the organisers, while Marie-Charles Jean de Polignac was the grand organiser of a 'Cultural Olympiad'. A season of art at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées was organised and Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, a work symbolising peace and the coming together of nations, was to be played by a Dutch orchestra – a connection with the Games of the IX Olympiad, to be held in Amsterdam in 1928.

These were Coubertin's last Games as IOC President. They were an opportunity for him to appreciate "the protocol of the Olympic ceremonials was finally completed; I had constructed it little by little and in stages, so as not to take by surprise spectators and actors who might be ill-prepared or unreceptive" (Coubertin 1931 [1997], 216). Nonetheless, Coubertin regretted the reluctance of the public authorities to invest in an event for the world's youth, assembled for a time in Paris: "However, there is no point now in dwelling on sterile regrets" (Coubertin 1931 [1997], 212).

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3.6. Coubertin and the Olympic Winter Games

Christian Seychal

The creation of the Olympic Winter Games was a long crusade in the history of the Olympic Movement, in which Baron Pierre de Coubertin, the Olympic founding father, was both a person with strong positions, an influential referee, but also a fine diplomat who knew how to adapt himself to the constraints and pressures of his time.

From the re-establishment of the Olympic Games in Athens in 1896 until those of Paris in 1924, the idea of organising Winter Games was a destabilising element of the Olympic Movement which Coubertin had to face, mainly because of the position of the Scandinavian countries. Swedes, Norwegians and Finns were strongly opposed to these Winter Olympics, which could threaten the existence of their 'Nordic Games'. These were the largest international meeting of ice and snow until then; had been created in 1901 and were favourably reported by Coubertin in the *Olympic Review* who had called them 'Scandinavian Olympiad' and 'Boreal Olympiads' (Coubertin 1901, 17 and 23).

In the spirit of the reviver of the Games, with the exception of figure skating and ice hockey, winter sports were not 'stadium sports' according to his classical Hellenic culture, and for him the Nordic Games made it perfectly possible to measure the performance of competitors in 'cold' sports. However, in 1896, given the popularity of ice sports, skating was in theory included in the programme of the first edition of the modern Olympic Games in Greece, but was not retained at the end. The idea came from Viktor Gustaf Balck, a personal friend of Coubertin and President of the International Skating Union (ISU), one of the few International Sports Federations (IFs) prior to the revival of the modern Games. Balck, a Swede who was one of the first members of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), initially campaigned for the Winter Games in Stockholm for the year 1900, before being the main opponent due to the creation of the Nordic Games.

Coubertin's position was then decided. At the beginning of the 20th century, the Baron did not appreciate some winter sports, in particular luge, bobsleigh and skeleton, which he castigated: "The great inferiority of these snow sports [...] is that they are completely useless, with no useful application whatsoever" (Coubertin 1908, 13)⁴⁶ Coubertin relies on the way he perceived these sports at the time, as the amusement of young mountain citizens and the futile tourist leisure of the wealthy classes. But his position changed little by little with the constant evolution of winter sports and their growing popularity outside the Scandinavian countries.

After 1908, when figure skating made a remarkable debut in London, there was increasing demand for more winter sports in the Games. Coubertin, as a fine tactician, left the choice of optional sports to the organising committees as long as they had the necessary equipment. Figure skating thus appeared in London in 1908. But Sweden, which had just obtained the Games for Stockholm, used the absence of an ice rink as the reason not to include winter events in the 1912 Games in order to protect its Nordic Games and preserve their monopoly. Coubertin supported this: his position was both political and strategic. By giving in, he feared a split in the unity of a still very fragile Olympic Movement. In addition, he needed the support of Nordic countries to add modern pentathlon, decathlon and artistic events to the programme of the Games and thus complete his Olympic work.

The idea was eventually shelved. However, Coubertin had a major concern about establishing equality between each sport. This was his focus – of which the 'Alpine' nations supporting the Winter Games constantly reminded him. So, in Paris in 1914, another IOC congress added the sports of figure skating, ice hockey and skiing to the list of optional sports that could be organised. But the First World War postponed the deadline and, as a result, in Antwerp in 1920, figure skating re-appeared and ice hockey was staged for the first time.

⁴⁶ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the author.

By this time, Coubertin, still conscious of Scandinavian resistance, had shifted his opinion. Not only had the winter sports, he believed, developed in popularity, but they were also truly amateur and needed great athleticism. He felt that they were being diminished by exclusion from the Olympic Games, and that by bringing together more and more nations, it was essential to include them in the Olympic programme. The tide had turned!

In 1921, in Lausanne, again to spare the Nordic countries, the Baron, as a fine diplomat, suggested setting up a separate commission to study the Olympic Winter Games. The discussions were heated. But it was decided that if France was awarded the organisation of the 1924 Summer Games, it would have the right to organise an International Winter Sports Week, which would receive IOC patronage, but which would not be part of the Games. In 1921, having won the right to organise the Games of the VIII Olympiad in Paris, the French committee chose to organise the Winter Sports Week the following year, in the resort of Chamonix.

Coubertin realised that, for practical reasons, the Week could not be organised at the same time and in the same place as the Summer Games, starting with Amsterdam, which was elected to organise the Games in 1928. "Would the Dutch be expected, in 1928 to erect a range of mountains bought second hand or made specially for the occasion" he wrote in his *Memoirs* of the 1921 IOC Congress in Lausanne, Switzerland. "It is possible to manufacture artificial ice, but not snow, and even less mountain peaks" (Coubertin 1997 [1932], 188). The solution appeared to be a separate event which was somehow linked to its 'older brother', the Summer Games.

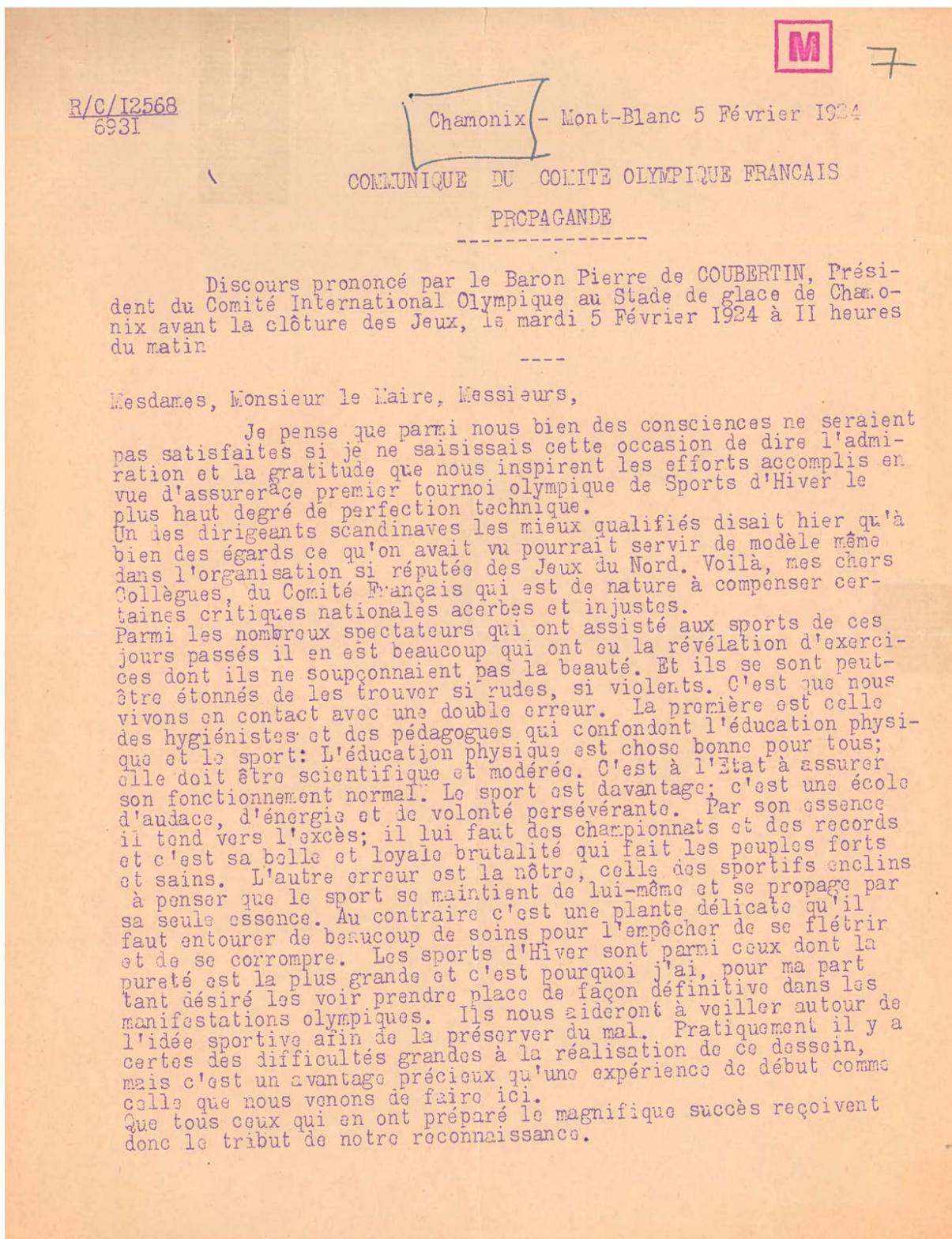
The Winter Games were finally founded in spite of the Scandinavians who ended by abandoning their objection and realising that in view of the roles of Switzerland and Canada in particular they could no longer lay claim to the practical monopoly they had exercised for so long" (Coubertin 1997 [1932], 188).

From the 25th of January to the 5th of February 1924, the first International Winter Sports Week in Chamonix was a great success, especially for the Scandinavian countries, which played the leading roles, causing Coubertin to say: "The Winter Games met with no resistance. Our Scandinavian colleagues who were not convinced and converted, had rallied to the idea without any reservation. I was very pleased, having always wanted to see this winter appendage duly legalised [...]" (Coubertin 1997 [1932], 220).

In 1925 during the IOC session in Prague, St Moritz in Switzerland was chosen to host the second edition of the Winter Games, and the IOC retrospectively attributed to the Chamonix Week the title of first Olympic Winter Games, for official recognition in Lisbon in 1926. The great history of the Olympic Winter Games could begin.

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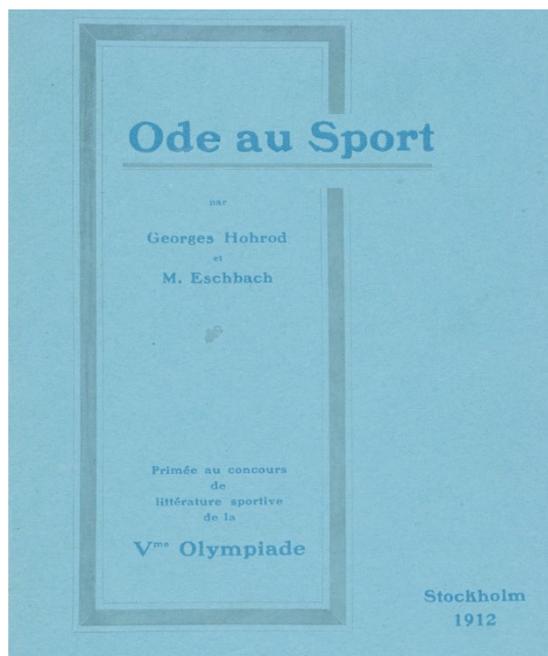
Document 16: Chamonix 1924, speech from Coubertin for the closing ceremony of the I Olympic Winter Games, 5 February 1924. IOC Historical Archives.

3.7. Coubertin and Olympic Art Competitions

Christian Wacker

At the beginning of the Olympic Movement, Pierre de Coubertin did not stress the aspect of art competitions explicitly as, in his opinion, the Olympic Games should firstly be revived and secondly shaped. In 1904, he explained that: "The time has come to take the next step, and to restore the Olympiad in its primal beauty. At the time of Olympia's splendour [...] the arts and literature, in harmonious combination with sport, made the Olympic Games great," (Coubertin 1904, 1)⁴⁷.

In circular letters Coubertin wrote in 1906, he informed the International Olympic Committee (IOC) about convening an advisory conference. He also called upon the members to name artists and writers, and set a theme to study to what extent art and literature could be included in the modern Olympic Games. More than half of the approximately 60 guests were artist from various genres, but they were mostly from France. International artists sent refusals or simply did not show up, and even the IOC was only present with five members. Most of the IOC members had been present in Athens in 1906, for the Intercalated Games, which commemorated the 1896 edition of the Olympic Games, and did not attend the Congress in Paris, considering it to be of lesser importance. This had not been the case for Coubertin, who had an excellent excuse not to travel to Athens and who ranked the Congress, as being as important as the International Congress of Paris for the Re-establishment of the Olympic Games that had been held in 1894. Coubertin himself called this advisory conference an Olympic Congress.



Document 17: Coubertin, *Ode au Sport*, 1912. IOC Historical Archives.

In his book about Olympic Congresses, Norbert Müller describes the decision of the Congress to introduce five arts competitions (in architecture, sculpturing, painting, literature, and music) at future Olympic Games as the most important. These competitions were to be organised on an equal footing with the sporting events and inspired by the spirit of sports. Artistically, the harmony of 'muscles and spirit' should be expressed, thus, the relationship between sport and art was a precondition of all entries. The Congress fulfilled its main purpose by initiating competitions in arts, which were part of the Olympic Games from 1912 to 1948. The first inclusion of arts competitions in 1912 in Stockholm turned out to be extremely difficult and it was left to the IOC and to Coubertin to advertise the events and determine the winners. Coubertin even participated under the pseudonym Georges Hohrod and M. Eschbach with the famous *Ode to Sport* and won the gold medal for literature. Each winner of the art competition received the same medals as winners for sports competitions and they had been included into the official Olympic programme.

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⁴⁷ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the author.

3.8. Introducing the Olympic Charter

Alexandre Miguel Mestre

Pierre de Coubertin studied law at the Catholic University of Paris, but as mentioned in the *Mémoires de Jeunesse*, this academic path was the result not of vocation but rather of family imposition (particularly by his parents), and the classes at the Faculty were a 'torture' for the Coubertin. This may be one of the reasons why the regulation of the Olympic Games was not a priority for him, and might explain why, in the entire rich heritage that Coubertin successfully revived, there was no 'Olympic Law'. Indeed, he was actually against a proliferation of rules, and on this point proclaimed as follows: "The Games must embrace the life of the world and not remain prisoners of utterly arbitrary regulations" (Coubertin 1936 [2000], 521).

This explains why the International Olympic Committee (IOC) was not created until 1896, and why for 14 years that body operated with very little by way of regulation and internal organisation, and a scanty framework of rules for dealing with such important issues as organising and putting on the Olympic Games. In fact, it was not until 1908 that rules of procedure were drafted. The IOC *Annuaire* lists the IOC members' names, and rules covering the IOC's mission, recruitment of members, meetings and administration. Neither the manner in which cities would be chosen to hold the Games nor the criteria for deciding whether a given sport was to be admitted into the Olympic programme were included (even taking into consideration the fact that this point was already defined in the decision taken at the International Congress of Paris for the Re-establishment of the Olympic Games that was held at the Sorbonne in 1894).

In 1924, the term 'Charter' was used for the first time, specifically in relationship to the section focused on the Olympic Games. Drawn up at the Paris Congress in 1914, and approved in 1921, the 'Charter of the Olympic Games' was included in 1924 as a sub-heading of the 'Statutes of the IOC'. It was not until long after Coubertin's time that the actual title 'Olympic Charter' was first used in 1978, for the overall document.

Notwithstanding this framework, the truth is that Coubertin ended up using the *Olympic Charter* as one of his trump cards, in particular to compel states to subject themselves to the primacy of 'Olympic Law' over national state legislation. On the controversial issue of amateurism, Coubertin even called attention to the fact that most countries had introduced "complicated legislation, full of compromises and contradictions" (Coubertin 1894 [2000], 301).

Nowadays the *Olympic Charter* is the Lex Maxima (similar to a Constitution) of the Olympic Movement. It also constitutes or encompasses the IOC's statutes. As a composite legal text that embraces executive, legislative and disciplinary powers, the *Olympic Charter* covers a wide range of topics – from the composition and organisation of the Olympic Movement to the Olympic properties and Olympic protocol – and lists the 'Fundamental Principles of Olympism', many of them inherited from Coubertin.

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CITIUS . ALTIUS . FORTIUS

COMITÉ INTERNATIONAL
OLYMPIQUE

STATUTS

RÈGLEMENTS ET PROTOCOLE
DE LA
CÉLÉBRATION
DES
OLYMPIADES MODERNES
ET DES
JEUX OLYMPIQUES
QUADRIENNAUX

ADRESSES DES MEMBRES

Document 18: Directory - Olympic Charter 1921. IOC Olympic Studies Centre.

3.9. Establishing the IOC's Executive Board

Alexandre Miguel Mestre

Pierre de Coubertin, who was then 58 years old, informed the members at the 20th Session of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in Lausanne, in 1921, that he intended to retire in 1925. This decision was likely linked to his proposal that same year to initiate the creation of an IOC Executive Commission (today called the IOC Executive Board), with its headquarters in Lausanne, and was perhaps inspired by a conviction that the IOC would need constant structured management in order to secure his legacy.

Coubertin felt that the IOC required a collegial management structure to replace his hitherto solitary superintendence of its affairs. This was because the management of the IOC was increasingly demanding, time-consuming and subject to criticism. Moreover, this solution was also a means to ensure the stable management of the IOC when Coubertin was absent.

The IOC Executive Commission, which was proposed by Coubertin and established in 1921 after its creation had been accepted at the 20th IOC Session in Lausanne in the same year, had a Secretary, by imposition of Coubertin, who chose his faithful friend Baron Godefroy de Blonay to fill that position. Blonay subsequently suggested to Coubertin that the Commission should be able to act with a degree of autonomy in relation to Coubertin. Coubertin's response was that the Committee's role was to manage, and not to reform...

The original composition of the Commission consisted of five IOC members, Jiří Stanislav Guth-Jarkovský (from Bohemia, which later became Czechoslovakia), Henri de Baillet-Latour (a Belgian, who succeeded Coubertin in 1925), Sigfrid Edström (a Swede), and Pierre de Polignac (a Frenchman). The Commission was referred to from the outset as a 'body of gentlemen'.

The Commission's first meeting was in Paris (Faubourg Saint-Honoré 103) on the 7th of November 1921. However, its prominence only increased after the Baron retired in 1925, perhaps because Coubertin continued to make all key IOC decisions himself.

The *IOC Statutes*, published in 1924, make express reference, under the heading 'Administration', to an Executive Commission, which was responsible for assisting the IOC President in the administration of the IOC. The Commission's five members had a renewable four-year term of office and met when convened by the President of the IOC, or by three of its members. The Commission also had a Vice-President, and an optional Chancellor, or Secretary, who was responsible for the Commission's internal structures, and for the drafting and distribution of documents. This Commission was in charge of managing finances, the archives, implementing the Olympic Games Regulations and protocol, proposing candidates for IOC membership, and fixing the agenda of IOC Sessions.

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3.10. Athletic Excellence and the Role of Olympic Athletes

Stephan Wassong

Pierre de Coubertin's most concise article on the concept of Olympism is probably that entitled *The Philosophic Foundations of Modern Olympism*. The article was first published on the 7th of August 1935 in the magazine *Le Sport Suisse* and has since been re-published on a number of occasions.

A careful reading of the article reveals that it was athletes who were at the centre of Coubertin's Olympic idea and the focus of most of his educational thinking. Coubertin had a specific age group in mind for Olympic athletes. He used the term 'human springtime' metaphorically, as to him athletes were most probably young adults who had just finished their vocational training or just graduated and were ready to develop into respectable members of society. Participation in the Olympic Games was to represent an additional opportunity for them to enhance their personality in terms of integrity, honesty, responsibility, achievement and transnational openness.

In order to fully understand Coubertin's vision of Olympic athletes, it is essential to reflect on the demands on athletes to display athletic excellence. Achievement is expected of athletes. Olympians have to strive to achieve the best possible result, which does not exclude the achievement of absolute records. This is also reflected in the famous motto with the Latin comparative '*citius, altius, fortius*'.

To Coubertin, victorious athletes definitely deserved to be honoured for their outstanding achievements at the Olympic Games. Accordingly, Coubertin approved the victory ceremonies, which became a tradition at the Olympic Games from the first edition in Athens in 1896. The first use of a victory podium at the Olympic Games was at Lake Placid in 1932; since then, it has been used at both Olympic Winter and Summer Games. This was not an idea of Coubertin's but of his successor, Count Henri Baillet-Latour. Previously, the honours were usually performed by a member of the royal family who stood on a pedestal over the athletes or in the royal lodge. With the introduction of the victory podium, the positions were reversed, and athletes have since received special symbolic appreciation, thus meeting Coubertin's wishes to honour athletes respectfully.

Coubertin believed that participation in the Olympic Games should be reserved for the best athletes only and that they should be selected on the basis of individual achievement and not social origin. Coubertin was clear that not all athletes had the capability and muscular superiority needed to become an Olympic athlete; however, in his Olympic pyramid, he stated that Olympic athletes had a moral and social responsibility to act as role models, stimulating interest in sport by the masses. By this, he meant that the educational value of sport should be disseminated among all age groups and social classes so that they could engage in sport in their leisure time.

"For every hundred who engage in physical culture, fifty must engage in sports. For every fifty who engage in sports, twenty must specialize. For every twenty who specialize, five must be capable of astonishing feats" (Coubertin 1935 [2000], 581).

Coubertin was well aware of the fact that public sporting facilities, accessible to all, were needed in order to realise the idea of spreading sport among the masses. During his time as the IOC President, and even after he resigned from the position, he came up with various initiatives to improve public athletic infrastructure, including the establishment of communal sport centres, the implementation of a sport badge for the public, the foundation of the Société des Sports Populaires and public playing fields in the residential areas of big cities.

According to Coubertin, Olympic athletes could take advantage of the educational role ascribed to sport and fulfil their responsibility to act as role models only if their achievements were strictly amateur. In his opinion, professionalism, with its unilateral focus on profit as a means of making a living, would too easily

lead to manipulation and disregard for fair play in competition. He believed that athletes should stress this in the Olympic oath.

Although Coubertin clearly regarded active athletes as key actors of the Olympic Games, he did not even consider giving them representation in the International Olympic Committee (IOC) or including them in decision-making processes. Of course, this can be criticised from today's perspective, but not from that of reflecting on Coubertin's time as President of the IOC, from 1896 until 1925. In those decades, as well as in the following ones – shaped by Coubertin's successors as IOC President – the one-dimensional institutional relationship of power between athletes and sports officials was considered a given by all those involved.



Picture 13: Coubertin rowing in the Ouchy harbour in Lausanne.

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3.11. Introduction of the Athletes' Oath

Sebastian Kühn

Today, the festive promise of the Olympic oath forms one of the central traditions and highlights of the Olympic opening ceremonies and their formal protocol. To Pierre de Coubertin, the power of these ceremonies distinguished the Olympic Games from other sports competitions. Their purpose was to load the events with educational and moral value.

Coubertin was deeply concerned that the development of modern sports was threatened by what he called a moral decline. In 1906, in a letter published in the *Revue Olympique*, he wrote: "The wonderful spirit of chivalry that reigned supreme in the sport [of fencing] a few years ago is becoming increasingly rare. A push-button hierarchy is forming before our very eyes. In other sports, cash prizes awarded directly, or works of art that can be sold are mixing up the various classifications, to the point that the terms 'amateur' and 'professional' are meaningless. If we allow things to go on as they are, repugnant snobbery, the habit of lying, and the spirit of gain will soon invade our athletic associations" (Coubertin 1906 [2000], 599).

Therefore, he was eager to find a way to hold the athletes morally accountable for the fair and noble competition. As was so often the case, Coubertin found the solution in the model of the Olympic Games of Antiquity. At the ancient Games, the athletes had to solemnly swear in front of a statue of the supreme Greek deity Zeus to obey the rules of the competition and that they were worthy of entering the stadium. Coubertin picked up on this example in the letter from 1906: "We must get back to something similar. We must do so, or else we will see the beginnings of decline in our modern sports, a decline that will become faster and faster, threatened in turn by these corrupting factors" (Coubertin 1906 [2000], 599).

Therefore, the introduction of a modern version of the oath was the required reaction, according to Coubertin, as he assumed: "This will introduce into modern sport the spirit of joyful candor, the spirit of sincere altruism that will renew them, and will make of collective muscular exercise a true school for moral improvement. (Coubertin 1906 [2000], 599).

When he later described his vision of a 'modern Olympia' in 1910, Coubertin wrote: "There is one ceremony which did exist in the past that can be transposed nearly without modification: the oath. [...] With the image of god replaced for each individual by the flag of his country, this ceremony would surely only increase in grandeur" (Coubertin 1906 [2000], 597).

On the value of linking the modern Games to their ancient model, Coubertin wrote in 1931: "In this way, everything in the restored and modernised Olympism focuses on the ideas of mandatory continuity, interdependence, and solidarity. One must readily agree that such an arrangement is imbued with the greatest educational value, and is a powerful lesson in philosophy and history" (Coubertin 1931 [2000], 603).

The modern Olympic oath was introduced at the Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Games in Antwerp in 1920. According to the plans of Coubertin, an athlete from the host country, in this case Belgian fencer Victor Boin, spoke the oath while holding a corner of his nation's flag: "We swear that we will take part in the Olympic Games in loyal competition, respecting the regulations which govern them and desirous of participating in them in the true spirit of sportsmanship for the honour of our country and for the glory of sport." (International Olympic Committee 1930, 22).

This formula remained substantially unchanged throughout Coubertin's lifetime, but has since been adopted to explicitly address different contemporary issues and developments in modern sports, such as non-discrimination, doping and others. Nowadays, the Olympic oath is not just taken by the athletes, but also by representatives of the judges and coaches.



Picture 14: Paris 1924, the athlete's oath by Géo André.



Picture 15: Chamonix 1924, the athlete's oath by Camille Mandrillon.

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3.12. The Importance of Ceremonies During Olympic Events for Coubertin

Éric Monnin

In 1910, Pierre de Coubertin considered that "the question of the 'ceremonies' is one of the most important to settle. It is primarily thought the ceremonies that the Olympiad must distinguish itself from a mere series of world championships. The Olympiad calls for solemnity and a ceremonial which would be quiet out of keeping were it not for the prestige which accrues to it from its titles of nobility" (Coubertin 1910 [1966], 34).

The place of ceremonies within the Olympic Games should certainly set them apart from other sporting championships. The Yearbook (*Olympic Charter*) of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), published in 1921⁴⁸, set out, for the first time, the official sequence of events for the opening and closing ceremonies at the Olympic Games, such as the opening proclamation by the sovereign or head of state (1896), the playing of the host country's national anthem, the parade of the athletes with their respective flags (1908), the lighting of the Olympic cauldron (1928), the Olympic flag and the Olympic oath (1920), the releasing of pigeons at the Closing Ceremony (1896), and then at the Opening Ceremony (1920), and so on.

Bertrand During specifies the place of the ceremonies within the Games are not limited to competitions. He explains that they are closely associated and extend the system of events. Their importance was clearly affirmed by Coubertin, and well perceived by the public, who gave them a wide audience, even greater than that of the most prestigious finals. Thus the opening ceremony, which suspends time to create the event, and the closing ceremony, which announces the beginning of a new cycle and is part of this perpetuity, correspond. Today's ceremonies are closely linked to those of antiquity. "People meet at Olympia to make both a pilgrimage to the past and a gesture of faith in the future" (Coubertin 1910 [1966], 34).

For Coubertin, the Olympic Games "represent the quadrennial and international festival of youth, the 'festival of human spring', uniting all forms of muscular activity and all the nations of the world" (Coubertin 1931a, 3)⁴⁹. This vision, which may seem utopian, brings together hundreds of athletes and dozens of nations in a host city, united around a common goal – the Olympic values (excellence, respect and friendship) – and showcased during the Olympic events and ceremonies. During evokes this link between the competitions and the ceremonial aspect: "to the value of excellence present in the competitions, the ceremonies add, through the symbolism of the ceremonies, the value of fraternity, transcending social limits, and the value of universality, transcending national limits" (During 1988, 184)⁵⁰.

According to Coubertin's vision, Olympic ceremonies should not be limited to the Olympic Games. They are an integral part of other Olympic events, such as Sessions, Congresses, etc. For example, on the 25th of November 1892, a large number of political and sporting leaders took their seats in the large amphitheatre at the Sorbonne to attend the five-year anniversary of the Union des sociétés françaises de sports athlétiques (USFSA). To coincide with this social event, celebrations were organised in the town of Avray, in Meudon, and in the Bois de Boulogne, including the presentation of prizes by the anniversary's patron, Prince Obolensky. Coubertin used the opportunity to share that people should think about reviving the ancient Games "Everyone applauded, everyone approved, everyone wished me great success but no one had really understood" (Coubertin 1931 [1997], 14). For Coubertin, it was a failure.

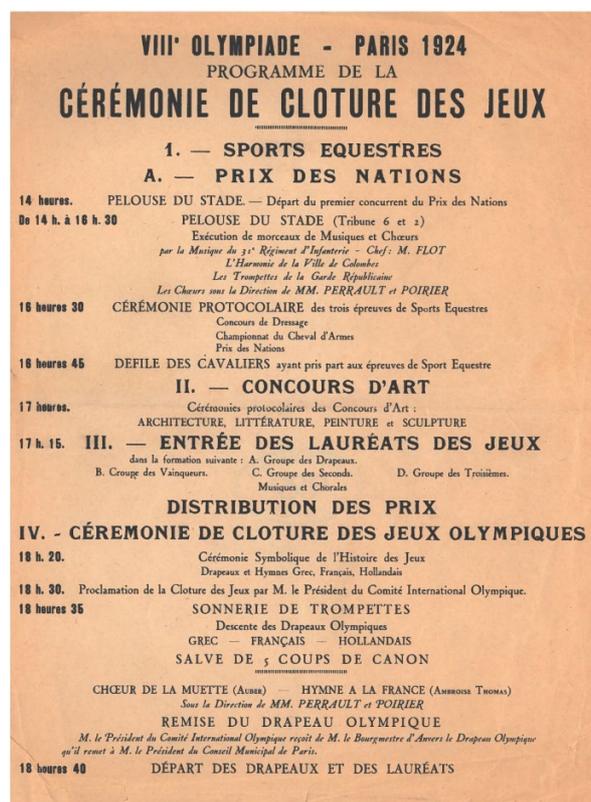
⁴⁸ International Olympic Committee. 1921. *Yearbook*, Lausanne, International Olympic Committee, 10-11.

⁴⁹ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

⁵⁰ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

Following the success of the anniversary celebrations, the USFSA organised the International Paris Congress for the Re-establishment of the Olympic Games, from the 16th to the 23rd of June 1894 at the Sorbonne in Paris. The programme included a number of ceremonies, such as the Fête de nuit organised by the Racing club de France (RCF) on the Croix-Catelan lawn, with illuminations and fireworks, foot races by torchlight, fencing competitions, choir performances and trumpets. At the end of the working sessions on 23rd of June 1894, the delegates ratified the creation of the IOC and the revival of the Games.

In the same spirit, in anticipation of the National Olympic Committees (NOCs) Congress and the 20th anniversary celebrations of the re-establishment of the Games, in 1913 Coubertin presented "a detailed programme which extended over a fortnight and comprised no fewer than seventeen ceremonies or festivities" (Coubertin 1931 [1997], 158). The day after the anniversary ceremonies, at the invitation of the Marquis de Polignac, all the delegations took a special train to Reims for a series of festivities, including physical exercise demonstrations, artistic shows and water sports. "Finally, the next day, Sunday the 28th, the sports meeting organised in Reims by the Union des Sociétés de Sports Athlétiques brought the Olympic fortnight to a fitting and 'muscular' close." (Coubertin 1914, 111)⁵¹. By 1925, when Coubertin stepped down as IOC President, the protocol for the Olympic ceremonies had been more or less firmly established, and has been adapted to the present day.



Document 19: Paris 1924, programme of the closing ceremony of the Olympic Games. IOC Historical Archives.

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⁵¹ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

3.13. The Creation of the Olympic Motto and Flag

Bernard Meier & Elvira Ramini

The Olympic renaissance is the universal, timeless legacy that the world received from Pierre de Coubertin. Right from the beginning in 1894, his basic goal was to achieve the pedagogical renovation of humankind by means of sport. The Olympic Games were meant to be an instrument serving this objective. At the end of the 19th century, Coubertin was conscious that educational and social reforms were necessary. In the invitation to the celebration of the International Congress of Paris for the Re-establishment of the Olympic Games in 1894, Coubertin explained: "The re-establishment of the Olympic Games, on a basis and in the conditions in keeping with the needs of modern life, would bring together, every four years, representatives of the nations of the world, and one is permitted to think that these peaceful, courteous contests constitute the best form of internationalisms" (Coubertin 1894 [2000], 301). The basic ideas of Coubertin's project are represented in the Olympic motto and flag.

Olympic motto

The Latin words 'citius, altius, fortius' have been used as the official Olympic motto since the foundation of the modern Olympic Games at the 1894 Congress and appear on the commemorative diploma that was given to the delegates. The motto, which was originally conceived of by Henri Didon of the Dominican order, a Prefect of the College of Arcueil situated in the suburb of Paris, was adopted by his friend Coubertin. It has spread and is known today in all areas of sport. But the Olympic motto, as conceived by its author, must not be understood simply as striving for an improvement of sports records, but also as a progressive perfection and moral improvement of humanity thanks to sport.

The interpretation of the motto by Paul Martin, a Swiss athlete, Olympic medallist in 1924 and friend of Coubertin, and also founder of the International Pierre de Coubertin Committee (CIPC) in 1975 in Lausanne, was paraphrased in the Bulletin du Comité International Olympique (Olympic Review) (1953,10):

- "CITIUS, does not only mean faster in the race but implies also swiftness of understanding and quick perception of the brain.
- ALTIUS, higher and higher, not only in order to reach one's goal but also towards the spiritual uplift of the individual.
- FORTIUS, does not only mean stronger in the Stadium's contests but refers to the way we face the hardship of life."

The Olympic motto was first pronounced and was the dominant theme in the speech delivered by Didon on the 7th of March 1891 before the Sports Association of the Albert the Great School, of which he was headmaster, and was used by Coubertin for the International Congress of Paris for the Re-establishment of the Olympic Games in 1894.

Today, the Olympic motto has been given additional value by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), with the aim of uniting all the people of the world. The word 'together' was added to make 'citius, altius, fortius – together', after being adopted at the 138th IOC Session in July 2021.

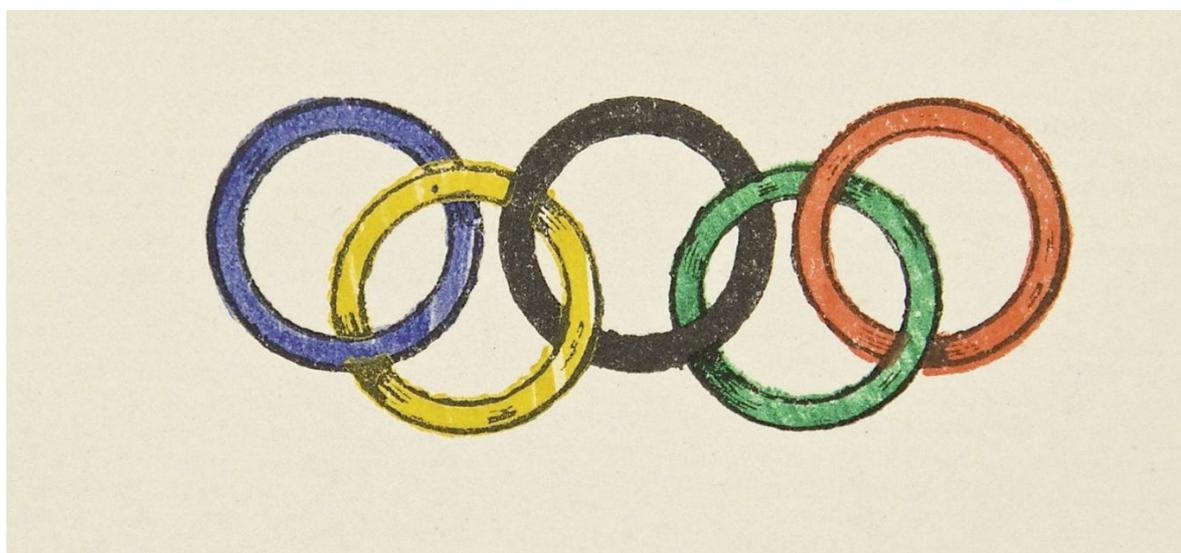
The Olympic emblem and flag

The five interlaced rings in blue, yellow, black, green and red represent the five parts of the world united in Olympism. Created by Coubertin himself, this symbol is the central and principal theme of the Olympic flag, which, on a white background and without a border, combined in these five colours the varied chromaticism of all the flags of the world. The Olympic flag, also designed by Coubertin, is known to have been presented officially for the first time at the IOC Congress in Paris in 1914, commemorating the 20th anniversary of the re-establishment of the Olympic Games. At the Olympic Games, it was flown for the first time at the Opening Ceremony of the Games in Antwerp in 1920.

Coubertin was enthusiastic about the conception of the new symbols, and in the *Revue Olympique* in August 1913 he wrote: "These five rings represent the five parts of the world now won over to Olympism, ready to accept its fruitful rivalries. In addition, the six colours [including the white background] combined in this way reproduce the colours of every country without exception. The blue and yellow of Sweden, the blue and white of Greece, the tri-colour flags of France, England, the United States, Germany, Belgium, Italy and Hungary, and the yellow and red of Spain, are included as are the innovative flags of Brazil and Australia, and those of ancient Japan and modern China. This is truly an international emblem" (Coubertin 1913 [2000], 594).

In the same article, Coubertin personally explains the timeless value that the Olympic emblem and flag represent: "Olympism did not reappear within the context of modern civilisation in order to play a local or temporary role. The mission entrusted to it is universal and timeless. It is ambitious. It requires all space and all time" (Coubertin, 1913 [2000], 595) The idea of universality, inclusion and peace also reminds us of Coubertin's vision that sport belongs to all people.

The Olympic motto and the flag are contemporary creations authored by Didon and Coubertin.



Document 20: First known version of the Olympic rings drawn by Coubertin on a letter in 1913 (extract). IOC Historical Archives.

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3.14. The Olympic Cup and Diploma of Olympic Merit in the Coubertin Period

Daniel de la Cueva



Picture 16: The Olympic Cup. Olympic Museum Collections, Lausanne.

Pierre de Coubertin critically analysed the Games of each Olympiad, considering possible new incentives for athletes, leaders and committed collaborators. He knew the honour of receiving an award from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in their countries of origin and therefore devised individual and collective awards for those who have collaborated prominently or represent the spirit of Olympism. With this, the Olympic Movement was clearly associated with those who have achieved remarkable and positive achievements for humanity, not just in sport.

Coubertin's initiative grew the meaning and implications of a conquest, in which the human aspects recognized for sporting competition are not exclusive, and therefore also broadened the horizons of Olympism. This new growth challenge meant further expanding the social and cultural function of Olympism. As the philosophies of Olympism and the Olympic Games grew, there was a favourable and inclusive consensus for the incorporation of new sports, new artistic competitions and notable achievements that, although not sporting, reflected its spirit. The Olympic

Cup and Diploma demonstrated how Olympism survived even when it was impossible to hold the Games, as was the case during both World Wars, and effectively remained and were awarded regularly by the IOC.

In 1905 Coubertin proposed to endow the Committee with an Olympic Cup. This gold and silver cup crowned by a statuette was to originally be delivered each year to a sport society that was considered most deserving of it. Since 1906 it has been awarded annually by the IOC to the institution that would keep it in custody for one year, it is an elegant artistic object, now delivered in reproduction, while the original designed by Charles Massin remains in the Olympic Museum in Lausanne.

Among those who have received the Olympic Cup, we can mention the people of the host cities, for accompanying the candidacies, development and contribution of volunteers to the Olympic, Winter and Youth Games. It rarely occurred when conflict situations occurred, such as major organizational difficulties, when there were terrorist attacks or boycotts of the Games.

Also proposed by Coubertin, the Diploma of Olympic Merit began to be awarded in 1905. It was designed to reward a complete set of athletic, physical and moral qualities continuously maintained throughout the life of a human being and not a specific feat or action. This is how leaders, statesmen, sailors, explorers, artists, and filmmakers were awarded, until the 75th Session of the IOC in 1974, after which this Diploma was eliminated and replaced instead by the Olympic Order.

In 1909, Coubertin wrote that the Olympic Diploma of Merit, was designed to emphasize "uniqueness, and not to reward a certain achievement, a special feat, but rather a set of athletic, physical and moral qualities that appear continuously in someone's life" (Coubertin 1909, 85)⁵². Among those who received the prize were US President Theodore Roosevelt, aeronaut and inventor Santos-Dumont and Count Zeppelin.

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⁵² Originally published in French, English translation provided by the author.

3.15. Coubertin's Rationale for the Invention of the Modern Pentathlon

Philipp Waeffler

Pierre de Coubertin was convinced that through sport, fundamental values and character traits, as well as fair play and cultural understanding, could be developed. Therefore, it was no surprise that he wanted to add a new event, which reflected his educational, philosophical, cultural and social ideals, to the newly re-established Olympic Games. Coubertin wanted to see the harmony and balance of an all-round athlete, whose skills and excellence were tested with a new multi-disciplinary sport, as opposed to one specialisation. Being the reform pedagogue he was, it was important for him to see his educational aims represented on the most prestigious platform when it came to redefining the Olympic Games. The sport of modern pentathlon was connected with Coubertin's original ideas, as he first described when writing about 'utilitarian gymnastics'. The new sport united in condensed form Coubertin's ideal of a multi-faceted man, a 'débrouillard', who was tested and formed through sport, becoming an 'Olympian' and described as the perfect athlete.

Coubertin wanted to see his ideals of all-round athleticism and educational aspects represented at the Olympic Games. His understanding of education and sport matched with the pedagogical and modern zeitgeist.

How much importance Coubertin gave to the modern pentathlon is reflected in the fact that he mentioned his idea to establish an athletic multi-disciplinary event, called 'pentathle', in the *Bulletin du CIO* in 1894. Although the initial ideas involved an athletic pentathlon, the word 'modern' was circulating, with universal support (e.g. from Demetrius Vikelas and Viktor Gustaf Balck), at this time. Thanks to Coubertin's resilience, the proposition to include the modern pentathlon on the Olympic programme was first specifically discussed at the 12th IOC Session in 1909 in Berlin and during the 13th IOC Session in 1910 in Luxembourg. While it was determined that shooting, swimming, fencing, riding and running would be the disciplines in the modern pentathlon in Luxembourg, the order of the disciplines was finalised only in May 1911. The sport's inclusion on the Olympic programme for the first time – for the Games of the V Olympiad Stockholm 1912 – was approved during the 14th IOC Session in 1911 in Budapest.

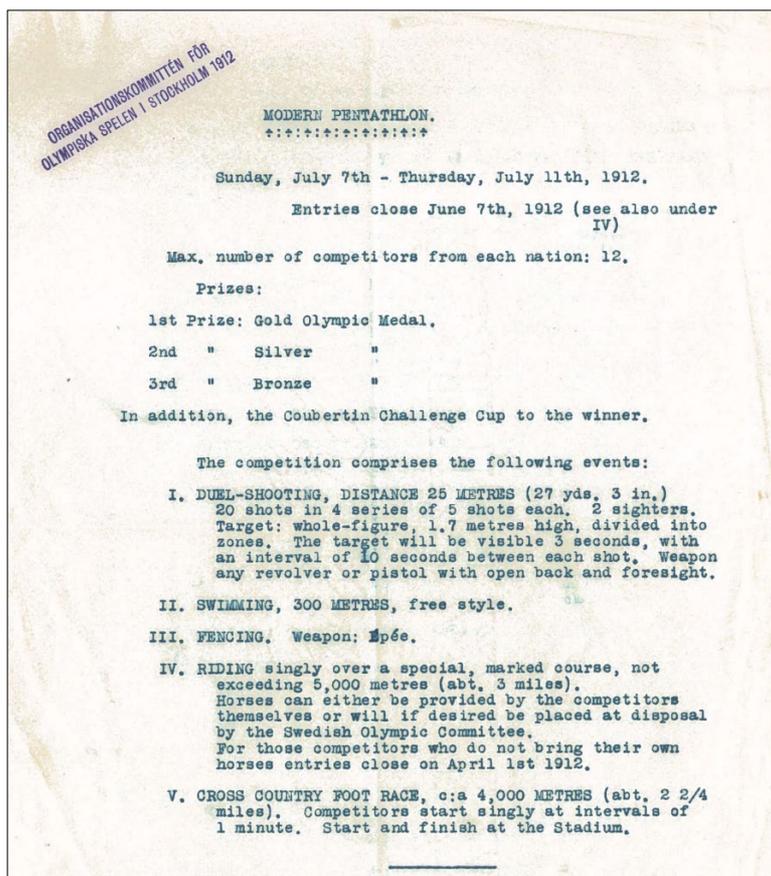
Coubertin's proposal not only matched the prevailing zeitgeist of being modern, but also went along with the IOC's intention to have multi-disciplinary events and see the modernisation of the Olympic Games. Additionally, he could count on strong support from Sweden, the country selected to organise the Olympic Games 1912. Further, the invention of the modern pentathlon reflected Coubertin's educational and societal ideas, which strengthened his rationale for promoting it.

Once the inclusion of a new pentathlon was decided, the rules, order of disciplines and participation of women had to be discussed. Further, test and qualification competitions were organised, an idea Coubertin strongly supported, since this reflected his ideals to select the strongest athletes. At one point, Coubertin's opinion differed from that of the organisers regarding the selection of the horses for the modern pentathlon. Sweden, as the host country, wanted all the participants to bring their own mount, which was at odds with Coubertin's ideal of fair play and his suggestion that the organisers had to provide horses for all competitors. An agreement was found that some – mainly the competitors from the host nation – would participate with their own horses, whereas others would compete with horses provided by the Organising Committee. For future editions, horse provision by the Organising Committee became standard.

Ultimately, the modern pentathlon had a successful debut on the Olympic programme and made waves, especially with participating nations, around the globe. While the Swedish organisers were pleased with their medal sweep and the recognition for their military officers, others saw the modern pentathlon as the pinnacle of the new Olympic multi-disciplinary events.

Coubertin himself was very pleased with the invention. However, he did have some critical remarks regarding the rules, the difficulties in organising such a combination of disciplines, and the provision of horses. For him, the modern pentathlon was a sporting highlight and one of the most interesting innovations of the renewed Olympic programme. Coubertin called it "a veritable consecration of the complete athlete" (Coubertin 1931 [1997], 125-126).

Coubertin saw his ideals and beliefs reflected and, as a consequence, he was convinced to keep the modern pentathlon on the Olympic programme. He stated how much the new sport meant to him later in 1931: "... an event to which I attached great importance: a veritable consecration of the complete athlete, the modern pentathlon was to comprise a foot race, a horse race, a swimming race a fencing match and, finally, a shooting contest..." (Coubertin 1931 [1997], 125-126).



Document 21: Stockholm 1912: Programme of the Modern Pentathlon. IOC Historical Archives.

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3.16. The Feminist Controversy: Coubertin's Opposition to Women Competing in the Olympic Games

Natalia Camps Y Wilant & George Hirthler

On the day he retired from the International Olympic Committee (IOC), in Prague in 1925 at the age of 62, Pierre de Coubertin reminded his colleagues that the great global movement he had created was built on an all-inclusive ethic: "They [the Olympic Games] are global. All people must be allowed in without debate" (Coubertin 1925 [2000], 558).

And yet, across the previous 31 years as he built the Movement from a fledgling idea to a worldwide phenomenon – and even into his retirement – Coubertin was opposed to the participation of female athletes in the Olympic Games. This contradiction lies at the heart of a controversy that has haunted his reputation and even led modern cancel culture critics to label him a misogynist – an unjust accusation that ignores the historical context of his times and, more importantly, Coubertin's broader position on women in sport.

From today's perspective, any objection to women competing in sports is unthinkable, but in the late 19th and early 20th centuries social mores were entirely different, and opposition to women taking part in sport, not to mention attending college, taking up a profession, voting or having independent public activities, was the cultural norm. Although the roles of women were evolving, leading countries such as France, England and the United States all operated on a double standard of 'separate spheres' in gender equality.

In the broadest sense, Coubertin wanted everyone to engage in sport. "Sport is," he wrote, "the birthright of all, equally and to the same degree, and nothing can replace it" (Coubertin 1932, 213)⁵³. But given the paternalistic society he was raised in and the chivalrous code he lived by, protecting the dignity of women was a high priority – and therein lies the basis of his opposition to women competing in the Olympic Games. "If some women want to play football or box, let them, provided that the event takes place without spectators, because the spectators who flock to such competitions are not there to watch a sport" (Coubertin 1928 [2000], 189). In essence, he wanted to protect women from those whose motives were more lecherous than athletic.

Despite his adversarial position, he never stood directly in the way of women competing in the Games and, in fact, left the decisions up to the Organising Committee in every host city. Under his IOC presidency, from Paris 1900 to Paris 1924, the number of women taking part in the Games grew sixfold, from 22 to 135. Over the course of his presidency, women competed in golf, archery, equestrian, tennis, diving, sailing, fencing, swimming and figure skating events.

Parallel to the Games, Coubertin embraced the inclusion of female artists, writers and musicians in the Olympic Arts Competitions. Beginning under his presidency in 1912, the programme grew steadily, with 148 women competing and winning 10 medals by 1948.

When Alice Milliat launched the Women's Olympic Games in Paris in the early 1920s, Coubertin stood in opposition. A decade earlier he had written that adding "a little female Olympiad" (Coubertin 1912 [2000], 713) to the Games would be too much work for the organisers, and that a feminine Olympiad would be "impractical, uninteresting, ungainly and [...] improper" (Coubertin 1912 [2000], 713). Those words earned him the ire of feminist historians and the occasional accusation of misogyny.

Nevertheless, in his writings on female education, there is clear evidence of the emergence of a very progressive view of women's rights. As an educational reformer, Coubertin aligned with Jules Ferry and Jules Simon, both advocates for women's education. Although he believed that the highest calling

⁵³ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the authors.

of a woman was to be "the companion of man, the future mother of a family" (Coubertin 1901, 281)⁵⁴, he recognised —as few of his time did— that "this is what we strive to accomplish when we aspire to achieve gender equality" (Coubertin 1901, 282)⁵⁵.

Even more, he wrote in 1901 that education should enable women's independence if necessary: "Let the laws protect her, put her in a position to resist, and even to escape from marital tyranny, nothing more legitimate" and for "those who do not marry, ways to earn an honest living" (Coubertin 1901, 23)⁵⁶.

Those are very enlightened views within the context of his time, even advocating divorce, and allude again to protecting the dignity of women.

Throughout his career, Coubertin called upon and collaborated with women. Coubertin was embraced and celebrated by Juliette Adam, one of the leading French feminists of her day and the founder and editor of *La Nouvelle Revue*. Calling Coubertin "mon cher collaborateur", she championed and published his political writings and his fiction. Others, such as Lady Somerset in England and Princess Marie of Sweden, helped push the Olympic Movement's agenda forward at Coubertin's request.

Drawing his inspiration from the 'men only' model of Ancient Olympia, Coubertin was reinforced in his bias in modern times by the Much Wenlock Olympian Games in Shropshire, England, which had spanned 50 years, and the four editions of the Zappas Olympic Games in Athens between 1859 and 1890, neither of which admitted female competitors. But Coubertin was aware of the changing role of women in society and in the field of sport. Despite his opposition, he admitted at one point that "ultimately the public will decide" (Coubertin 1931, 6)⁵⁷.

It is clear from Olympic history that the inclusion of women continued to advance slowly after Coubertin retired. At the Olympic Games Amsterdam 1928, 10 per cent of the competitors were women; three decades later at the Olympic Games Rome 1960, that had risen to only 11 per cent.

Anita DeFrantz, a champion of the rights of all athletes, but particularly women, noted the paltry gains women had made in the following 16 years between Rome 1960 and Montreal 1976, where she won a bronze medal in rowing. She observed that, despite the addition of women's rowing and basketball, "in the 1976 Montreal Games and the Olympic Winter Games, women comprised only 21 percent of the athletes" [DeFrantz, 2000, 164]. Clearly the historical bias against women in the Games remained the cultural norm for decades after Coubertin had passed from the scene.

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⁵⁴ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the authors.

⁵⁵ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the authors.

⁵⁶ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the authors.

⁵⁷ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the authors.

3.17. Moving the IOC from Paris to Lausanne

Jean-Loup Chappelet

The outbreak of the First World War in 1914 marked the end of the Belle Époque and left Pierre de Coubertin, like many of his contemporaries, quite distraught. The revived Games had been supposed to promote peace. Apart from the fact that the conflict cost him some of his fortune, he was worried because the 1916 Olympic Games were scheduled to be held in Berlin and the IOC Statutes (a notional rule that was abandoned when Coubertin was re-elected for 10 years in 1901) stipulated that the IOC headquarters (then in Paris) should be set up in the country of the next host city.⁵⁸

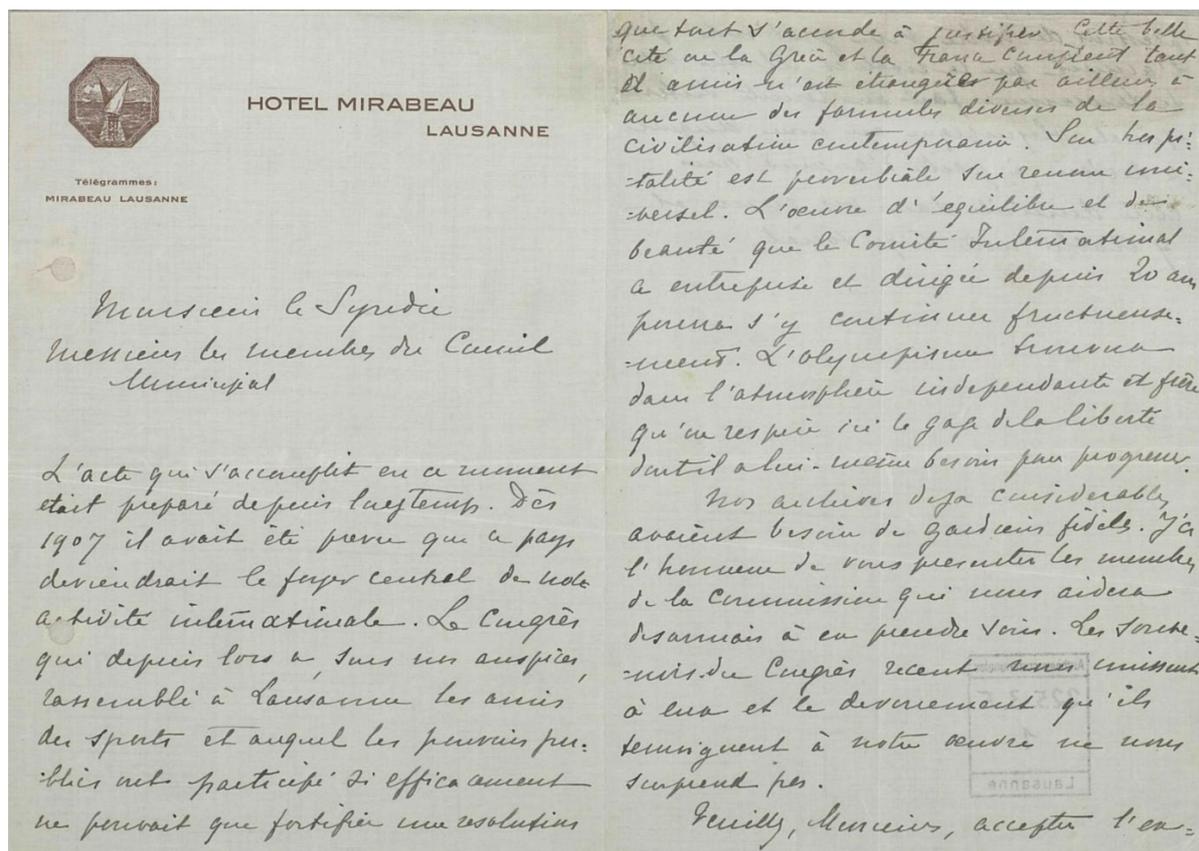
Without consulting the IOC members, Coubertin decided to move the headquarters of the IOC administration to Lausanne. Nevertheless, on the 10th of April 1915, Godefroy de Blonay, an IOC Member in Switzerland, joined him in the meeting room at Lausanne City Hall for a 'small ceremony', during which the mayor, Paul Maillefer, officially 'took note' of the move with his colleagues, local council members. The presidents of the Vaud Council of State and the Swiss Confederation were invited to attend, but instead sent their apologies. However, the latter sent a telegram welcoming the IOC "to the neutral and peaceful soil of Switzerland" (IOC 1994, vol.1, 139) according to minutes from the municipal meetings⁵⁹. In his *Mémoires Olympiques*, Coubertin referred to the surreptitious move as "a masterly coup d'état" (Coubertin 1932 [1997], 167).

The choice of Lausanne was not without significance. Of course, Coubertin appreciated the region and, more generally, the neutrality and tranquillity of Switzerland, which he had visited as early as 1903. He even referred to the country as the "queen of sports" in a 1906 article in the *Revue Olympique*. In 1910, he launched a competition for a 'modern Olympia', that is, a permanent home for the revived Games. In 1912, the plan of architects Eugène Monod and Alphonse Laverrière for an *Olympie sur la rive droite du lac Léman* (Olympia on the right bank of Lake Geneva) was awarded the gold medal in the architecture competition at the 1912 Stockholm Games. This project was inspired by the *World Communication Centre*, designed by the American sculptor Hendrik Andersen and promoted by Paul Otlet and Henri-Marie La Fontaine. The latter, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1913, had been one of the honorary members of the International Congress of Paris for the Re-establishment of the Olympic Games. Coubertin had also organised a Congress on sports psychology and physiology in Lausanne in 1913, bringing the IOC closer to both the city and its university.

Coubertin had first considered Basel, the Swiss rail hub on the border with France and Germany, where he had organised an IOC meeting in 1912 to which he had transferred the Olympic Review's bank accounts. But in the end, he chose Lausanne, a French-speaking city where he had many contacts, designs for a 'modern Olympia' and a loyal lieutenant in Godefroy de Blonay. As the war dragged on, Coubertin asked him to act as interim IOC President for the duration of the hostilities. He planned to organise an IOC meeting in Bern in 1915 (which never took place). In the end, he resigned himself to the cancellation of the Berlin Games scheduled for 1916. He had accepted his re-election as head of the IOC for ten years in 1901 at the suggestion of Godefroy de Blonay (who kept the IOC archives in his Château de Grandson from 1915). It was only after stepping down as president that he settled his family in Lausanne.

⁵⁸ A more detailed explanation can be found in Jean-Loup Chappelet's work, *La place olympique suisse, émergence et devenir* (Bière: Cabedita, 2019), 10-16.

⁵⁹ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.



Document 22: Speech from Coubertin for the establishment of the IOC in Lausanne (page 1), 10 April 1915. IOC Historical Archives.

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3.18. Coubertin and the Regional Games

Malik Atour Evele & Marion Keim

Regional Games are multi-sport events that appeared at the beginning of the 20th century as an extension of the Olympic idea. "All Sport for all People" (Coubertin 1919 [2000], 739) was the vision of Pierre de Coubertin, the father of the modern Olympic Games, the historian and educationalist for whom sport was a possible source for inner improvement for each individual.

It was in the aftermath of the First World War that Coubertin strongly felt that the Olympic Movement's mission had to be extended to all members of society and he saw Regional Games as one of the ways to promote his vision, ideas and the belief that sport belonged to everyone and should be played by everyone. He made his intention known on the 15th of September 1921, when he sent a circular letter to the members of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in which he announced that "according to my promise, I will work towards the advancement of the Regional Games" (Coubertin 1921 [2000], 700).

Thus the IOC worked to encourage the establishment of such events. After the Far Eastern Games, which were first held in 1913, 1926 saw the first Central American Games in Mexico organised as Regional Games under the IOC's patronage celebrating the traditions of the Olympic spirit. This is how, in turn, the Central American and Caribbean Games (1926), the Balkan Games (1931), the Pan American Games (1937), the Asian Games (1951), the Pacific Games (1963), the African Games (1965) and more recently, the European Games (2012), have been respectively organised over the years.

The organisation of the Regional Games in Africa was the subject of concern on the part of Coubertin. During the IOC Session held in Rome in 1923, he drew attention to the absence of Africa in the dynamics of setting up the Regional Games and tried to organise them there under the aegis of the IOC in Algiers (1925) and in Alexandria (1927). Both attempts were unsuccessful. Coubertin then explained these failures in his *Olympic Memoirs* by saying "But at the back of it all, there was the basic conflict, the struggle of the colonial spirit against the tendency to emancipate the natives, a tendency full of perils as far as the general staffs of the mother country were concerned" (Coubertin 1931 [1997], 207).

From the point of view of the organisation of these Regional Games, Coubertin's thought never departed from the idea he had of the Olympic Games themselves. For him, it was clear that the Regional Games should combine sports activities with artistic activities in the form of contests. Due to their evolution, their development, and the interest they arouse among young people, the Regional Games have made it possible to activate national bodies such as the National Olympic Committees (NOCs), but also to create sports organisations at continental and international levels.

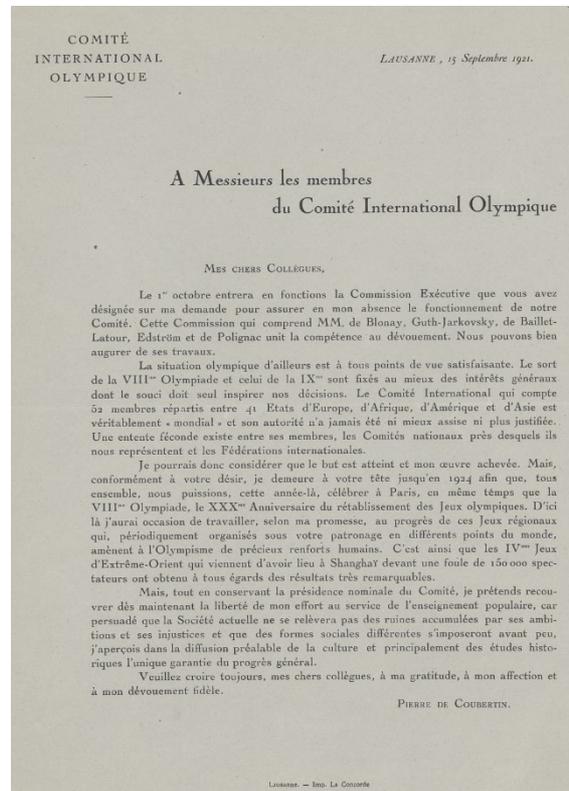
Today, better than in the past, the organisation of the Regional Games embracing the Olympic spirit shows that they help to promote peace, the incessant but necessary dialogue between peoples, and that they contribute in a relevant ways to international understanding and to the establishment of a better world concerned with preserving human dignity.

Beyond the living together that they promote between young people from diverse backgrounds, they position themselves as a factor guaranteeing the right for all peoples and in all parts of the world gathered under the banner of the five rings, to practise physical and sporting activities without discrimination of any kind, each according to their abilities and to the best of these - an idea very dear to Coubertin and part of the 'Fundamental Principles of Olympism' as defined in the *Olympic Charter*.

Regional Games have over time become a real tool at the service of the development of sport and the propagation of Olympism. Coubertin thought that they were part of the answer to allow the dissemination of sport and Olympism. In his *Olympic Memoirs* he maintained his unwavering position

that sport belonged to everyone: "For every man, woman and child, it [sport] offers an opportunity for self-improvement quite independent of profession or position in life. It [sport] is the prerogative of all, equally and to the same degree, and nothing can replace it..." (Coubertin 1932 [2000], 748).

Regional Games are a unique opportunity for everyone to share and learn from each other, experience and celebrate our regional diversity in sport, recreation and culture, and foster understanding amongst nations for the good of humanity and a more peaceful and better world.



Document 23: Circular letter from Coubertin about the importance of Regional Games, 15 September 1921. IOC Historical Archives.

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3.19. Coubertin's Holistic View of Olympism

Otto J. Schantz

As a young man, Pierre de Coubertin had already found his lifelong vocation: convinced that the future prosperity of France depended on the proper education of youth, he hoped to "link his name to a major educational reform" (Coubertin 1909 [1986], 2)⁶⁰ and thus make his contribution to the resurgence of his homeland, which had been shaken by revolutions, frequent changes of government and military defeats. At first, his efforts were aimed at reforming the French education system, but gradually he involved all of humanity. In his reform projects, Coubertin attributed an essential role to sport and physical education. To strengthen sport as an international means of education and peace, he introduced the modern Olympic Games and tried to give this new international movement an ideological basis, which he called Olympism.

Drawing on Victorian Muscular Christianity, medieval chivalry and classical ideals of eurhythmy, Coubertin gradually developed a syncretic "philosophy of life" (DaCosta 2006, 157) which was celebrated through a worldwide festival with a quasi-religious aura created by invented traditions.

Coubertin assumed that the pendulum of history had repeatedly swung between the entities of body and mind. After an epoch of asceticism, it was now time to bring the pendulum back towards the body. Excesses in one direction or another are common, even at the individual level. A well-rounded education of personality helps to restore harmony, to restore the eurhythmy of life. In his eclectic view, which repeatedly made use of ideas from history, Coubertin believed that he had found models for this eurhythmy of life in Greek antiquity and in the medieval knighthood. The contemporary ideal of a harmoniously formed personality was for him Theodore Roosevelt, a virile rough rider and clever statesman with a strong character, with whom he had an intensive exchange of ideas.

For Coubertin, Olympism's search to exceed physical capacity was not an objective in itself. It was comparable to the worship of a religious practice which aimed higher, which sought a spiritual and moral attitude. Hence Coubertin's claim that Olympism was an athlete's religion. But Coubertin also pursued more concrete and pragmatic goals with his ideology. As human beings, we are unfinished at birth; and to become human, we must be improved by education and training. However, what is the goal of this development? The aim of human improvement has been defined and justified by humanists differently at different times, according to various currents of thought. The concrete objective of Olympism, according to Coubertin, was to prepare 'man', to prepare humanity, for the new demands, for the challenges of the 20th century. His educational programme was based on the classic triad of intellectual, physical and moral education. To improve the intellectual education of young men, he developed the method of 'intellectual aviation' that ended the mechanical way of teaching or learning which he himself had experienced during his school time. For moral education, he advocated mutual respect, going beyond mere tolerance, requiring the effort of knowledge and understanding. Physical education should be useful because he thought that the zeitgeist was characterised by utilitarianism and that utility was the best way to motivate young people to practise physical exercises.

Certainly, he saw a superior tool for the formation of character in the practice of sport than in his utilitarian gymnastics. But these gymnastics were for those who did not have what he considered 'the sporting instinct'. It should encourage them to practise physical activities, despite lacking this instinct. At the individual level, sport served as an exercise for the will, a school to learn respect for the other, to prepare democracy and to improve and protect health. At the societal level, physical education and sport should contribute to social peace, bringing people from different social backgrounds together, and function as therapy against neurasthenia, alcoholism and pornography. On a more international level, sport should contribute to worldwide peace by allowing people of different nations to compete peacefully and to get to know and respect each other.

⁶⁰ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the author.

The Olympic Games as a "festival of youth, strength and future" (Coubertin 1913, 70)⁶¹ paid homage to the mind, willpower and muscular strength that should produce the harmoniously educated and morally empowered human being. In mythical youth worship, the eugenic function of constant renewal and improvement of the human race was ascribed to the Olympic Games as the "quadrennial festival of universal human spring" (Coubertin 1924, 269)⁶². Permeated by the ideas of the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution, Coubertin firmly believed in humanity and its perfectibility. The Olympic motto 'citius, altius, fortius' became an imperative, a call to constantly work on one's own improvement, for the benefit of the community.

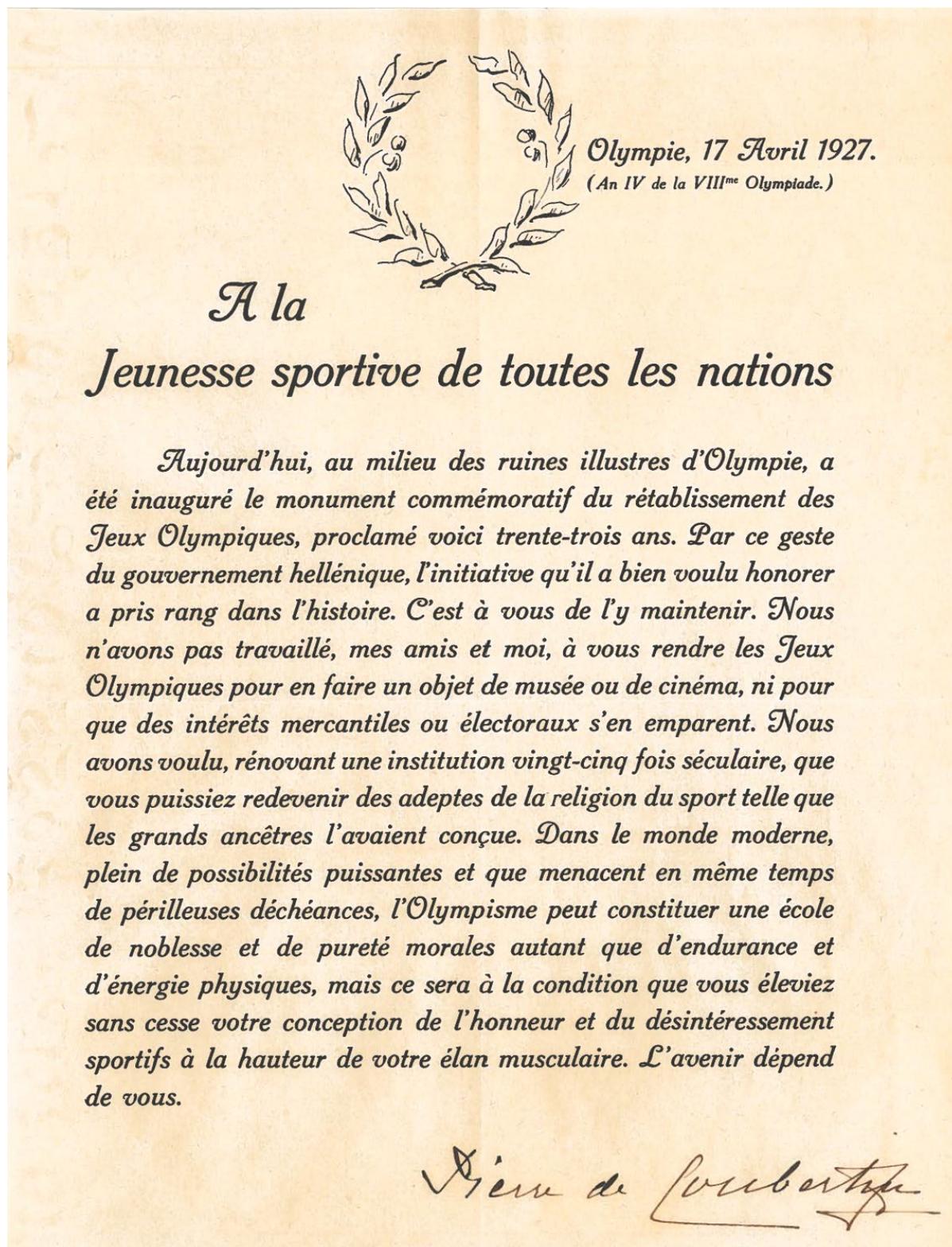
Unselfish sport, not aimed at material gain, should bring joy in festive garb. The festival had to be 'ruskianised', decorated beautifully in the sense of the art critic John Ruskin, in order to increase its value and prestige and, as with the ancient Games, to create a eurhythmic atmosphere characterised by beauty and harmony. Inspired by Richard Wagner's opera productions in Bayreuth, Coubertin conceived the Olympic Games as a total work of art that would involve and captivate the assembled people as a whole.

Transcended as a homage to human energy and a cult of the will to a 'religio athletae' combined with art and science, sport as an educational medium should be given depth and permanence, as well as worldwide recognition and dissemination. The 'chevalerie sportive' of all nations should meet in peaceful competition and get to know and respect each other. An 'aristocratie du muscle', which has earned its success from egalitarian starting conditions, becomes a role model for the masses.

Coubertin's Olympism is not a firmly established doctrine, especially since he repeatedly pointed out the need to adapt his ideas to the times. It is not a systematic, logically consistent philosophy, but an eclecticism oriented towards practical needs, or as he himself emphasised, an intellectual attitude compatible with all cultures and religions. It probably owes its long and worldwide success to this relative flexibility and openness to different culturally determined meanings.

⁶¹ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the author.

⁶² Originally published in French, English translation provided by the author.



Document 24: Coubertin's message "To the Sporting Youth of All Nations", 17 April 1927. IOC Historical Archives.

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3.20. Baillet-Latour Replaces Coubertin as IOC President in 1925

Sophie Roduit

Announced by Pierre de Coubertin himself on the 17th of March 1921, the time had finally come for the man who had been the International Olympic Committee (IOC) President since 1896 to bring a close to a chapter of his life that had lasted 29 years. The Olympic Committee of Czechoslovakia, a nation that had come into being on the 28th of October 1918, hosted the IOC in Prague. Its President, Jiří Guth-Jarkovský, was one of the last remaining founding members of the Committee, which itself had survived the conflagrations of the First World War. The Session opened on the 26th of May 1925 at Prague City Hall, lasting three days. At the meeting of the 28th of May 1925, Coubertin announced "that the time had come to elect his successor"⁶³. "He was very sorry to be leaving a position in which, for 30 years, the friendship and confidence of all his colleagues had supported him so fully and continuously, but this term could not be exceeded, as it was already excessive and, moreover, he has duties of a personal nature which he does not consider compatible with the direction of a global association such as the I.O.C." ⁶⁴. Some members still asked him to stay, and some voted for him. The members proceeded to elect a new President, with Count Henry de Baillet-Latour elected in the second round. An IOC Member since 1903 and a founding member of the new Executive Board (EB) founded in 1921, the Belgian became the third IOC President. He will be responsible for finding solutions to the problems facing the IOC, such as amateurism, the Olympic programme and women's participation in the Games.

After this Session, two simultaneous Congresses were organised – one educational and the other technical. Johannes Sigfrid Edström, the future IOC President, was appointed to chair the Technical Congress because of his diplomatic skills, his work within the IOC since the Games of the VI Olympiad in Stockholm, and his role as President of the International Athletics Federation. There was a greater need to manage new relationships between IOC members in the face of conflicting nationalist, internationalist and universalist ideas. Coubertin only took part in the discussions of the Educational Congress, which were based on the Rapport sur l'éducation sportive drawn up by the Portuguese IOC member, Count Penha-Garcia. By stepping down as IOC President, Coubertin would be able to concentrate on his lifelong project. In his speech at the opening of the Congress in Prague City Hall, Coubertin said that he "wants to be able to devote the time that remains to me to hastening as far as I can an urgent undertaking: the advent of pedagogy that produces mental clarity and critical calm". Coubertin, the new 'Honorary President for life of the Olympic Games', addressed the athletes in the same speech, in the form of a testament, and encouraged "their ascension towards the hill where we want to erect the temple, while on the plain a vast fair will be organised. The temple will remain and the fair will pass. Fair or temple, sportsmen and women will have to choose; they cannot claim to frequent both: ... let them choose!" (Coubertin 1986, 410)⁶⁵. At the age of 62, Coubertin felt ready to focus on an active retirement on behalf of education, so that "sport might become the Empire of the Morning Calm" (Coubertin 1913, 170)⁶⁶ and that peace might become a virtue more precious than triumph on all the continents where Olympism was to develop.

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⁶³ Minutes from the 24th Session of the IOC, Prague 1925, 19.

⁶⁴ Minutes from the 24th Session of the IOC, Prague 1925, 19.

⁶⁵ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

⁶⁶ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

4. Coubertin's vision and support for the Olympic Movement after his Presidency (1925-1937)

4.1. The Olympic Games 1928 and 1932 Without Coubertin

Kevin Tallec Marston

Early in his presidency, Henri de Baillet-Latour (who took office on the 1st of September 1925) faced attacks from the leaders of the International Federations, who took advantage of this major change within the IOC. Pierre de Coubertin had already denounced these "assaults" back in 1921. While football and tennis worried him, the federations that would be taking part in the upcoming Winter Games (Saint-Moritz 1928; Lake Placid 1932) were keen to assert their independence. In 1926, Frantz Reichel, Secretary General of the French Olympic Committee and Coubertin's "old comrade-at-arms" (Coubertin 1927 [1966], 102) sent a letter, dated from the 6th of December, to the International Labour Office (ILO), an organ of the International Labour Organisation which had been established in Geneva in 1919, with the following question: Is it possible for the League of Nations to incorporate sport into its programme? Reichel's initiative, based on his successful participation in the organisation of the Olympic Games Paris 1924, came against a backdrop of new political trends in Europe that saw sport as a cultural activity closely associated with the leisure activities of all citizens, whatever their social status.

FIFA and the IOC: two worlds gradually turned away from each other

Relations between the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) were becoming increasingly strained around a fundamental principle: amateurism. Between the ideal of selfless sport and the reality of the paid athlete, football gradually took a stance that opposed it to the values defended by the Olympic Movement. FIFA members long debated without finding satisfactory definitions that would distinguish an amateur player from a professional player. They also delegated to the national federations the power to set the amounts allowed for amateurs. During an unofficial meeting, Jules Rimet (FIFA President since 1921) suggested to Baillet-Latour that the IOC's acceptance of such forbearance of earnings be discussed again, as FIFA was preparing to vote on this principle at its Congress in Rome in May 1926. Baillet-Latour and the IOC Executive Board opted for a provisional compromise which took into account the need for economic success at the expense of respect for Olympic values. On the 25th of May 1928, however, an independent football World Cup open to professionals was created. This tournament would be held in 1930 in Uruguay, the country that had won the 1924 and 1928 Olympic tournaments.

The International Tennis Federation and the IOC revealed antagonistic class struggles

The conflict between the IOC and the International Lawn Tennis Federation (ILTF), already brewing at the 1924 Olympic Games, originated in the early days of the United States Lawn Tennis Association (USLTA) during the 1890s, the creation of the Wimbledon tournament in 1877 and the organisation of the Davis Cup by the United States from 1900. France's Suzanne Lenglen, undefeated in the amateur championship, 'dared' to pursue a career in the professional championship, which was then being developed United States.

In fact, in 1928, tennis was officially removed from the Olympic programme. While some complained about the 'lack of consideration and respect shown by IOC members, others lamented the lack of good manners shown by the Federation's directors. More than just quarrels between individuals, sport became a battleground for disagreements between social classes. The principle of amateurism – at the heart of economic and political issues – was exploited. In this respect, the values associated with the Wimbledon tournament overshadowed the values the IOC wished to promote. These examples of tennis and football were known to and described by Coubertin in 1925 at the Prague Congress; for him, the issue of amateurism was "raised to the level of a social question". But he refrained from taking a stance: "The sportsman who is illicitly subsidised and the sportsman who is reimbursed for a loss of

salary – are they both amateurs or neither or if only one of them, then which is it to be" (Coubertin 1925 [1966], 93-94).

While Coubertin was in active retirement on behalf of education and social peace...

From the 17th of May to the 12th of August 1928 in Amsterdam, the Games of the IX Olympiad brought together 46 NOCs and 2,883 athletes (2,606 men and 277 women) in 14 sports and 109 events. Coubertin, who was ill, had to cancel his trip. For the first time, the Olympic cauldron was lit at the top of a tower inside the stadium and remained lit throughout the Games. For the first time, women's gymnastics and athletics events were included in the programme. This was despite misgivings, notably from Coubertin, "As for the participation of women in the Games, I remain opposed. It is against my will that they have been admitted to an increasing number of events" (Coubertin 1928, 2)⁶⁷. The medals were presented on the closing day of the Games for the last time. However, the British women's delegation did not travel to Amsterdam, in protest at the small number of events on offer. As these Olympic Games drew to a close, for various reasons, the IOC, the International Athletics Federation and the Fédération Sportive Féminine Internationale remained dissatisfied with the programme of women's athletics events.

From the 30th of July to the 14th of August 1932, in Los Angeles, California, the Games of the X Olympiad brought together 37 National Olympic Committees (NOC) and 1,332 athletes (1,206 men and 126 women) in 14 sports and 117 events. These Olympic Games took place "in spite of unfavourable economic circumstances and a banking crisis of unexpected gravity" (Coubertin 1932 [1966], 124), in the midst of the Great Depression, which prevented several delegations from participating. The Olympic infrastructure benefitted from the Californian locale. Fifteen sports venues were used for the 1932 Summer Olympics. In order to manage costs, existing sites were preferred, with the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum renamed the *Olympic Stadium*. Paavo Nurmi's suspension by the International Athletics Federation (led by President Johannes Sigfrid Edström, who went on to become IOC President in 1946) for breaking the rules of amateurism temporarily upset diplomatic sporting relations between Sweden and Finland. Although Coubertin was not present at the Games, he stayed informed, thanks in particular to Baillet-Latour. Coubertin reported that these Games were "a glorious apotheosis" thanks to a "perfectly Olympic organisation and spirit"(Coubertin 1932 [1966], 124).

Since 1925, Coubertin had distanced himself from the IOC and devoted himself to his new crusade: for him, it was a question of exploring the essence of sports education, adapted to various audiences. When his 'friends' celebrated his 70th birthday in Lausanne, he nevertheless advised the younger generations, who had the future of humanity in their hands, to be vigilant: the "coming society will be altruistic or will be nothing: choose between that and chaos; - lastly the will to understand things as a whole. Lift up those eyes, threatened with myopia by the slavery of the specialisation: do not be afraid of becoming long-sighted. Look toward the far horizons of nature and history. From these heights man draws his strength and motive-power" (Coubertin 1932 [1966], 123).

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⁶⁷ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

4.2. Coubertin and the Olympic Torch Relay

Ansgar Molzberger

"The tired runner brings the torch to the fresh runner – a symbol of the eternally renewing power of youth. In the same way the fire of the Greek spirit has always reignited and enlightened mankind, the fire of Olympia should finally continue to burn in the Olympic Games of modern times. [...] This is how old and new are linked [...]" (Diem 1934, 1)⁶⁸. With these words, Carl Diem, Secretary General of the Organising Committee (OCOG) for the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin, announced the premiere of the Olympic torch relay in the *Olympic Press Service* on the 30th of May 1934.

A symbolic fire had already been lit in 1928 at the Olympic Games in Amsterdam. Now, in the run-up to the Games of the XI Olympiad Berlin 1936, a ritual was added that is still an integral part of the Olympic Games protocol today.

The idea for the Olympic torch relay is attributed to Diem, who at that time had already been working for many years on ideas for the ceremonial staging of the Olympic Games. In 1912, the Olympic Games in Stockholm had left a very positive impression on Diem – he had also been impressed by the fires that had been lit on the two stadium towers on special occasions during the Games. However, Diem, Secretary General of the Organising Committee for the 1916 edition, was not able to realise his manifold staging ideas for those Games, which were awarded to Berlin but then cancelled due to the First World War. After the end of the war, Diem, as Germany's leading sports official, devoted himself in particular to his work at the German University of Physical Education, which opened in Berlin in 1920 and was largely initiated by him. Here, the Jewish archaeologist and Diem confidant Alfred Schiff researched extensively on ancient fire cults and thus provided a historical basis for the premiere of the Olympic torch relay – however, Schiff's name did not appear in 1936 for racist reasons.

In his circle of friends, Diem expressed the idea for the Olympic torch relay as early as 1931, the year the 1936 Olympic Games were awarded to Berlin. At the international level, Diem first communicated the plan to Pierre de Coubertin, whom he trusted, at a meeting on the 31st of July 1933.

Coubertin was enthusiastic about the idea, as he himself had used the image of an Olympic torch in speeches at earlier Olympic Games. For example, on the 26th of July at the closing banquet after the sailing competitions at the 1912 Olympic Games in Stockholm, he said: "And now, gentlemen, through our mediation, a great people has received the torch of the Olympiads from your hands, and has thereby undertaken to preserve and if possible to quicken its precious flame" (Coubertin 1912 [1913], 798)⁶⁹. Furthermore, Coubertin's phrase, "May the Olympic torch follow its course throughout the ages for the good of a humanity ever more ardent, courageous and pure" (Coubertin 1920 [1957], 51)⁷⁰ – which he uttered at the Closing Ceremony in Antwerp in 1920 – had also been displayed on the scoreboard in the stadium at the end of the 1932 Olympic Games in Los Angeles; and in the *Olympic Charter* (Statutes) of 1921 it was stated that the IOC President's speech at the closing ceremony of the Olympic Games should include the phrase "may the Olympic torch continue its course through the ages" (Comité International Olympique 1921, 11-12)⁷¹. But above all, as early as 1894, torch races were already part of a Fête de Nuit within the International Congress of Paris for the Re-establishment of the Olympic Games, convened by Coubertin.

Following the meeting with Coubertin in 1933, Diem briefed the acting IOC President, Henri de Baillet-Latour, on the planned Olympic torch relay. Baillet-Latour was also taken with it. At the 1934 IOC Session in Athens, the German IOC member Theodor Lewald, who was also President of the Berlin

⁶⁸ Originally published in German, English translation provided by the author.

⁶⁹ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the author.

⁷⁰ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the author.

⁷¹ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the author.



Document 25: Berlin 1936, map of the Torch relay from Olympia to Berlin. IOC Collections.

1936 OCOG, presented the idea of the torch relay to the IOC on the 18th of May 1934, with Diem in attendance. The IOC gave its full approval.

After extensive preparatory work by the Berlin Organising Committee and the production of the steel torch-holder – by the Essen-based Friedrich Krupp AG – for the magnesium torches to be used by the runners, the Olympic flame was lit by the sun's rays in the ancient grove of Olympia on the 20th of July 1936 with the help of a concave mirror manufactured by the Zeiss company. The first of the total of 3,075 runners (from Olympia to Berlin) was the Greek Konstantin Kondylis. Coubertin had addressed the runners in a greeting which was published in the newspaper *Le Sport Suisse* on the 22nd of July 1936: "May your route be happy. [...] On my behalf, ask the youth assembled in Berlin to accept the legacy of my work. Ask them to complete what I have begun, a task that pervasive routine and tedium prevented me from achieving completely. Let the union of the body and mind be scaled forever, for progress and for human dignity" (Coubertin 1936 [2000], 579).

From Olympia, the flame was then brought to Germany via a relay run over a total of 3,075 kilometres through Greece, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Austria and Czechoslovakia, accompanied by festive events in the larger cities of the participating countries. Fritz Schilgen was the last runner to light the Olympic flame during the Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Games on the 1st of August 1936 in the Berlin Olympic Stadium. In addition, an olive tree branch from

Olympia was transported to the German capital by plane. The guest of honour Spiridon Louis, Olympic marathon champion in 1896, handed it over to the German 'Führer' Adolf Hitler at the Opening Ceremony.

At the end of the 1936 Olympic Games, Coubertin – who was not present in Berlin – was impressed by the perfectly organised world sports festival and especially by the torch relay. In another message of greeting, the manuscript of which is in the IOC archives, he addressed the Olympic athletes: "And you, athletes, remember the flame lit by the ardour of the sun, that came to you from Olympia to shed light on us and to warm our age" (Coubertin 1936 [2000], 520).

However, the fact the Nazis had used the 1936 Olympic Games – with their ceremonial staging and the very professional organisational work that had impressed the sporting world – as a kind of façade to conceal the true face of their racist, anti-Semitic and inhuman dictatorship became clear at the latest in 1939, with the outbreak of the Second World War sparked by Germany. Nevertheless, the new Olympic ritual of the torch relay was not up for discussion after the premiere, even though the Nazis had also used the 1936 relay extensively for political purposes in line with their ideology. With a view to the next Olympic Games, there were plans for a torch relay for the 1940 Olympic Games, which – like the 1944 Games – could not be held because of the Second World War.

By decision of the IOC in 1946, the popular ritual was then performed again at the first Olympic Summer Games to be held after the Second World War, the Games of the XIV Olympiad London 1948 – and is an element of Olympic protocol to this day. And also at the Winter Olympics: after holding the

first torch relays after the Second World War from 'alternative' starting locations, the Olympic flame was lit for the first time in Ancient Olympia for the 1964 Winter Olympics in Innsbruck.



Picture 17: Berlin 1936, ceremony of lightning of the Olympic Flame from rays of the sun.

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4.3. Coubertin and the Olympic Games Berlin 1936

Volker Kluge

Pierre de Coubertin stood down as President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in 1925. After that, he refused to get involved in IOC business, instead devoting himself to pedagogical and philosophical matters, which he regarded as the essence of Olympism. But he did decide to play one more active role. This was for the Olympic Games Berlin 1936, which – as soon became apparent – were used by the Nazi regime for its own propaganda.

Had things gone as wished by Coubertin, who testified to the Germans' sense of order and discipline, the Olympic Games would already have been held in Berlin in 1916. But they were a victim of the First World War, from which the German empire and its allies emerged as the losers.

In 1931, when the IOC chose Berlin once more, Germany was a democratic state. Only a few people realised that, two years later, Adolf Hitler would be creating a dictatorship in which any form of opposition was hounded and the Jewish population discriminated against. The civilised world's answer was a boycott movement, which called for the Olympic Games to be moved to another country.

Under pressure in foreign policy terms, the Nazi regime approached prominent personalities, seeking their support to avoid sanctions. At the top of the list of illustrious names was that of Coubertin, who was facing hard times after losing his fortune in the global economic crisis. The 70-year-old was forced to move out of the Villa Mon-Repos in Lausanne. Separated from his family, he went to live in the modest surroundings of a guesthouse in Geneva. He confessed to a longstanding colleague campaigner that life had lost its meaning for him.

Faced with this situation, it was Carl Diem, the General Secretary of the Berlin 1936 Organising Committee, who actively sought him out in order to win him over as a supporter. At a meeting in Switzerland, Diem gave him an extensive description of the preparations, especially the organisers' intention to link the sports competitions to cultural performances. Coubertin was particularly keen on the idea of having Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* played at the Opening Ceremony, something he had already wanted to happen in 1916. He offered to give speeches in Germany, as a result of which he was invited to Berlin. But shortly before the visit scheduled for November 1934, Coubertin cancelled the trip because of an illness.

Still driven by the ambition of perfecting the Olympic ceremonial elements that he had invented, Coubertin ignored the dictatorial regime in Germany. On the contrary, he regarded the growing international protests as an attack on the Olympic Movement. He considered the "anti-Hitler campaign" to be "foolish and stupid"; and he put it down to "a cunningly deceived" press (Diem 1935)⁷². He wrote to Diem that: "There are nonetheless many sensible people who stand against the current, use sound judgement and are struck by the Führer's determination, his thinking, his sangfroid, and his talent as a speaker and for knowing when to remain silent" (Diem 1935)⁷³.

Hitler, who was shown this letter, thanked Coubertin with a signed photo, which led Coubertin to ask him for a handwritten text for a graphological study. But this was refused, on the grounds of "fundamental considerations" (Meerwald 1935)⁷⁴.

⁷² Originally written in French, English translation provided by the IOC. In this letter written by Diem, he quotes Coubertin's letter of 8 May 1935. The original letter has been lost.

⁷³ Originally written in French, English translation provided by the IOC. In this letter written by Diem, he quotes Coubertin's letter of 8 May 1935. The original letter has been lost.

⁷⁴ Originally written in German, English translation provided by the IOC.

Coubertin was unsettled by the criticism of his pro-regime behaviour. He regarded it as misplaced, believing that the Olympic ideal would emerge strengthened from these Games organised with such effort. For this reason, he was happy to help the Nazi propaganda, and the regime offered him the chance to make a speech in French entitled *Pax Olympica*, which was broadcast worldwide. Coubertin was apparently unaware that he was being used as an 'apostle of peace' to legitimise the holding of the Games.

After this, he received in Germany the recognition he had never had in his French homeland. He was showered with honours and privileges. A square outside the Reichssportfeld built for the Olympic Games was named after him. The stadium's hall of honour was decorated with a relief portrait. Coubertin was given a contract for the German edition of his *Olympische Erinnerungen* (Olympic Memoirs), and at a Goethe Society ceremony in Weimar, he was even included in a historic series of "poet greats" (Lewald 1935).

When the IOC called for a fund to be created to help Coubertin in his precarious financial situation, the Berlin Organising Committee initially pledged to contribute 5,000 Reichsmark. But in order to make a stronger impression, this amount was then doubled, and turned into an "honorary endowment" (Pfundtner 1936)⁷⁵ from Hitler, which was given to Coubertin on the opening day of the Olympic Games.

In spite of these forms of homage, the Nazi regime could not entice Coubertin to go to Berlin, so that his presence could provide the crowning glory for this gigantic spectacle. Coubertin limited himself to a welcome message, and at the Opening Ceremony of the Games, the seat allocated to him, next to Hitler, remained empty. Only his voice could be heard from the stadium loudspeakers, and on the scoreboard a simplified version of the Olympic creed could be seen: "The reason of Olympic Games / is not the victory / but the participation / not the finish / but the chivalry."⁷⁶ Coubertin originally wanted to go to Olympia, in order to demonstrate France's contribution to the revival of the Games at the lighting of the Olympic flame. Diem, who had come up with the idea of the torch relay, talked him out of it in the hope that he could persuade him to go to Berlin instead. But Coubertin finally decided not to leave Switzerland and to follow the proceedings from afar, not so much by radio but rather through newspaper articles or the letters that Diem sent him each day. These were full of self-praise, which Coubertin espoused with no critical distance.

In France, where Germany's breach of international treaties and blatant rearmament were being followed anxiously, people saw things differently. Only a small portion of the press was impressed with these Olympic Games, while the majority saw them as a propaganda event. In his concluding review, Jacques Goddet, Editor-in-Chief of *L'Auto*, went so far as to call it a 'perversion of the Olympic ideal'. After this harsh criticism, *Le Journal* invited Coubertin to express his own opinion. This was unequivocal: "What? The Games 'disfigured'? The Olympic idea sacrificed to propaganda? That is utterly wrong! The wonderful success of the Berlin Games has served the Olympic ideal magnificently. The French are the only ones, or practically the only ones, playing Cassandra" (Coubertin 1936a [2000] 521). In another interview he expressly described the Games as being "very exactly [...] what I wished they were" (Coubertin 1936b, 4)⁷⁷.

There was hope in the concluding summary that he wrote at the end of the Games: "The swaying and struggles of history will continue, but little by little knowledge will replace dangerous ignorance; mutual understanding will soften unthinking hatreds. Thus the edifice upon which I have laboured for half-a-century will be strengthened" (Coubertin 1936c [1966], 136). His death shortly afterwards spared Coubertin a great disappointment. If not before, the start of the Second World War would certainly have forced him to realise that, with his view of the Berlin Games, he had brought down his own

⁷⁵ Originally written in German, English translation provided by the IOC.

⁷⁶ At a reception in London in 1908, Coubertin actually said: "L'important dans la vie ce n'est point le triomphe mais le combat ; l'essentiel ce n'est pas d'avoir vaincu mais de s'être bien battu." See: *The Fourth Olympiad London 1908, Official Report*, 793.

⁷⁷ Originally written in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

utopia, and that he had placed his legacy in the wrong hands. But that does not take anything away from the importance of his life's work, the product of a noble heart based on the idea of peace and understanding between peoples.



Picture 18: Berlin 1936, speech from Coubertin to the Swiss radio.

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4.4. The Lausanne Olympic Institute

Jean Durry

Envisaged by Pierre de Coubertin in 1915 as a follow-up to the Sports Psychology and Physiology Congress in Lausanne in 1913, but delayed by Coubertin's work for the National Propaganda Department of the Foreign Affairs Ministry in Paris for most of 1916, the project to create an Olympic Institute in Lausanne became a reality between 1917 and 1919 in the form of intermittent sessions.

The reason he devoted a large part of his time and energy to this during these wartime years was that he had found a way to apply in vivo his educational ideas that closely combined intellectual disciplines and sport. In a letter to Viktor Gustaf Balck dated on the 25th of March 1918, he said: "I am not making my students utopians, but rather men who are well-rounded, calm and capable of discernment [...]" (Coubertin, 1918)⁷⁸.

January 1917 saw the start of the active phase. The first session was held in two parts. From the 1st of March to the 13th of April, 20 internees from the Lausanne region (prisoners transferred from Germany to Switzerland, but who were still treated as prisoners) took part; and from the 7th of May to the beginning of July it was the turn of 30 French and Belgian internees, officers, non-commissioned officer and soldiers. In his report delivered on the 10th of April 1918 to the General Assembly of the Lausanne Friends of Olympism Society (SLAO), which he had launched with the principal aim of 'supporting the Olympic Institute', Coubertin highlighted the extremely encouraging results of the programme, the physical exercises, the theory lessons and the nine talks that had proved popular with the public: "The physical improvement was [...] considerable [...]. The mental improvement was no less noticeable. All trace of depression disappeared from these men, whose injuries or sufferings induced by captivity had severely disabled" (Coubertin 1918, 4)⁷⁹.

Although the 'Olympic Festival' at the end of February 1918 brought together around 1,000 people, the new session of the Institute (from the 18th of March to the 12th of April) attracted only students from Lausanne University; the terrible flu epidemic put a stop to the session planned for the autumn; and the third one (from February to the 6th of March 1919) was attended only by members of local sports clubs. Although the report of the 18th of March 1919 was flattering, in reality Coubertin failed to make the Institute a lasting part of the Lausanne landscape.

Coubertin had expressly differentiated the Institute, a personal initiative, from the Olympic Movement. Once the war was over, Olympism came back to life and monopolised his attention once more. He turned the page to such an extent that, in his *Olympic Memoirs* (1931-1932), there is not a single reference to the Institute.

Although it had now become an empty shell, the Lausanne Olympic Institute label would still be useful to him on occasion; and in 1937, he wanted to pass it on to Francis-Marius Messerli – while creating another Institute in Berlin with Carl Diem. After the Second World War, the IOC then sponsored a Pierre de Coubertin Olympic Institute, but this never really got off the ground.

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⁷⁸ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

⁷⁹ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

4.5. The Founder of the Olympic Museum

Christian Wacker

The collection of souvenirs of the Olympic Games and later of other great sporting events heralded the beginning of sport-related collecting. The idea of collecting Olympic history and memorabilia goes back to Pierre de Coubertin, who started to build an archive in the attics of the Casino de Montbenon in Lausanne after moving the headquarters of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in 1915. In 1923, the IOC Session voted in favour of developing the collections of the Museum, and then the collection was transferred to a pleasant mansion inside the city's Mon-Repos park and covered two rooms on the 1st floor. Coubertin personally installed the Museum, curated it by himself and opened it to exclusive guests, but not publicly. The collection was constantly growing due to gifts from the Olympic family all around the world. In 1970, the permanent exhibition there closed its doors.

With the election of Juan Antonio Samaranch as IOC President in 1980, the awareness of collecting and exhibiting Olympic heritage got a significant boost. During the 1980s, a so-called 'showcase' in the heart of Lausanne was used to display more than 40 temporary exhibitions, and budgets were created to acquire Olympic collections. The basis was laid out for the Olympic Museum, which opened its doors in 1993. Millions have visited this museum since then, and a new concept after a restoration period with a re-opening of the Olympic Museum in 2013 has attracted even more attention.

Under the leadership of the Olympic Museum, an Olympic Museum Network was created in 2006 and currently has 32 members. This list is constantly growing, because a variety of museum projects are being planned or under development. Cities which are bidding for or organising the Olympic Games develop a sensibility for Olympic history and recognise a need to showcase their Olympic and sports heritage. Very often plans for Olympic museums are a logical consequence, as can be observed in London, Sochi and Istanbul. The fact that the world of today is embraced by a compact network of Olympic museums can be regarded as a legacy going back to Coubertin, and even more strongly to Juan Antonio Samaranch, one of his Presidential successors. Due to their topics, Olympic museums usually collect items of minor financial value, but of greater socio-historical importance. Unlike art museums, where the object plays the central role (financial value, rarity), Olympic museums use the language of 'edutainment' to inform, educate and entertain their visitors. With a combination of sports items, media presentations and even live acts, they attract their audience. Collection policies usually follow these principals beyond the 'l'art pour l'art' idea.

The question will arise about the type of objects to be collected. The answer is simple, but complex at the same time. Every object, which is directly or indirectly connected to sport, is of potential interest. This could be a trophy, a medal, a diploma, a pin, clothes, sports equipment, but also entrance tickets, videos, DVDs, tapes and photographs as well as intangible collectibles like interviews.

The collection cannot afford all types of Olympic and sports items used during decades or even centuries, but it stores items from famous sportsmen and women as well as those who tell stories. Although it is not possible to define clear-cut rules concerning a collection policy, it is possible to describe some guidelines to help collections identify objects that contain condensed information and therefore have museum quality, i.e.: to match the profile of the collection. In this process of appraising the information value of objects, the following five key questions are helpful:

- Does the object document sports history in general?
- Does the object document national or cultural sports history from the concerned entity?
- Does the object document the history of a sports person (athlete, functionary, fan, spectator, journalist, etc.), a sports association or a sports club?
- Does the object document a sports event of international (indicating an object's outstanding value), national (indicating an object's high value) or local (indicating an object's high value or irrelevant value) importance?
- Does the object document a significant development of sports equipment (material, production, etc.)?

The more questions can be answered positively, the more likely it is that the object being evaluated is of Olympic museum quality and matches the profile of the collection.

To this day, a world-wide-networked collector's scene of sporting artefacts and Olympic memorabilia has also developed which attempts to get top prices when selling rare Olympic torches or unique Olympic diplomas. Today, museum collections no longer play a major part in the buyers' market since competition from investors, speculators and wealthy private collectors has become too strong. A similar development is evident in the football memorabilia market, where, especially in England, six-figure buyers' bids at auction are no longer unusual.



Picture 19: The Olympic Museum in Mon-Repos in 1964.



Picture 20: The cabinet of Coubertin in the Olympic Museum in Mon-Repos, Lausanne.

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5. Promoting education, physical education, sport and physical activity through and beyond the Olympic Movement

5.1. Olympic Education

Nelson Todt

Coubertin did not use the term Olympic education, but referred initially to "sporting education", which was the title of the book he published in 1922, *Pédagogie sportive*. The term Olympic education first appeared in sports education and Olympic research only in the 1970s.

Besides the institutional framework that Coubertin had given the Olympic Movement, through the International Olympic Committee (IOC), National Olympic Committees (NOCs) and the Olympic Games, he also needed an intellectual orientation, an Olympic philosophy, for which he coined the term Olympism; synonyms are: Olympic idea, Olympic thought, Olympic ideals or principles.

In fact, in line with his educational vision, Coubertin considered Olympism as something much more than simple exercises, and insisted that the educational value of sport did not emerge simply as a mere provision of sport, and even less as a spontaneous consequence of simply participating in it, but that it had to be taught explicitly.

According to the Olympic Studies Centre (OSC) of the IOC and from an educational perspective, Coubertin's Olympism seeks to bring together in a radiant union all the qualities that guide mankind to perfection (1917). It draws on corporal hygiene and public-spiritedness (1917). It advocates a general sports education (1918). It has an educational character and exudes social, moral and educational force (1920). It is a garden for the culture of the will (1923). It is, simultaneously, strength, solidarity and competition – the gospel of a rounded individual (1925).

In presenting Coubertin's article on Olympic pedagogy in the *Gazette de Lausanne* (1918), Norbert Müller noted that this is when Coubertin used that terminology for his concept of pedagogy. Müller further noted that what Coubertin was referring to was pedagogy as it related to an individual's freedom to practise sport, to develop equality and fraternity through sport, as well as his own requirement that Olympism play a part in human rights being realised.

In the actual article, Coubertin wrote that: "this Olympic pedagogy [...] was based at once on the cult of effort and on the cult of eurythmy – and consequently on the love of excess combined with the love of moderation – is not sufficiently served by being glorified before the world once every four years in the Olympic Games. It needs permanent factories. The Olympic factory of the ancient world was the gymnasium. The Olympiads have been renewed, but the gymnasium of antiquity has not – as yet. It must be" (Coubertin 1918 [2000], 217).

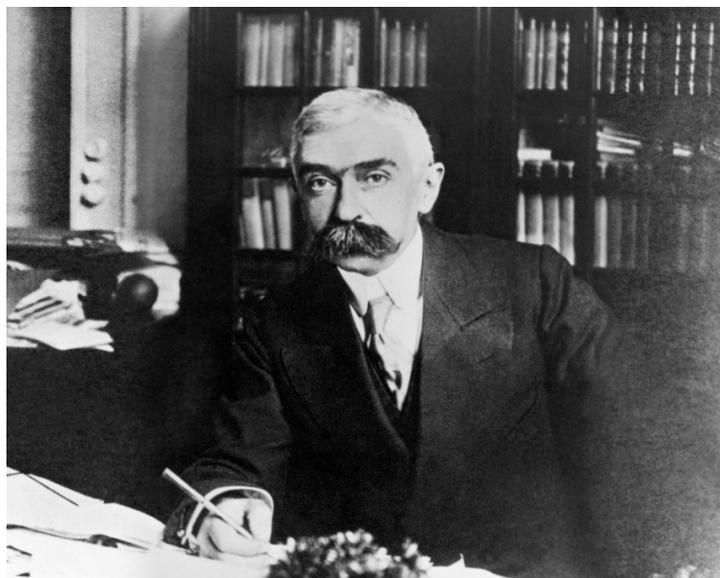
Equally he considers: "Olympism as a state of mind" (Coubertin 1918 [2000], 548), not a revolutionary system where every detail has been studied in advance, but one that allows for the most diverse formulas to be applied in Olympic pedagogy, and one that does not belong to any race or to any specific time.

Inspired by educational thinking in Greek Antiquity and by the educational value ascribed to sport in the Anglo-American educational system at the school and university level, Coubertin promoted the harmonious education of mind and body. He was convinced that the character of the young could be critically developed through the individual experience of sporting activity and extended from there to life as a whole.

Thus, Coubertin was looking for something not just healthy for the body, not just athletic, but something Olympic. This led him to coin the Latin expression *mens fervida in corpore lacertoso* when Coubertin returns to the idea of a new motto for Olympism: "an ardent mind in a strong body" (Coubertin 1911, 99)⁸⁰ which reformulates the traditional motto *mens sana in corpore sano* – a healthy mind in a healthy body, emphasising the bodily effort of the athlete and the shaping of his character.

Considering the given context, we can infer that Coubertin's concept of Olympic education aimed at providing a comprehensive and well-rounded education for individuals. This encompassed both physical and intellectual development, emphasising the importance of achieving a harmonious balance between the body's abilities, intellectual capabilities, and personal will.

It is understandable that "Olympic education is the means by which Olympism is disseminated, instilled and promoted" (International Olympic Academy 2001, 569). As a result, Olympism does more than lend legitimacy to the Olympic Movement and serve as a basis for diverse educational programmes, it also contributes to the formation of the human being, by teaching the concept of freedom, from the perspective of the ability to act, speak, and think without external constraint, creating conditions for social coexistence, and, above all, promoting international understanding and peace.



Picture 21: Portrait of Coubertin in 1911.

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⁸⁰ Originally written in Latin, English translation provided by the IOC.

5.2. International Olympic Institute

Volker Kluge

Having relocated the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) headquarters to Lausanne in 1915 at the beginning of the First World War, in 1917 Pierre de Coubertin subsequently set up an Olympic Institute there which offered sporting, academic and cultural courses. The programme, organised by the Lausanne Association of Friends of Olympism, was a mixture of lectures, artistic events and lessons in equestrian, martial arts, gymnastics and athletics, with participation being evaluated using a points system. Soon, however, it fell into obscurity.

Together with his close associate, Francis-Marius Messerli, he founded the International Bureau of Sports Pedagogy (Bureau International de Pédagogie Sportive - BIPS) in 1928. The Bureau was to take over the function of the 1925 Pedagogical Congress in Prague, which, to Coubertin's annoyance, had gone unsatisfactorily. It published a bulletin in which he devoted himself to questions of sports education. The core of Coubertin's efforts was *La charte de la réforme sportive* (the Charter for Sports Reform), which he presented to the League of Nations in Geneva on the 13th of September 1930 and in which he spoke out in favour of the priority of the Olympic calendar and against the large number of international sporting events.

This proved unsuccessful due to a lack of interest and funding, as did the Chair for Olympic Studies created for Coubertin by the French Culture Minister at the Centre Universitaire Méditerranéen in Nice in 1934. IOC member in Sweden Sigfrid Edström, who had visited Coubertin in mid-September 1934, wrote to IOC President Count Baillet-Latour: "He seemed in excellent health, though he still pronounced that he wished soon to die. He said that he had nothing to live for" (Edström 1934).

All that changed when Carl Diem turned up in Lausanne just a few days after Edström in 1934. Coubertin felt that Diem understood him and, in the Villa Mon-Repos, took him round the Olympic Museum, which consisted of three rooms at the time. In passing, Coubertin asked Diem, the head organiser of Berlin 1936, whether, after the Games, he could resume publication of the *Olympic Review*, which had been discontinued in 1914. Diem remarked: "He saw me as something of an executor of the Olympic ideal [...]" (Diem 1934, 802)⁸¹.

The recognition that Coubertin would receive from the Germans ultimately led to him bequeathing his literary inheritance to Germany. As he was concerned about the Olympic Movement deviating from its educational mission, he proposed the establishment of a "Centre of Olympic Studies" (Coubertin 1937 [1938], 3).

Five months later, Hans von Tschammer und Osten informed him that authorisation had been granted to set up a foundation called the International Olympic Institute (IOI), with Diem as the director. The stated purpose of the foundation was to showcase the academic aspects of Olympism, create a set of archives and commence publication of an *Olympische Rundschau* (*Olympic Review*).

The IOC was notified at the 1938 Session where President Baillet-Latour also informed the members about Messerli's intention to merge the BIPS and the Olympic Institute in Lausanne, which still formally existed. The IOC decided not to get involved in such a conflict of interests. It did agree, however, to integrate its official *Bulletin* into Diem's review.

Twenty-four issues of the *Olympische Rundschau* were published – the final one in the summer of 1944. The Institute, which was based in a building in the Reichssportfeld complex in Berlin, had already been destroyed in a bomb attack in 1943. During the first IOC Session after the Second World War – in 1946 – Edström, who had succeeded the late Baillet-Latour as IOC President, announced that the

⁸¹ Originally published in German, English translation provided by the author.

Institute would be relocated to Lausanne. However, talks of reviving the Institute soon stopped. His proposal to continue working with Diem was roundly rejected by the other members, and the new IOC Chancellor, Otto Mayer, took on the editorial responsibilities for the *IOC Bulletin*.



Picture 22: Aerial view of the Reichsportfeld in Berlin.



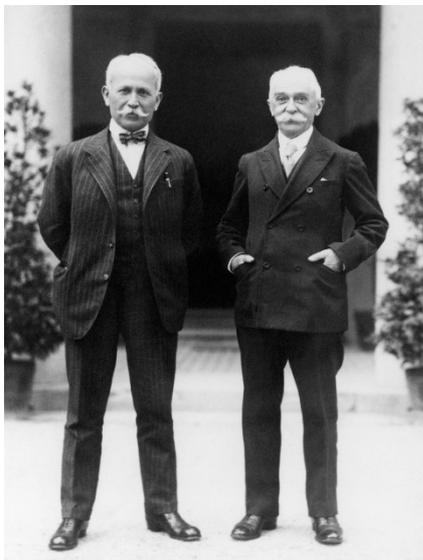
Picture 23: The Olympic Institute in Lausanne installed in the Casino de Montbenon.

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5.3. The International Olympic Academy as a Permanent School of Olympism

Konstantinos Georgiadis



Picture 24: Coubertin with Chrysafis, at the Greek ministry of education.

Pierre de Coubertin's pedagogical pursuits of physical education, sport and the Olympic Games laid the groundwork for the creation of the Permanent School of Olympism in Olympia. Coubertin's thought was dominated by holistic education in accordance with the contemporary pedagogical ideas and the ethos of the classical era with a focus on moderation, orderliness of life and balance. *Kalokagathia* as a virtue was reflected in his quests as an ongoing educational process of uplifting the individual with cultural and social parameters.

Coubertin's Olympic pedagogy, a concept he created himself, included, among other things, peace education, social education, historical background, philosophy, art in education and health education. In the context of Coubertin's Olympic pedagogy, the idea of the revival of the 'ancient gymnasium' was included as a permanent workshop for Olympic education. His enriched pedagogical programme with humanitarian goals is cross-thematic, interdisciplinary and multidimensional. In 1925, Coubertin founded the Universal Pedagogical Union and in 1926

the International Bureau of Sports Pedagogy.

Ioannis Chrysafis, an important figure in physical education in Greece, presented his ideas for physical education and the revival of the ancient gymnasium in 1925 at the Olympic Congress in Prague. Coubertin's relationship with Chrysafis sowed the first seeds for the creation of the International Olympic Academy (IOA) in the philosophy of the Platonic Academy as a place of spiritual quest for physical education and the Olympic Games. In 1927, Coubertin visited Olympia for the ceremony of revelation of the commemorative stele in his honour and for the revival of the Olympic Games. The idea of the ancient gymnasium had matured in the thoughts of the two men as an Olympic workshop.

After his death on the 2nd of September 1937, following his wishes, his heart was transferred and placed on the 24th of March 1938 in a special crypt inside the commemorative stele in Olympia, which is now at the IOA premises. Coubertin did not live to experience what he dreamed of as a permanent workshop of Olympic pedagogy. As a legacy of his ideas, in 1961, the IOA, the educational, academic and intellectual institution of the modern Olympic Movement, began its operations in Ancient Olympia, after a long-term collaboration between the Hellenic Olympic Committee and the IOC, Ioannis Ketseas and Carl Diem. The festivities started on the 16th of June 1961 with the opening of IOA activities, and were followed with a ceremony held a few days later to mark the handover of the ancient Olympic stadium to the Greek Government, following its excavation, which was completed in the same year. Two camps were set up to welcome the students and the accompanying professors.

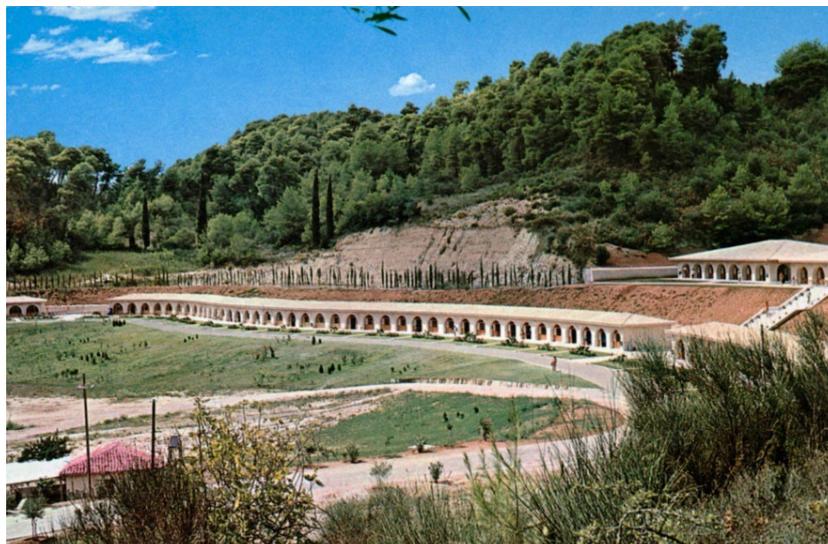
To this day, the IOA preserves the tradition and legacy of the Olympic ideal undimmed. Along with its educational activities, it promotes at all levels of education, and the social and educational ideas of the humanist Coubertin. Inspired personalities and visionaries have shaped the IOA's diverse educational activities. In addition, the first Olympic Museum for the modern Olympic Games was founded in Ancient Olympia in 1961, which would complement the work of the IOA. The educational work of the IOA has also been circulated through the annual editions of the Sessions' *Proceedings*. In 1996, in collaboration with the IOC, the IOA published the first international Olympic education programme entitled 'Keep the Spirit Alive'.

With the support of the IOC and President Thomas Bach, all the facilities and the infrastructure in Ancient Olympia were renovated in 2021, marking a new beginning for the IOA in the Olympic Movement. Additionally, in cooperation with the IOC, new educational programmes are being prepared, strengthening the institutional relations between the two organisations. Throughout the years, the IOA has gained a dominant role in the study of Olympism and the dissemination of Olympic education.

In addition to the IOA, there are currently 150 National Olympic Academies (NOAs) that act as transmitters for the diffusion of the Olympic values worldwide. The establishment of the first NOA in Spain in 1968 marked a new educational beginning that complemented the IOA's educational orientation and bore fruit. The gradual establishment of NOAs would give a new impetus to the dissemination of Olympic education. The work of the IOA together with the role of the NOAs was officially recognised and mentioned for the first time in the Olympic Charter that entered into force in December 1991.

With the establishment of multinational and cultural NOA networks, such as the Association of National Olympic Academies of Africa (AANO, founded in 2011), the Ibero-American Association (APAO, founded in 1988), the Association of French-speaking NOAs (AFAO, founded in 2009) and the Association of European NOAs (EOA, founded in 2018), the institutional conditions are in place to coordinate the work of the NOAs and fulfil their mission.

Today the IOA and the NOAs with all their initiatives are legacies of Coubertin's vision. Through innovative educational activities, they are ready to welcome the new generations that will disseminate Olympism and Olympic education. Undoubtedly, the celebrations for the IOA's 60 years of operation constitute its promising future for the realisation of the humanitarian goals of this permanent workshop of Olympism.



Picture 25: View of the International Olympic Academy in Olympia in 1970.

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5.4. The Universal Pedagogical Union

Gilles Lecocq

"On 31 May 1888, [...] two dozen men of goodwill met in Paris to consider ways of 'getting the French tan' through sport. Jules Simon, the Prime Minister, liked the idea when I went to plead my case before him. 'And how long [...] will it take to get this tan?' – '20 years,' I replied without hesitation" (Coubertin 1923, 688)⁸². A few years later, after he had stepped away from the International Olympic Committee (IOC), Coubertin established the Universal Pedagogical Union (Union Pédagogique Universelle, UPU) on the 15th of November 1925 in Aix-en-Provence, based on an observation that history, geography and politics were all intertwined. On the occasion, in his inaugural message, Coubertin made the following observation: "The evils from which Europe suffers are not the result of war. The war only aggravated them. Their origins date from much longer ago. They stem from the bankrupt state into which Western pedagogy is sinking" (Coubertin 1936, 172)⁸³. A few years after telling Jules Simon that it would take 20 years to 'get the French tan'⁸⁴, just as for a marksman to restore a weapon that had tired of excessive use, Coubertin proposed universal pedagogy as a link between his educational vision, imbued with passion and perseverance, and the instability of national and international societies.

When the modern city serves everyone

From the 14th to the 18th of September 1926, the UPU organised a conference in Lausanne on the 'pedagogical role of the modern city', in connection with the creation of a *Charte de la Réforme pédagogique*. Coubertin reaffirmed the need to build on recognition of the universal right to a basic education, while avoiding specialising too soon. In doing so, he was revisiting a perspective that he had initially outlined in the twilight of the First World War: "All forms of sport for everyone; that is no doubt a formula which is going to be criticised as madly utopian, I do not care. I have weighed and examined it for a long time; I know it is accurate and possible" (Coubertin 1919 [2000], 173). The modern city would become the place of reference that gave every resident the opportunity to experience a people's university and a revived ancient gymnasium. It was during his second trip to Greece, in April 1927, that Coubertin, on behalf of the UPU, recalled how, by paying homage to Minerva, the stadium of Pericles and the divine Acropolis, he had dreamed of proclaiming in each city the "future victories awaiting Hellenism – still so very much alive, and eternally adapted to human circumstances". (Coubertin 1932 [1997], 229).

Universal pedagogy for universal peace

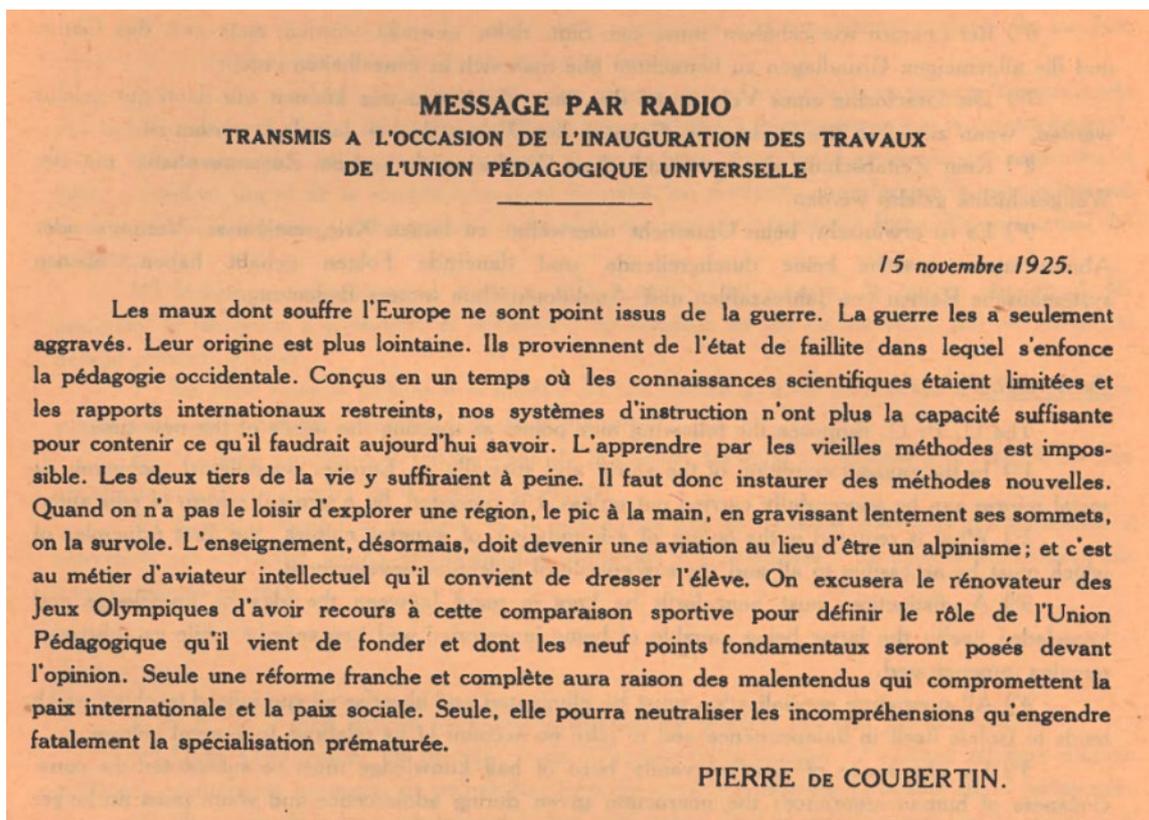
In issue II of the *Bulletin de l'Union Pédagogique Universelle*, Coubertin stated that "The time will come, however, to decide whether history is to continue to be used as a factory for weapons of war, or whether it will be possible for it to play the pacifying role of which it is capable" (Coubertin 1926-1927, 7)⁸⁵. Forty years after the first edition of the *Dictionnaire de pédagogie et d'instruction scolaire* was published, Ferdinand Buisson was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. In 1927, Coubertin was reminded that patience is essential to the arts of eloquence and rhetoric, in order to create sophisticated diplomatic games. However, Coubertin had no time for diplomatic patience. He was nearly 68 years old when, in late 1930, he put an end to the UPU's activities. He wanted to think that in those five years, the Union had enabled him to work for a democratic extension of the principle of universal pedagogy, beyond Olympism.

⁸² Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

⁸³ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

⁸⁴ Beyond the metaphor of a weapon needing to be restored, Coubertin explained what he meant by this tanning process in 1931: "The alpha and omega of sports pedagogy consists in provoking or encouraging the operation of moral tanning through physical tanning, the tanning of the soul through the tanning of the body. The two are not related. Joining the two together is both a science and, above all, an art: an art requiring infinite aptness and delicacy and varying according to the temperament of the individual, the circumstances of their previous development, the environment in which they have been trained" (Coubertin 1931, 10). Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

⁸⁵ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.



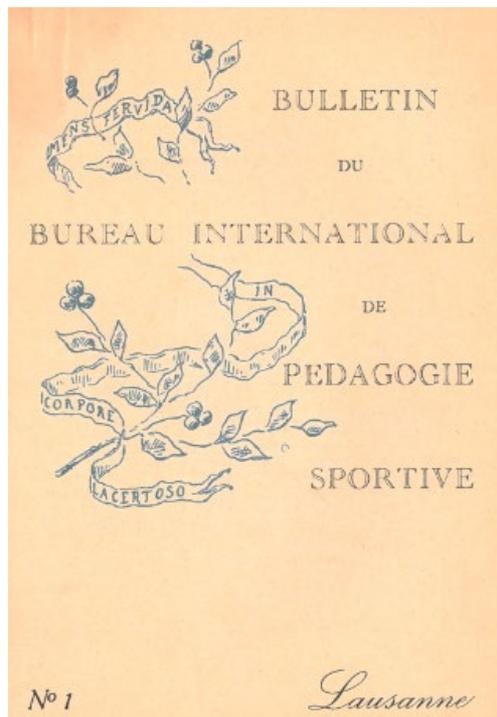
Document 26: Message from Coubertin for the inauguration of the works of the Universal Pedagogical Union, 15 November 1925. IOC Historical Archives.

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5.5. The International Bureau for Sports Pedagogy

Gilles Lecocq



Document 27: Cover page of the Bulletin No. 1 of the BIPS in 1925. IOC Historical Archives.

"Balance, alas, is not a state that is always easy to achieve" (Coubertin 1907, 338)⁸⁶. During a speech made on the 30th of June 1907 in the main amphitheatre at the Sorbonne, at the celebration organised by the Société des Sports Populaires for the presentation of the *Diplôme des Débrouillards* to the winners for 1907, Pierre de Coubertin was already proposing to create links between Olympic education and sports pedagogy. As he saw it, a culture of useful effort was needed to enable each person to exercise individually with no ambition other than to excel themselves, based upon reasonable eclecticism. 1920 saw the advent of what would constitute the principles of a sports pedagogy, and in the same year, Coubertin started thinking about the purpose and functioning of the International Bureau of Sports Pedagogy (Bureau International de Pédagogie Sportive - BIPS). It was on the 13th of November 1930 in Geneva that an association between Olympic education and sports pedagogy gave rise to *La charte de la réforme sportive* (the Charter for Sports Reform), the partial testament to the educational work of which Coubertin, who was never satisfied, was the constant champion. The creation of the BIPS in 1928 bore witness to this dissatisfaction, which was combined with a failure to understand the various social (r)evolutions

that were shaking the mythological foundation of the fundamental values of sport that Coubertin wanted. With this Bureau, Coubertin sought to underline the fact that the pedagogical use of sports activity needed to be advocated repeatedly.

The BIPS was one of Coubertin's last institutional creations, again with the support of the city of Lausanne authorities. Coubertin was untiring in his efforts to break down barriers in his quest to establish new institutional alliances. He demonstrated a passionate perseverance that was nonetheless constantly hampered by institutions which paid him increasingly less attention. After an encouraging start, the work of the BIPS went into decline, and at the end of 1929 Coubertin abandoned everything, including the secretariat, but continued producing the *Bulletin du BIPS* until 1933, maintaining a title that would be useful to him for naming various publications.

Coubertin's desire to restore the ancient gymnasium is worth noting, given that this leitmotiv was inspired by several cultural contexts. For example, the hippodrome in Constantinople and the Isolympic Games in Naples were places where the ancient gymnasium found its place not just in terms of respecting tradition, but also with the desire to adapt to a cultural context with its own specificities. And so, following on from Coubertin, it is up to each generation to give meaning to the realities of the sports pedagogy of its age. To achieve this, sports pedagogy which drives social reform through both sport and education is an opportunity to seek a still unachieved balance between the foundations of the natural and cultural dimensions of humanity, in accordance with the inscription on the Temple of Apollo in Delphi: *Meden Agan* (nothing in excess). "May numerous educators enter and remain there. They will find there a solid instrument with which to work for the good of young people and make them – in the words used at the formal closing of the Olympic Games – ever more ardent, courageous and pure" (Coubertin 1921, 124).⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

⁸⁷ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.



Document 28: Diploma of the Re-establishment of the Olympic Games awarded to the Bureau for Sports Pedagogy. Olympic Museum Collection, Lausanne.

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5.7. Coubertin and Utilitarian Gymnastics

Bernard Andrieu

The Comité de la Gymnastique Utilitaire, founded in 1903 with Pierre de Coubertin as its president, became the Société des Sports Populaires in 1906. For adolescents over the age of 14, those with some experience with gymnastics at school, the aim was to offer utilitarian gymnastics to create a "semi-trained person, one who can at any time substitute for his usual day a hard day's muscular work, without damage to his health, [...], without experiencing anything other than healthy fatigue" (Coubertin 1909, 186)⁹⁰, and "a resourceful person, skilful with his hands, quick to exert himself, flexible of muscle, resistant to fatigue, with a quick eye and firm decisiveness, and trained for those changes of place, profession, situation, habits, and ideas which the fertile instability of modern societies makes necessary [...]" (Coubertin 1909 183).

In modern societies, "it is no longer Minerva, goddess of calm and reflection, who reigns over the world, but Mercury, god of activity, locomotion and commerce" (Coubertin 1906, 3)⁹¹. For Coubertin, "we concern ourselves here only with the utilitarian impedimentum, that with which an accident or a circumstance of life may burden us unexpectedly and to which it is prudent to become accustomed in advance in order not to be embarrassed by it when such time comes" (Coubertin 1906, 76)⁹². Thus, as Coubertin believed, the process of 'handicapping', such as "falling into the water and endeavouring to swim fully clothed" (Coubertin 1906, 76)⁹³, enables physical vulnerabilities to be transformed into psychological strengths. Furthermore, from a playful yet utilitarian perspective, "it is good, from time to time, to try boxing, canne de combat, or wrestling in an overcoat and hat; nothing could be disconcerting in a more opportune way" (Coubertin 1906, 77)⁹⁴.

"A man is not a man if air is not his best friend and water his faithful confidant" (Coubertin 1914, 1)⁹⁵. In order to optimise one's "coefficient of capacity" (Coubertin 1906, 147)⁹⁶, the utility of physical exercise is reinforced by the benefits of aerotherapy, hydrotherapy and heliotherapy. "A run through the dewy grass with the breeze caressing your chest and arms is one of the most perfect pleasures in the world. All of nature seems to penetrate you: all your limbs breathe at once. You experience, as it were, the chemical work that is accomplished, increasing your joie de vivre to an as-yet-unhoped-for level" (Coubertin 1916, 41)⁹⁷.

In this sense, healthy living is an art that allows each of us to look after our own bodies, and to achieve the greatest possible strength and stamina. World record, personal record and average record then become signposts that demarcate our corporeal value throughout our lives. "Let these three records – the world record, the average record and the personal record – learn to coexist in a little notebook, something that won't take up much space yet will be infinitely interesting. They will provide material for an examination of our physical conscience in accordance with the famous precept of ancient wisdom 'know thyself'" (Coubertin 1905, 142)⁹⁸.

At the beginning of the fifth edition of *L'éducation des adolescents au XX^e siècle*, published in 1906, Coubertin expressed his respectful admiration and sincere gratitude to Theodore Roosevelt. It was a way of paying tribute to the health and aesthetic cult of the body that he had encountered during his time in the United States. For example, Coubertin advocated for the existence of an ancient Greek gymnasium, restored and open to all, which would include sports fields and facilities, as well as public

⁹⁰ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

⁹¹ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

⁹² Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

⁹³ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

⁹⁴ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

⁹⁵ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

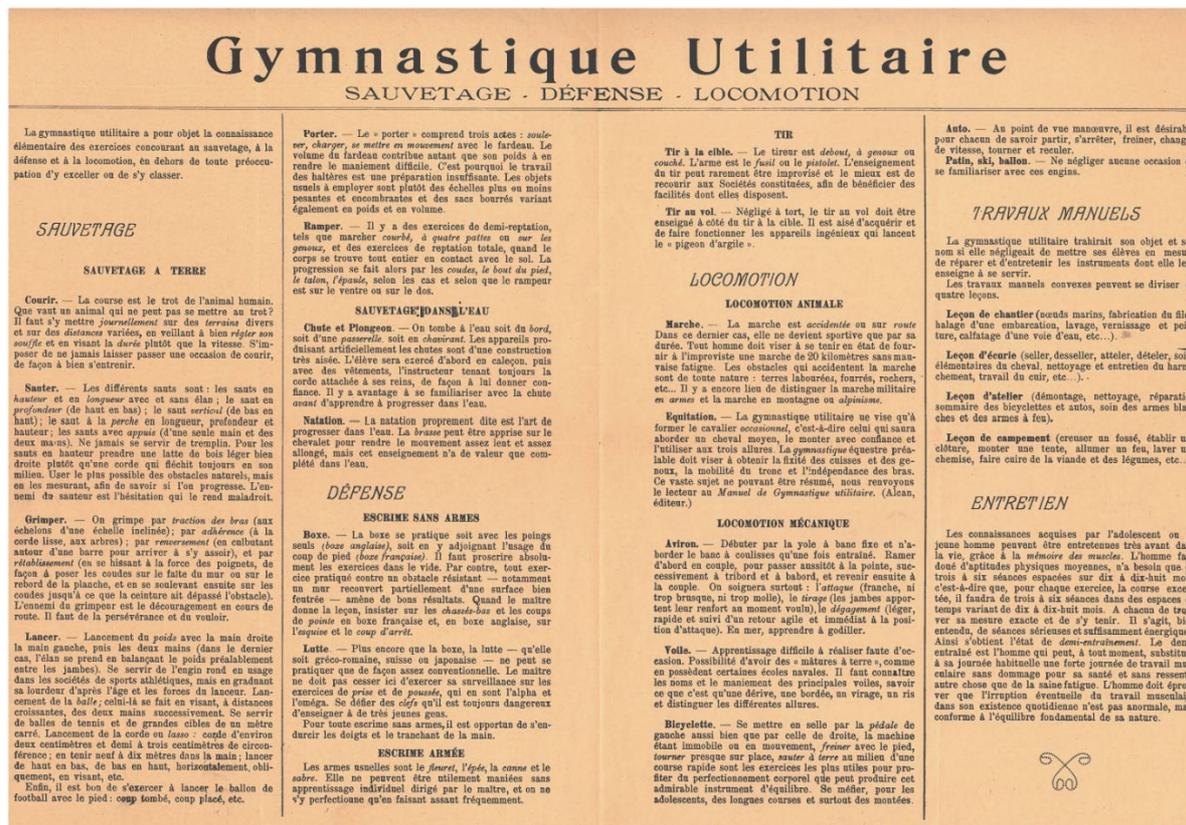
⁹⁶ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

⁹⁷ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

⁹⁸ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

baths and showers. By establishing a correlation between psychology and physiology, Coubertin proposed the creation of sanatoriums for the healthy, to make use of the chaise longue, which encourages healthy, honest and helpful 'relaxation' and which allows one to listen to the silence of his own muscles (Coubertin 1913)⁹⁹.

"Achilles the swift-footed" (Coubertin 1916, 5)¹⁰⁰..., do not forget that "muscle memory is a person of good will" (Coubertin 1916 45). But Achilles was no more than a demigod, forever known for the fragility of his heel. His flexibility may have seemed to come from birth, but even with utilitarian gymnastics, he could not avoid the mortal wound that fundamentally made him human! By emphasising the importance of muscle memory, Coubertin promoted the incorporation of motor skills as a way of life that served the whole person through the effects of utilitarian gymnastics.



Document 30: Exercises of Utilitarian Gymnastics, 1915. IOC Historical Archives.

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⁹⁹ The book, published in 1913 by Payot, was associated with the International Olympic Committee Congress, organised around the theme of sports psychology. The volume brings together anonymous articles published by Coubertin in the Olympic Review, including *The athlete and his chaise longue* (October 1906) and *Sanatoriums for the healthy* (April 1907). Coubertin felt that utilitarian gymnastics should not be limited to young men. In his view, new adherents needed to be considered. To some extent, he predicted the future of sports tourism and health tourism, under the impetus of the Touring Club de France in particular.

¹⁰⁰ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

5.8. The Organisation of "Workers' Universities" by Coubertin

Éric Monnin

Considering his social standing, Pierre de Coubertin was predestined for a political or military career. But he caught everyone off guard by devoting himself to educational reform. In 1909, he declared: "I brusquely resolved to change careers out of a desire to associate my name with great educational reform" (Coubertin 1909, 2)¹⁰¹.

The re-establishment of the Olympic Games and access to higher education for the working classes became major issues for Coubertin. His work on behalf of the working classes is little known in France. And yet it contributed to the same goal – that of a better, more egalitarian society.

Well before the re-establishment of the Olympic Games and the creation of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) on the 23rd of June 1894, Coubertin undertook his 'second crusade' devoted to education and the working class. To the irony of some, he replied: "What! Are you going to tell me you want to teach all this to manual workers? What nonsense! They have neither the time nor the inclination for such studies. I know; I know the disdain and irony. When I wanted to re-establish the Olympic Games, they took me for a madman" (Coubertin 1922, 10)¹⁰².

In November 1890, he launched his *Appeal for the creation of a workers' university* based on the model of people's universities. This programme was intended for the intellectual education of the workers because "certain signs presage, in all parts of the civilised world, the advent of the 'fourth state' [the proletariat]". This appeal was not heeded "as a result of the hostilities that arose" (Coubertin 1933, 165-166)¹⁰³.

Coubertin denounced the practice of the "'ruling classes' who resigned themselves to educating Democracy, yet constantly kept their efforts confined within the limits of professional utilitarianism. [...] However, it happened that an irresistible movement took shape which pushed Democracy towards power. It was number, and number became strength" (Coubertin 1918, 1-2)¹⁰⁴. Coubertin wanted to educate the working classes through higher education. He railed against the 'ruling classes', pointing out that "this Bastille must be razed. Democracy, in its turn, must learn from the centuries and make contact with disinterested science. [...] Open the doors of the temple! It is only time. The future of humanity demands it" (Coubertin 1918, 122)¹⁰⁵. Coubertin threatened "the capitalist bourgeoisie [which] risks paying dearly for the selfish calculations which have kept it from creating democracy" (Coubertin 1919, 2)¹⁰⁶.

Coubertin clearly stated that "the question of workers' universities is one of the most essential and urgent at the present time" (Coubertin 1921, 3)¹⁰⁷. He expressed the hope that the next congress, to be held in Lausanne in 1921, would focus on popular sports. Unfortunately, at the Antwerp Session in 1920, the IOC members were reluctant and voted to cancel the Congress on Popular Sports. For the IOC, this refusal expressed concern about the growing influence of the International Federations and, for Baillet-Latour, about a "Bolshevik agitation to change the structure of the IOC" (Müller 1994, 104).

Despite this rejection in 1922, Coubertin described a programme of workers' universities in his article *Entre deux batailles. De l'Olympisme à l'Université ouvrière*. It consisted "of intermittent universities planned at the rate of two sessions per year, each lasting three months, with administration entirely in

¹⁰¹ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

¹⁰² Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

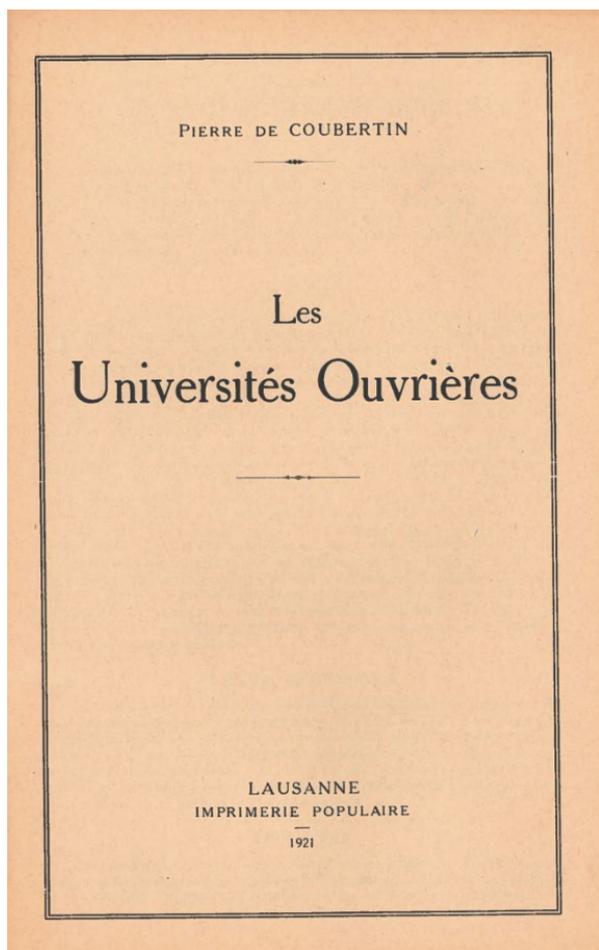
¹⁰³ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

¹⁰⁴ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

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¹⁰⁶ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

¹⁰⁷ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.



Document 31: Cover page of the book *Les Universités Ouvrières* by Coubertin. IOC Historical Archives.

the hands of the workers and teaching divided into 84 lessons per session, 24 of which were devoted to the study of universal history, 36 to a general understanding of the sciences, eight to philosophy, six to criticism and eurythmy, and 10 to exercises in language and style" (Coubertin 1922, 10)¹⁰⁸. He confided that he expected "much from the working class; magnificent forces lie within it; it seems to me capable of very great things" (Coubertin 1922, 9)¹⁰⁹ and wished to entrust the management of workers' universities to the (working) students themselves.

In 1922, to facilitate the development of the workers' university and improve the human condition of all people, he approached Albert Thomas, Director of the International Labour Office (ILO). Coubertin was convinced that it was the ILO's duty to promote his concept of workers' universities. In this context, the following year he published the *Mémoire concernant l'instruction supérieure des travailleurs manuels et l'organisation des universités ouvrières* with the aim of giving the working classes access to general and civic education through higher education.

Despite Coubertin's many initiatives and creations in favour of the democratisation of education and knowledge, in particular through

the Universal Pedagogical Union (Union Pédagogique Universelle - UPU) and the International Bureau of Sports Pedagogy (Bureau International de Pédagogie Sportive - BIPS), he was not supported on this issue, and his work remained unfinished.

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¹⁰⁸ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

¹⁰⁹ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

5.9. On Cultural Education, Beyond the Realm of Sport

André Leclercq

A historian and pedagogue, Pierre de Coubertin worked to revive education by "blending sport with culture and education" to shape an Olympism that would be "exalting and combining in a balanced whole the qualities of body, will and mind" (IOC 2021, 8). Homer and the ancient Greek poets, on the one hand, and Plato, Xenophon and other philosophers, on the other, provide the foundations for his analysis.

In his *Notes sur l'Éducation publique* (1901), Coubertin refers in particular to the dialogue between Socrates and his pupil Glaucon in Plato's Republic. Coubertin drew his inspiration for eurythmy from the intellectual and sporting education which Plato attributed to Socrates. This eurythmy is defined by an inner harmony, a whole characterised by a perfect balance between sporting and intellectual activity, itself leading to a moral balance, like a piece of music more perfect than the sum of its chords. Solon, the Athenian statesman, explained to Anacharsis, the Scythian philosopher who had come to visit him around 588 BC, the role of the Games in city life. *Anacharsis*, by Lucian of Samosata (2nd century) was used by Abbé Barthélemy in his work *Voyage du jeune Anacharsis en Grèce*, published in 1788. The book was so successful that it prompted the French Revolutionaries to twice successfully reinstate the Olympic Games¹¹⁰. Coubertin used the figure of the young Anacharsis travelling in Greece in his text *Anacharsis à Olympie* published in the *Revue Olympique* in 1908.

This literary rediscovery of the ancient games was amplified in the 19th century by art, thanks to archaeological excavations. In his *Notes sur l'Éducation publique*, Coubertin explained the popularity of sport in the late 19th century by the widespread presence of sport in art and literature: "To awaken in young souls a sense of beauty is to work for the embellishment of individual life and the perfection of social life" (Coubertin 1901, 297)¹¹¹. It was undoubtedly through England that Coubertin assimilated Plato's formula, which placed sport at the service of 'the excellence of the soul': "At the same time this great citizen, Thomas Arnold, the leader and archetype of English educators, gave a precise formula for the threefold role of athletics in education:

- its physical role, which is to balance the body, strengthen the muscles and soothe the senses and imagination
- its moral role, which is to provide an immediate interest in the student's life, to offer a tangible goal for his efforts, to develop his personal experience, to teach him the value of training, the fatal relationship between cause and effect, the law of individual responsibility.
- finally, its social role, which is to prepare young people by allowing them to manage and deliver their own games, [to learn] the workings of society." (Coubertin 1901, 146-147)¹¹².

Coubertin faced a great deal of opposition, particularly from those who wanted to reduce sport to an issue of personal health, that of *mens sana in corpore sano*. In opposition to the unmoving platitude of a healthy mind in a healthy body, he passionately promoted the far richer and more dynamic notion of "an ardent mind in a strong body" (*mens fervida in corpore lacertoso*) (Coubertin 1911, 99)¹¹³. As a man of culture, he gave sport its humanity, not by indulging in backward-looking references to mythical Greece, but by making sport part of a modern vision of society. Today, sport is a valued element of our shared culture; for that, we owe Coubertin. At school, sport is not just another subject. It is part of all disciplines, providing a concrete example of play taken seriously. To understand the mechanisms of our bodies, we must understand the universal laws of mechanics; to describe them, we must use elements of mathematics and the physical sciences. These are the mechanisms of a human being,

¹¹⁰ On 22 September 1796, the "First Olympiad of the Republic" took place before a crowd of 200,000 gathered on the Champ de Mars. A second Olympiad was held in 1798. Revolutionary leaders even considered inviting representatives of other European nations to the celebrations, but the rise of Napoleon put a stop to that.

¹¹¹ Originally written in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

¹¹² Originally written in French, English translation provided by the IOC.

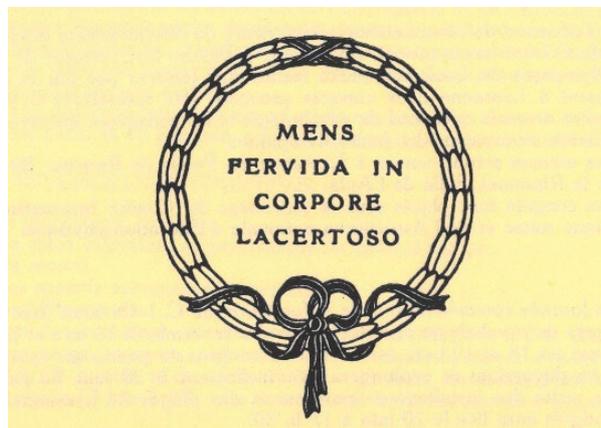
¹¹³ Originally written in Latin, English translation provided by the IOC.

whose body obeys the rules of both the life and health sciences. As part of its environment, this living creature is subject to the rules of the natural sciences. Sport is an adventure that takes place in space and time, and offers a wide field for the human and social sciences.

As a tool for disseminating culture, sport has the advantage of encompassing all areas of education: formal education (family, school), non-formal education (through various activities, particularly organisations) and informal education (media). It is through culture that we can conceive sport in its educational dimension, and it is by exploiting the richness of sport that Coubertin ensured the lasting revival of the Games, within the organisation he was able to assemble around himself.

Ever since the Pythia of Delphi suggested to Iphitos in 884 BC that the Olympic Games should be reinstated, it has been clear that sport is not war, but the opposite. In war, people clash because they disagree, and the result is destruction, chaos and disorder. In sport, we agree to oppose each other, and the result is a coming together, a cosmos, an ordered world. The Games create, implicitly or explicitly, a truce. Our opponent is not our enemy, he is our indispensable partner; without him, there would be no game. And to play well against him, we play with him, which helps us progress. This complicity between adversaries forces each to put their trust in the mystery of the other. What's more, it is the greatness of the vanquished that gives glory to the victor.

The true nature of sport, that is, its authentic morality, lies in respect for the rules, for others and for oneself. One of the oldest legal principles – arbitration – applies here. The arbiter – the referee – is the neutral element that allows the system to function, as they are the moral conscience of the players. Having an "ardent mind in a strong body" (Coubertin 1911, 99)¹¹⁴ excellence can only be achieved through effort; to reveal the talent in each one of us, we must push our limits in the interests of personal fulfilment. With its omnipresence in our cultural framework and its educational potential, sport represents a rich source of progress. Our consideration of Coubertin's legacy is based on a precept which leads us to conceive Olympism as part of the universal culture of brotherhood.



Document 32: "ardent mind in a strong body". Coubertin's creed printed on a programme of the BIPS in 1944 (extract). IOC Historical Archives.

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¹¹⁴ Originally written in Latin, English translation provided by the IOC.

6. Political orientation, his interests and writings

6.1. Coubertin: The Moderate Republican

Otto J. Schantz

Pierre de Coubertin grew up in a conservative aristocratic family, in which the hope for a restoration of the monarchy lived on. His strict Catholic mother sympathised with the legitimists, who wanted to raise the exiled Comte de Chambord to the throne as Henry V. His father, on the other hand, was an Orléaniste and would have preferred to see the Count of Paris, Louis Philippe Albert d'Orléans, the grandson of King Louis Philippe, as his successor on the throne.

In 1880, as a 17-year-old, Coubertin accompanied his parents on a trip to Lower Austria to meet the Comte de Chambord, who had retired there to his castle in Frohsdorf. If one believes Coubertin's *Mémoires de Jeunesse*, this meeting was rather a disappointment for him. His disparaging descriptions of the sickly pretender to the crown make it all too clear that he had other ideas about an heir to the throne who was to help France achieve splendour and greatness.

After the resignation of the pro-monarchy President Marshal Mac-Mahon on the 30th of January 1879, the possible restoration of the monarchy became a distant prospect. At first the aristocrats still made up the majority of the deputies of the Third Republic. After the electoral successes of the Republicans in 1876, their end, the 'fin des notables', was in sight, although this probably came about less quickly than Daniel Halévy described it in 1930 in his eponymous work *The End of the Notables*.

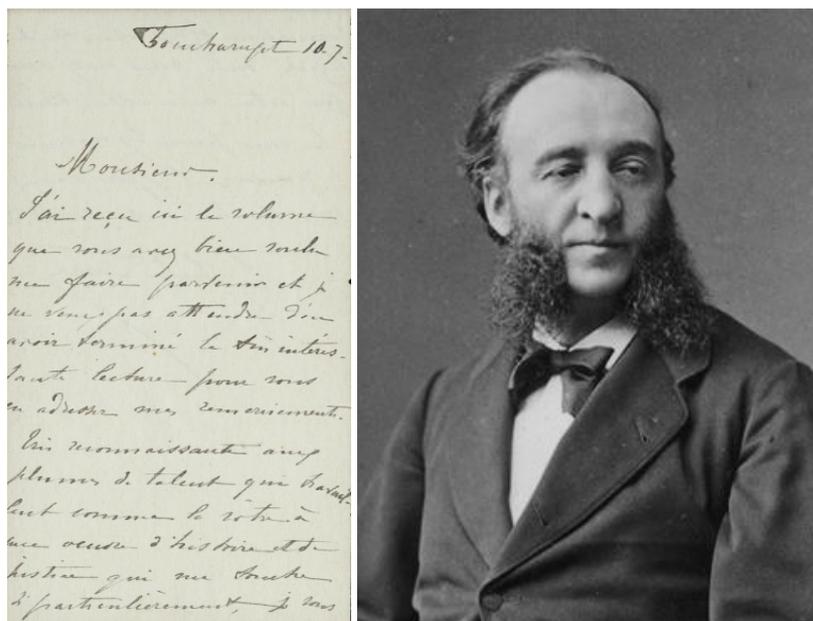
Under the influence of his liberal teachers at the Écoles des sciences politiques, which he attended between 1884 and 1883, and the debates at the Conférence Molé, Coubertin gradually distanced himself from the strict Catholic and monarchist line of his parental home, eventually joining the Republican camp. On the basis of the lectures Coubertin gave at the Conférence Molé, a kind of student parliament in which he belonged to the Union monarchique, Patrick Clastres assumes that in February/March 1887 he became convinced that only a parliamentary monarchy was possible. In Coubertin's opinion, a return of the heir to the throne from exile was possible only if he recognised the constitution of 1875 and limited himself to representative functions. Coubertin's change of political opinion represented a premature 'ralliement', a premature rapprochement with the republicans, because a first major wave of monarchists did not join the monarchy until the early 1890s, after the Catholic Church had given the green light. Coubertin processed this difficult decision to join the Republicans against his parental home and against the position of his brothers in literary terms in the novel *Roman d'un rallié*, which he first published under the pseudonym Georges Hohrod as a series of articles in the *Nouvelle Revue* in 1899.

Typical of the Third Republic before 1900 was its pronounced parliamentarianism. This was expressed in the fact that it was not so much party affiliation as personal independence that strongly determined the self-image of the deputies. Coubertin's political position cannot really be attributed to a political grouping, either. As a man of the centre who hated the political extremes, he was closest to the moderate republicans, who were concerned with the preservation of social order. He described himself as an independent. Thus, from 1900 to 1903, he wrote 58 letters for the newspaper *L'Indépendance Belge* for a column he called *Lettres d'un indépendant*. In the 52nd letter of this series, he defends his strictly Catholic brother Albert de Coubertin, who resigned as an officer after carrying out the order to expel Cathaeus monks from their monastery against his will. In this document, Coubertin emphasises the ideological divide that separates him from his monarchist brother and describes himself as a republican who sympathises with a republic as represented by Léon Gambetta, Jules Ferry or Sadi Carnot; a republic ready to defend itself, but not revolutionary like that of Jean Jaures or aggressive like that of anti-clerical Émile Combes, he says. Coubertin insisted on his independence. In his view, it was not any political constellations that could give France internal peace and stability, but concrete actions, such as the reform of education, which he sought.

Coubertin almost embarked on a political career. In 1889 and 1893, he rejected offers to run for the right-wing Republicans in the electoral district of Le Havre in the legislative elections. The reasons why he ultimately did not pursue a political career may have been manifold. He reasoned in retrospect that he expected to be more effective as an educational reformer than as a parliamentarian.

On central issues of the Third Republic – the separation of church and state, social legislation and social justice, the structure of the army, colonial policy and European foreign policy – he held positions that could not be brought under the hat of a single political grouping. This left him caught between two stools and exposed him to attacks from both the right and the left. He criticised the Catholic Church as a state within the state, but without joining the radical anti-clerical camp. He was in favour of social reforms in the sense of Le Play, but demonised the socialists as utopians who disregarded private rights. As a liberal, he opposed state intervention; as a conservative, he espoused traditional values and continued to cling to the possibility of a parliamentary monarchy for a long time. He advocated a strong army and was a convinced colonialist until the end of his life. In the Franco-German conflict, however, he relied on diplomacy in contrast to the revanchists, who wanted to reconquer Alsace and Lorraine militarily.

All in all, Coubertin can be characterised as an independent, moderate, and rather conservative republican with his own opinion, who did not allow himself to be taken over by political groups. After the Great War, his political writings became very rare. He now focused primarily on pedagogical aspects. Caught up in the Olympic Movement and living in Switzerland, Coubertin was certainly less inclined to take a public position on political affairs.



Document 33: Letter from Coubertin to Jules Ferry [not dated]. IOC Historical Archives.

Picture 26: The former French Prime minister Jules Ferry.

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6.2. Coubertin's Interest in the History of Nations

Daniel Quanz

"In order to understand a country, it is not enough to see it live; its present state must be compared with its recent past" (Coubertin 1898, 434). Pierre de Coubertin lived by these words. He published numerous historical studies on nations and regions he visited. In the quoted article from 1898, *Does cosmopolitan life lead to international friendliness?*, he firmly expressed his belief that only an "interchange of ideas" (Coubertin 1898, 434) through historical study of other nations could lead to a better transnational understanding.

A focus of Coubertin's attempt to foster international understanding through historical studies was the relations between the United States of America and France. His close friend and mentor, American historian William M. Sloane, was a fierce advocate of intercultural learning. He had published writings on French history, including the French Revolution and Napoleon Bonaparte, which Coubertin admired. Coubertin himself published several historical studies on the United States in French magazines. He also saw that his first major historical work, *L'Evolution Française sous la Troisième République*, published in 1896, was translated into English and published in the United States, with the clear aim to foster transnational understanding.

However, Coubertin's historical interest was not limited to the transnational exchange between the US and France. He had closely followed the International Peace Congress in Rome in 1891. The Englishman Hodgson Pratt, founder of the International Arbitration and Peace Association, had proposed as one of the objectives of the congress that students should be encouraged to study and analyse the progress of civilisation of each nation's contribution to the progress of humankind through universal historiography. Pratt was another inspirational figure for Coubertin and was listed as an honorary member for the Paris International Congress for the Re-establishment of the Olympic Games in 1894. His call to teach and study universal history was taken up by Coubertin. He published on transatlantic relations, the relationship between France and Germany – in French, but also in German and English translations – and the history of countries and regions all over the world.

After the First World War, Coubertin's approach to universal history became more programmatic. Around 1919, he initiated the Society for Universal History. The society's pamphlet, sent by Coubertin to the League of Nations with a plea to distribute it in the League's general assembly, reveals his programmatic approach:

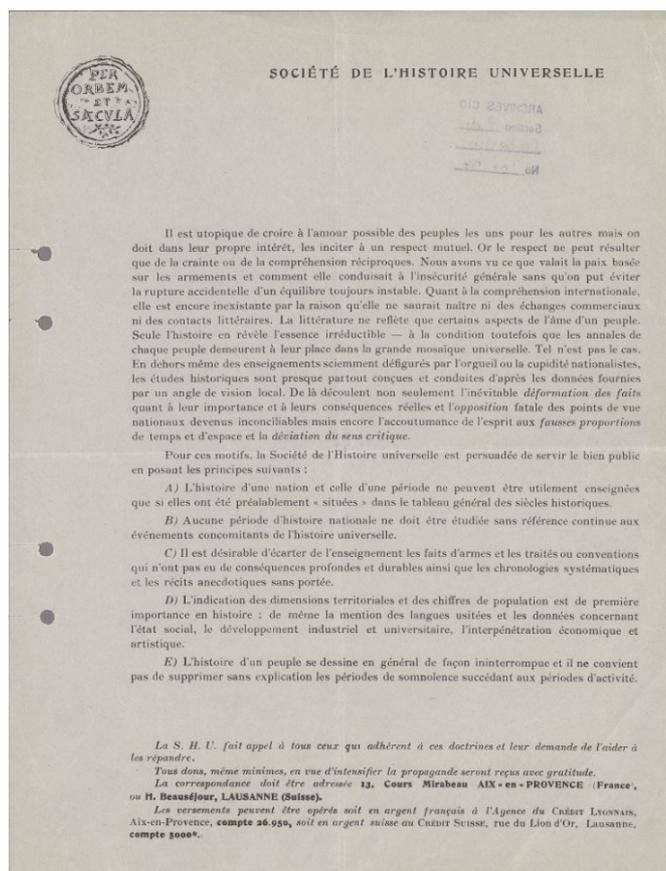
"It is utopian to believe in the possible love of peoples for each other, but in their own interest, they must be incited to mutual respect. But respect can only result from mutual fear or understanding. [...] As for international understanding, it is still non-existent because it cannot be born from commercial exchanges or from literary contacts. [...] Only history reveals its irreducible essence – provided, however, that the annals of each people remain in their place in the great universal mosaic" (Coubertin 1919, 1)¹¹⁵.

Coubertin deemed knowledge of history a necessary condition for mutual respect based on understanding, one of the main themes of his educational campaign. To him, historical studies of certain places and times needed to be part of a universal history of humanity. This is also supported by the Society for Universal History's motto engraved in its logo: 'Per orbem et saecula' – Through world and ages. Only by basing specific historical studies on the greater account of universal history could one derive an understanding of a specific nation or people. In this regard, Coubertin's account of universal history was in accordance with the views of many members of the international peace movement. Hugo Grotius, one of the fathers of international law, had already arrived at his internationalist legal system by deriving customary international law from historical examples, and peace activists like Pratt had advocated a universal history of humanity that emphasised a general

¹¹⁵ Originally published in French, English translation provided by the author.

progress in civilisation. History, in that sense, should not just tell the story of war and struggle between nations, but focus on social and technological developments. In such a history, peace was not the temporarily absence of war, but a common co-operative project of nations. Celebrations of civilisation and human exploits like the World Fairs or the Olympic Games were a modern display of and contribution to a common peaceful progress for humanity.

From 1920, Coubertin published his major work *Histoire Universelle* in four volumes, beginning with a description of early Asian empires and concluding with the development of modern democracies. Finally, he had put the pieces of his manifold historical works together to build his own mosaic of the history of civilisation and contribute to the creation of mutual respect and understanding between peoples as a historian.



Document 34: Information leaflet of the Society of Universal History, 1919. IOC Historical Archives.

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6.3. Initiatives to Increase Transatlantic Understanding

Stephan Wassong

Pierre de Coubertin was like a seismograph, monitoring social, economic, cultural and political tensions. With regard to the latter, he expressed concern not only about European conflicts but also about the growing rift between the Old and the New World. To his astonishment, this had set in despite improvements in transport and communications. Coubertin regretted that Europe's main concern was to compete with the USA on the economic front rather than commit to a fundamental academic connection with the New World. In his view, this had to change, as only increased interest by Europe in the USA could promote the mutual tolerance necessary to strengthen international relations. He believed that students should be educated in this field, since they would be taking on responsibilities as future leaders in politics, society, culture and education. In his attempts to put his belief into practice, Coubertin came up with an interesting initiative to counter the erosion of US students' knowledge about France. He thought it would make sense for similar initiatives to be carried out by other European countries.

Initiated during his second study visit to the USA in 1893 and continuing until 1902, Coubertin organised academic awards for students at various American universities. They were tasked with dealing with topics of contemporary French history, politics, society and culture in essay competitions and discussion circles. Students with the most informed contributions were awarded medals bearing the names of well-known French politicians, scientists, statesmen and poets:

- The French medal, founded in 1893, awarded to Princeton University (New Jersey).
- The Sadi Carnot medal, founded in 1894, awarded to Tulane University (Louisiana).
- The Sadi Carnot medal, founded in 1894, awarded to Palo Alto University and Berkeley University (California).
- The Alexis de Tocqueville medal, founded in 1898 at Johns Hopkins University (Maryland).
- The Louis Pasteur medal, founded in 1898 at Harvard University (Massachusetts).
- The Victor Hugo medal, founded in 1898 at Cornell University (New York).

Unlike the other medals, the Carnot medal was awarded to three universities. Coubertin explained this less with the impressive political agenda of Carnot as President of the French Republic from 1887 until his tragic assassination in 1894 than with the assumption that Carnot welcomed the educational initiative of the medal campaign. Referring to this, Coubertin mentioned in 1897:

"As to President Carnot, of the many topics which he permitted me to discuss with him on more than one occasion, none interested him more than the subject of the intellectual relations between the United States and France. And that is why I gave the name of Carnot to the students' annual debate on contemporary French politics which I instituted between the Universities of Berkeley and Palo Alto in San Francisco, and at Tulane University, New Orleans" (Coubertin 1897, 654).

The front sides of the medals all appear to be similar, with the engraving of the portrait of Marianne, the embodiment of the French Republic. Marianne is wearing a Phrygian cap. On the reverse of each medal, the name of the respective university and that of the donor, Coubertin, is engraved within an oak wreath.

The Union Française des Universités d'Amérique was responsible for disseminating the medal campaign, thus lending it strength, and organising the awarding of the individual medals at the various universities. The inaugural meeting of this organisation, founded by Coubertin, took place on the 8th of March 1897. In addition to US and French professors, members included administrative staff from the US embassy in Paris. An article reporting the inaugural meeting of the society can be found in the archives of Harvard University without reference to the newspaper and date. The headline reads: *America and France: Baron de Coubertin on the national ideal of the United States.*



Picture 27: Coubertin and IOC members. 24th IOC Session and 8th Olympic Congress, Prague, 1925.



Picture 28: Athens 1896, athletes from the Princeton University (USA).

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6.4. Coubertin as Author

Otto J. Schantz

"But Olympism is only part of my life's work, approximately half in fact" (Coubertin 1936 [2000], 752) With these words, Pierre de Coubertin started *La symphonie inachevée (The Unfinished Symphony)*, written in 1936. But today his work is too often exclusively associated with his enterprise relating to the Olympic Games. The volume of written works by Coubertin is truly remarkable. The complete compilation of his oeuvre comprises approximately 16,000 printed pages, including 34 books, 57 brochures, 1,224 articles, and 46 leaflets and posters, among other literary formats. This diverse collection of writings explores a wide array of subjects, spanning from poetry to novels, hygiene guidelines to treatises on moral education, accounts of his travels to philosophical reflections, and the history of sport to universal history, to name but a few of the literary genres and topics addressed.

A thematic analysis reveals that Coubertin's publications reflect a variety of interests that evolved over the course of his life, surpassing the realm of sport and physical education. Roughly eight dominant themes emerge from his works: sport and physical education, general education, history, politics, journalism, the Olympic Movement, hygiene and health, and art. Additionally, he penned literary compositions employing both poetic and prosaic forms.

Among these themes, physical education and sport occupy the largest share, representing nearly a third of his entire body of work. Following closely behind is general education, to which he dedicated almost twice as many pages as he did to the Olympic Movement (around 17 percent compared to approximately nine percent). Similarly, Coubertin delved more extensively into his ideas concerning general history (approximately 17 percent) and politics (around 13 percent) than he did into the Olympic Movement.

A notable portion of his works can be classified as journalism (around nine percent), encompassing chronicles, reports, and accounts of his travels, while a smaller, but still significant fraction can be regarded as literary compositions (approximately two percent). Among these literary endeavours, Coubertin dabbled in pastiches imitating styles such as that of La Bruyère. He also published a novel entitled *Le Roman d'un rallié* which incorporated autobiographical elements. Additionally, during the Olympic Games Stockholm 1912, he was awarded the gold medal in the literary contest for his *Ode au Sport*, published under the pseudonym Hohrod and Eschbach.

More than one-third of his published works revolve around sport, physical education, and the Olympic Movement. Within this category, roughly a quarter pertains directly to the Olympic Movement, with a slightly smaller portion focusing specifically on physical education. Approximately seven percent of his sports-related works delve into the subject of sports psychology. Notably, his writings on sport for all, although relatively less recognised, occupy a significant space in his sports-related compositions (around 13%), comparable in volume to his works on the Olympic Movement. The history, organisation, politics, and even practice of sport are the subjects explored in more than half of his publications devoted to sport.

When examining Coubertin's productivity over time, one notices significant variations in quantity. The initial period of noteworthy output falls between the years 1888 and 1892, characterised by the publication of influential books and articles on what could be termed comparative education. However, it is during the span of two decades, from 1899 to 1919, that Coubertin experienced his most fertile and diverse phase of creation. The second half of the 1920s and early 1930s witnessed the emergence of a third phase of intensified publication, marked by the release of *L'Histoire Universelle* (1926-1927) and his *Mémoires Olympiques* (1932), initially serialised in the magazine *L'Auto* before being compiled into a book.

When one examines the themes explored in Coubertin's writings, it becomes evident that he remained preoccupied throughout his life with three subjects: general education, physical education and sport, and the Olympic Movement from 1894 onwards. His early publications and the period between 1910

and 1915 exhibit a multitude of reflections on education, with a notable milestone being the publication of *Notes sur l'Éducation publique* in 1901.

Coubertin's literary endeavours in the realm of sport were abundant between 1890 and 1894 when he published numerous articles in the *Revue Athlétique*, a publication under his direction. Other notable periods highlighting the importance of sport and physical education in his work include the years 1905 to 1915 and 1918 to 1921, which witnessed his active involvement in popular sports. Additionally, from 1930 to 1934, Coubertin's activities and publications through the International Bureau of Sports Pedagogy (Bureau International de Pédagogie Sportive - BIPS) further showcased his dedication to this field.

In contrast, Coubertin's political and historical publications display less continuity. His historical writings can be categorised into three distinct periods: 1896 to 1899, the period of the Great War, and the years 1926 and 1927, which saw the publication of *L'Histoire Universelle* in four volumes. These historical works illustrate a shift from a focus on national history to a broader, universal perspective. Regarding his political statements, they were particularly prevalent in the early 20th century through his journalistic contributions to the newspapers *L'Indépendance Belge* and *Le Figaro*. However, after the First World War, Coubertin's political works became scarce. Immersed in the Olympic Movement and residing in Switzerland, his inclination to publicly engage in political affairs diminished.

While Coubertin's writings on the Olympic Movement and his Olympic ideas comprise only a small fraction of his published body of work, they undoubtedly remain the most renowned and influential. These writings have left a significant impact on the world of sport. Nevertheless, it would be unjust and oversimplifying to reduce the breadth of his contributions solely to his Olympic-related endeavours. To truly honour his dedication and intellectual output, one must view his Olympic ideals within the broader context of his educational, historical, political, and psychological conceptions. A comprehensive understanding and evaluation of Coubertin necessitate a consideration of the evolution and entirety of his body of work.



Picture 29: Coubertin and his daughter in Lausanne [not dated].

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7. Coubertinian places of memory

7.1. Paris / Lausanne / Geneva

Jean-Loup Chappelet

Once the administration of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) had moved to Lausanne in 1915, Pierre de Coubertin made frequent visits to the Swiss city. He stayed at the Hôtel Beau-Séjour (where he had a small flat), halfway between the station and the historic city centre, though his official residence was still in Paris at 10, boulevard Flandrin, where he had lived and worked since he got married. In 1915, Coubertin created the Olympic Institute in Lausanne, tasking it with raising awareness of the IOC among the city's residents, and seeing in it a prototype for the re-establishment of ancient gymnasiums, that is, "centres of city life based on the cooperation of art, intellectual culture, general hygiene and muscular activity...". (Coubertin 1919, 1). Though this prototype was not emulated, on three occasions (in 1917, 1918 and 1919), the Institute organised courses consisting of lectures and physical activities for prisoners of war interned in Switzerland. Coubertin also published his 21 *Olympic Letters* in the Gazette de Lausanne in 1918 and 1919.

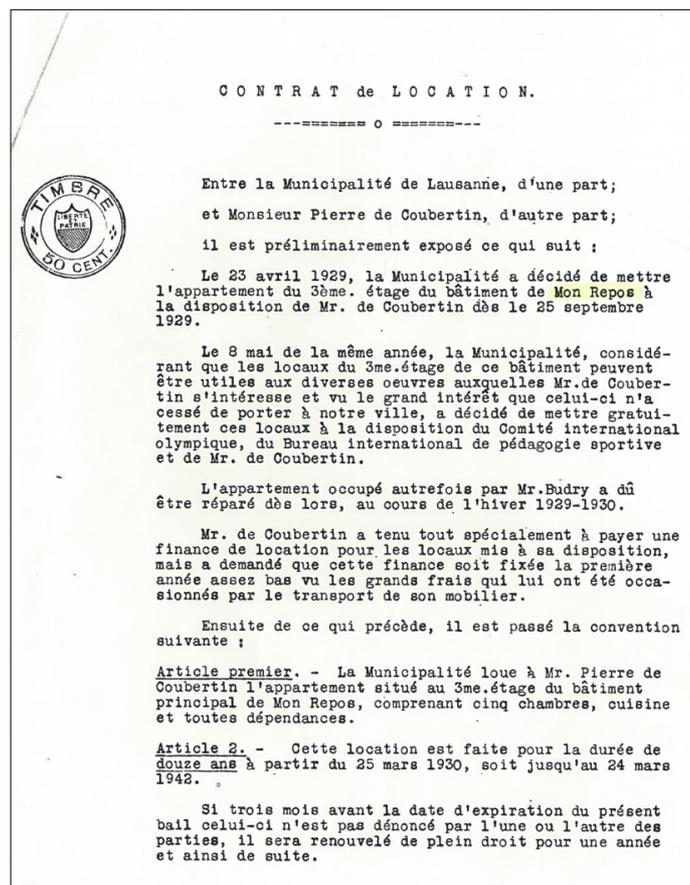
After the First World War, he organised an IOC Session in Lausanne in April 1919, followed in May-June 1921 by important meetings with the existing National Olympic Committees (NOCs) and the fledgling International Federations (IFs), which were keen to unite in opposition to the IOC. The International Federations set up a permanent office, which did not survive the Second World War. They were responsible for sanctioning Olympic competitions according to their own rules. Consultative conferences on equestrian sports, winter sports and mountaineering were held in Lausanne. As these conferences drew to a close, the IOC Session took place at the Casino de Montbenon, where the IOC had several rooms at its disposal following its move to Lausanne. These premises were provided on a non-exclusive basis by the City of Lausanne, which had recently acquired the building and was using it for the benefit of local associations. These meetings attracted a large number of officials and demonstrated Lausanne's interest in housing the IOC headquarters, particularly following the slump in tourism after the First World War.

In September 1921, the IOC and the City signed an agreement granting the IOC exclusive use of all the rooms on the first floor of the Casino, including one called the 'Trophy Room', which was intended to house various cups from the 1912 Stockholm Games as well as Olympic memorabilia collected by Pierre de Coubertin over the years. It is not known whether such an exhibit was ever really installed, but it was a first attempt at the Olympic Museum – a project very dear to Coubertin. In February 1922, the City decided to lend the IOC a number of premises in the 'Mon-Repos' Villa, which it had just inherited. Buoyed by this decision and at the suggestion of Godefroy de Blonay (no doubt at Coubertin's instigation), the IOC ratified the choice of Lausanne as the headquarters of its 'secretariat' at its Session in June 1922 in Paris, seven years after the welcome ceremony in 1915!

It was shortly afterwards, in the summer of 1922, that Coubertin made Lausanne his main residence. He was having financial difficulties – (he lost much of his fortune in the First World War), as well as family problems (poor relationships with his two brothers). What's more, he was fed up with the criticism he faced in Paris. He sold the family home at 20, rue Oudinot – where he was born. His furniture and other possessions arrived in Lausanne and were stored at Mon-Repos after the city agreed to declare to Swiss customs, who were demanding duty be paid, that these objects would be used to furnish the premises of the Museum that was to be set up at Mon-Repos in two rooms on the ground floor. A formal agreement was signed in May 1924 for the use of a number of premises in the Villa by the IOC. However, Coubertin still travelled a great deal and was often away from Lausanne. It wasn't until September 1929 that he, his wife and their two children permanently moved to a flat on the third floor of Mon-Repos, for which the town granted him a lease, fearing that he would move to Arcachon in the Gironde, France. There was no rent to be paid. After retiring from the presidency in 1925, Coubertin remained very active and was particularly involved in the fledgling Olympic Museum,

which his colleagues had entrusted to him to 'manage', as well as the Universal Pedagogical Union (Union Pédagogique Universelle - UPU), which he had founded in 1925, and the International Bureau of Sports Pedagogy (Bureau International de Pédagogie Sportive - BIPS) founded in 1928, both of which had their headquarters in Lausanne.

From 1933 onwards, Coubertin no longer got on with his wife, who continued to live at Mon-Repos with her children until her death at the age of 102 in 1963. In 1934, he moved to Geneva to the Melrose guesthouse at clos Belmont 12, in the Eaux-Vives district. The mansion belonged to the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), which used it as its international headquarters, and to which Coubertin had become close in the 1920s (see his extensive correspondence with the YMCA's Elwood S. Brown, organiser of the 1919 Paris Inter-Allied Games as well as several regional games). Coubertin's financial difficulties were becoming increasingly severe. The 1929 crash finally ruined him. He continued to go to Mon-Repos to work on his various initiatives. It was there he wrote his *Mémoires Olympiques* (published in 1932). He reorganised the Olympic Museum, opening its doors to the public in 1934, against a backdrop of disputes between himself, the City and the IOC over the ownership of the various objects stored there. He also approached the International Labour Office (ILO), which had moved to Geneva in 1920, as he hoped to obtain a post there. He died of a heart attack on the 2nd of September 1937 in Geneva, in the Parc La Grange near the Melrose guesthouse, where he had been out for a walk. The City had granted him honorary citizenship two months earlier. His funeral was held at Notre-Dame de Lausanne and he was buried in the Bois-de-Vaux cemetery (with his heart in Olympia) designed by architect Alphonse Laverrière, who had drawn up several plans for Coubertin's "modern Olympia".



Document 35: Contract between Coubertin and the Municipality of Lausanne for the rent of Mon-Repos, 10 October 1930 (extract). IOC Historical Archives.

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7.2. Coubertin in Philately

Pablo Galán

Within the world of Olympic philately, collections have acquired great importance, the sports theme being one of the oldest and most interesting. Historically, it began with the Greek issue of stamps at the Olympic Games in 1896. This series is considered the queen for the beauty of its design and the scarcity of existing pieces, besides being the first sports series issued in the world.

Within the sports theme, that on Pierre de Coubertin is very interesting. Although his person is the most important in the Olympic world, not many stamps have been issued about him. As Conrado Durántez says: "Pierre de Coubertin, the most famous unknown personality". The first country in the world to issue stamps related to Coubertin was Haiti. In 1939, it introduced a set of three values, one for ordinary mail and two for airmail, in commemoration of the construction of the Port-au-Prince stadium. They show the bust of Coubertin, flanked by the flag of Haiti and the Olympic flag.

The next stamp with his effigy was issued in France on 24 November 1956. It has a face value of 30 francs and shows the face of the founder of the modern Olympic Games. His name appears, together with a text, "renovator of the Olympic Games", and the dates of his birth and death (1863-1937). The stamp was issued in commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the first Olympic Games. The Republic of San Marino issued a series of seven stamps on 19 May 1959, six for ordinary mail and one for airmail, depicting the faces of several Olympic personalities: Baillet-Latour, Bonacossa, Brundage, Montú, Edström and Coubertin twice. Several countries issued very interesting stamps commemorating the centenary of Coubertin's birth (1863), the founding of the International Olympic Committee (1894) and the celebration of the first Games in Athens (1896). In recent years, various postal administrations around the world have been lavishly issuing stamps with an Olympic theme, and some of them recall the most important personality of the modern Olympic Movement.

On the occasion of the Games of the XXXI Olympiad, Rio de Janeiro 2016, Spain put into circulation a stamp in collaboration with the Postal Union of the Americas, Spain and Portugal (UPAEP). This entity encompasses administrations of 28 countries and its objective is postal development among its members. The stamp depicts the figure of Pierre de Coubertin and in the background is the athlete Jesse Owens.

We cannot forget Juan Antonio Samaranch, a great fan of Olympic philately, whose collection is preserved in the Olympic Museum in Lausanne. It was at his behest that the *Fédération Internationale de Philatélie Olympique* (FIPO) was founded in 1984. During his term as President of the IOC, philatelic exhibitions, the Olympiflex, were held in the host cities of the Olympic Games. FIPO has since been integrated into the *Association Internationale des Collectionneurs Olympiques* (AICO), which encompasses philately, numismatics and Olympic memorabilia collections. Thanks to FIPO and AICO, Coubertin's legacy is highlighted in philately.



Document 36: Series of stamps with an effigy of Coubertin: Haiti 1939, France 1994. Olympic Museums Collections, Lausanne.

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7.3. Coubertin: A Few Key Dates

- **1863**, 1 January: Birth in Paris of Charles Pierre de Coubertin, fourth child of Charles Louis de Fredey, Baron de Coubertin, and Agathe Marie Marcelle Gigault de Crisenoy.
- **1874-1881**: Secondary schooling at the École libre Saint-Ignace, rue de Madrid in Paris.
- **1880**: Bachelor of Arts degree.
- **1881**: Bachelor of Sciences degree.
- **1882**: A law student. He also enrolls at the École libre des Sciences Politiques.
- **1883**: First trip to England.
- **1885**: Bachelor of Laws degree.
- **1886**: Extended stay in England and Ireland.
- **1889**: Organisation of the Congress for the Propagation of Physical Exercises in Education. Coubertin is the secretary general.
- **1889-1890**: Trip to the United States and Canada on an official mission to the universities of the two countries.
- **1890**: Leads the creation of the Union des Sociétés Françaises de Sports Athlétiques (USFSA).
- **1890**: Invited by Dr William Penny Brookes, he attends the Much Wenlock Olympian Games.
- **1892**, 25 November: During a conference given at the Sorbonne in Paris, Coubertin ends a lecture on physical exercise in modern times with a call to re-establish the Olympic Games.
- **1894**, 23 June: During the Paris Congress for the Re-establishment of the Olympic Games in the Sorbonne auditorium, the Congress delegates approve his proposal. Creation of the International Olympic Committee (IOC).
- **1895**, 12 March: Wedding of Pierre de Coubertin and Marie Rothan, a diplomat's daughter.
- **1896**: Birth of his son Jacques.
- **1896**: Organisation of the Games of the I Olympiad in Athens.
- **1896**, 10 April: As per the original regulations adopted in 1894 that the President of the IOC should be from the country in which the next edition of the Games is to be held, at the 1896 IOC Session Pierre de Coubertin is elected as the second President of the IOC. Coubertin takes over from Demetrius Vikelas, whose term of office as IOC President ends with the conclusion of the Games.
- **1900**: Games of the II Olympiad in Paris.
- **1901**: A few days before the IOC Session in Paris, IOC member William Milligan Sloane declines the presidency of the IOC. Instead, he suggests entrusting the presidency to Coubertin for life. The latter refuses but accepts a further term of office.
- **1902**: Birth of his daughter Renée.
- **1904**: Games of the III Olympiad in St. Louis.
- **1907**, 23 May: 10th IOC Session in The Hague. Coubertin is re-elected for 10 years.
- **1908**: Games of the IV Olympiad in London. First edition of the *Olympic Charter*, called the *Annuaire du Comité International Olympique*.
- **1912**: Games of the V Olympiad in Stockholm. Coubertin wins the gold medal in the literature event for his *Ode to Sport*, submitted under the pseudonym of Georg Hohrod and Martin Eschbach. In Stockholm, the sport of modern pentathlon, created by Coubertin, first appears on the Olympic programme.
- **1913**: In the August issue of the *Olympic Review*, Coubertin publishes an article in which he describes the emblem and flag for the Olympic Congress planned for 1914. The emblem consists of "five rings linked at regular intervals, their various colours - blue, yellow, black, green and red - standing out against the white of the paper. These five rings represent the five parts of the world now won over to Olympism, ready to accept its fruitful rivalries."
- **1915**, 10 April: The IOC moves its secretariat from Paris to Lausanne. On this day, Coubertin is one of the signatories, along with city and state council representatives, of a document establishing Lausanne as the administrative centre of the IOC and the repository of the archives of modern Olympism.
- **1916-1917**: Temporary transfer of the functions of IOC President. During the First World War, Coubertin puts himself at the service of France and decides that Godefroy de Blonay will become President *ad interim*.

- **1917:** The interim President, Godefroy de Blonay, writes to the IOC members asking them to re-elect Coubertin for another 10 years.
- **1920:** Games of the VII Olympiad in Antwerp. The Olympic flag that Coubertin invented in 1914 is flown.
- **1921:** Coubertin announces his wish to retire from the IOC presidency. He asks his colleagues to grant his final request: to award the 1924 Olympic Games to Paris. Creation of the IOC Executive Board.
- **1922:** Coubertin moves permanently to Lausanne after the sale of the family mansion in the rue Oudinot in Paris. The IOC moves to the Villa Mon-Repos.
- **1924:** Games of the VIII Olympiad in Paris, preceded in February by an International Winter Sports week in Chamonix (which will later become the first Olympic Winter Games).
- **1925, 28 May:** 24th IOC Session in Prague. Coubertin voluntarily steps down from the IOC presidency before the end of his term. His colleagues appoint him "Honorary President for life of the Olympic Games". Henri Baillet-Latour is elected as the third IOC President.
- **1925:** Coubertin founds the Universal Pedagogical Union (UPU).
- **1928:** Games of the IX Olympiad in Amsterdam and II Olympic Winter Games in St Moritz.
- **1928:** Coubertin founds the International Bureau of Sports Pedagogy (BIPS).
- **1931, 8 September until 27 March 1932:** Publication of *Olympic Memoirs* by the BIPS. The memoirs were initially published as a series of articles in French newspaper *L'Auto*.
- **1932:** Games of the X Olympiad in Los Angeles and III Olympic Winter Games in Lake Placid.
- **1934:** Coubertin moves to the pension Melrose in Geneva.
- **1935, August:** In a speech recorded in Geneva for German radio, Coubertin delivers his message on the *Philosophical Foundation of Modern Olympism*.
- **1936:** Games of the XI Olympiad in Berlin and IV Olympic Winter Games in Garmisch-Partenkirchen.
- **1937, 2 September:** Pierre de Coubertin dies from a heart attack in the Parc de la Grange in Geneva. He is buried in the Bois-de-Vaux cemetery in Lausanne.
- **1938, 26 March:** His heart is taken to Olympia and placed in the marble column commemorating the renovation of the Olympic Games.

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