
**INFORMATION
LETTER**

OF

**THE INTERNATIONAL
PIERRE DE COUBERTIN
COMMITTEE**



1/95

A Word from the Chairman

Dear Colleagues,

It gives me great pleasure to be able to contact you by means of this Information Letter. In starting up again a paper which we had stopped publishing we think we can comply with the need for information and communication from which we can all get the maximum benefit, the actions and activities of all can only enrich the innovative potential of each of us.

Our last General Meeting (Lausanne, 30th May) enabled us to evaluate the progress made.

Thanks to our faith in the up-to-dateness of Coubertin's works, thanks to the constant work of the members of the Board and to many amongst you, we doubled our membership and, at the same time, various Pierre de Coubertin National Committees were created in Central and Southern America, in North America, in New Zealand, while others will soon be set up in Mexico, Venezuela, Salvador, Spain, Hungary and Haiti.

The number of articles written by some of our members, the video-tapes made on Pierre de Coubertin, the university articles published by research workers, members on our Committee, the masterly lectures given in universities have in themselves increased our authority by revealing the works and thoughts of Coubertin. Owing to our contribution and the great kindness of President Juan Antonio Samaranch, a Coubertin Commission has been set up within the I.O.C. at the same time that some of the members of the Board played a role in the editing of the three volumes of «The International Olympic Committee - One Hundred Years», published by the IOC to commemorate its centennial.

The exhibitions on Coubertin for this anniversary: in Guatemala, by the National Olympic Committee, in Spain by the Spanish Olympic Academy, for the 25th anniversary, in Paris, at the National Sports Museum, a very grand and beautiful one, in Oslo, during the last Winter Games have all proved the vitality of our Committee, and the competence and organizing ability of our members to carry them into effect.

Squares, streets and institutions have been named after Pierre de Coubertin throughout the world. In Guatemala, San Juan de Puerto Rico, Ecuador, Armilla, Grenada, Victoria, Barcelona and Buenos Aires. Lectures have been given during Olympic Academy Courses by members of the Association of Latin-American Olympic Academies in the towns of: San Salvador (Salvador), Quezaltenando, Guatemala, Caracas (Venezuela) Mexico City (Mexico), La Paz, Sucre (Bolivia), Buenos Aires (Argentina), Talca Santiago, Arica (Chile), Asuncion (Paraguay) Montevideo (Uruguay), Tegucigalpa (Honduras), Grenada, Madrid, Victoria, Barcelona (Spain).

We are proud of these events and we expect in return that you inform us of your own initiatives; we are here to help you to carry them into effect.
Olympically yours.

Conrado Durantez

Coubertin and the Teaching of Sport

Up to 1916 «Utilitarian Gymnastics» which gave birth to body development through open air games (of which Coubertin is well and truly the forerunner) practically monopolized all his thoughts on pedagogics. Obviously, in the circumstances, he acted for sport by creating school sports' associations in Paris, Rouen and Bordeaux, so that school sports should become known and be recognized.

Opposition

But so much opposition prevented him from theorizing. We know that the opposition in the 1880's was virulent and manifold.

- 1) Parents, who were afraid of consumption and bad morals, were encouraged in their opposition by the Catholic hierarchy, who saw in the neo-olympic movement «an offensive return to pagan ideas» (but Pope Pius X supported Coubertin).
- 2) Doctors were against sport.
- 3) But above all, professional teachers, in the name of «the broadening of the minds of young scholars», were afraid of the fermenting of freedom that sport was going to awaken in French secondary schools which had continued to maintain strict Napoleonic discipline.

In March 1889, giving evidence before the Inquiry Commission on Secondary Education, Coubertin recorded that he «met with the most hostile, the most unceasing, the most distressing ... in the University».

In 1894, in Caen, at the French Association for the Progress of Science Congress, in spite of an ardent speech, Coubertin was defeated. The Congress decided «to make war on sport in secondary education».

Mens fervida in corpore lacertoso

- 1) As he was persuaded of the hygienic mistake of those then supporting Swedish gymnastics, Coubertin waged war on the «mens sana in corpore sano» (a healthy mind in a healthy body) concept to which so many orators lacking in imagination had recourse and which had been abused to so great an extent that, without exaggeration, it could be qualified as an unacceptable refrain. (BIPS Bulletin N4, p. 12).

These words, Coubertin said, do not correspond to the requirements of the times. What France needs is conquerors, not little frightened bourgeois.

- 2) Sport is very different from gymnastics, because «it requires the freedom of excess. It is its very essence, its justification, **it is the secret of its moral value.** Audacity for audacity's sake without real necessity, that is how our body overcomes its animalism». (Olympic Congress - Prague 1925 - Opening Speech).
- 3) Consequently «A fervent soul in a trained body» «mens fervida in corpore lacertoso» and this definition of sport according to Coubertin:
«Sport is the **voluntary and habitual** devotion to **intensive** muscular exercise based on the desire to make progress and which can go as far as taking **risks** (underlined by Coubertin)...
which is completed by this statement, even more demanding, more selective:
«The tendency of sport towards **excess** (...) here then is its psychological characteristic, par excellence. It wants more speed, more height, more strength ... always more. That is its drawback, admittedly, from the point of view of human equilibrium. But it is also its nobleness and even its poetry» (Sportsman's Pedagogics - Foreword).

The Sportsman's Pedagogics according to Coubertin

«The alpha and omega of the sportsman's pedagogics consists of provoking or encouraging the process of moral bronzing by physical bronzing, the bronzing of the soul by the bronzing of the body» (BIPS Bulletin N4 p. 10).

The goal is clear. It is not a question of locking sport in an old-fashioned concept, with reference to mythical Greece. But absolutely to enter contemporary sport in a contemporary society fundamentally different from that of ancient Greece.

It is a question, on the teaching level, of breaking loose from gymnastics which have too rigid methods and, through sport, liberating the energy which France needs to be a conqueror.

Lessons on the teaching of sport given by Coubertin are worth less in their method, didactic, than in the values they transmit. We do not look for sport methodology in Coubertin, as in former times we found the remarkable paper written by Hébert in his «natural method». We must not expect to find in Coubertin «secrets» of training. Coubertin places the education of the body in the concept of general education (the muscle must always abandon the struggle to the superiority of the spirit) and, tactically, in order to see his «reformation of the 20th century adolescent» triumph, called upon those whom we today call the deciding managers of political or civilian life. To triumph he knew he had, first of all, to convince the elite. Thus,

«Sport in France will either be intellectual or it will not be at all... it will be the silent bulwark, ideally supervised, behind which the individual will carry out his mental ascension». (Une Campagne de 35 ans - A 35-year Campaign - 1 st June, 1923).

«The legend of sport, a rebel by definition to things of the mind, is no longer valid. It is an old, antiquated, hackneyed expression». (Sportsman's Pedagogics 1922 - p. 130).

«We would be brought to conclude that everything else being equal, critical judgment develops better in a sportsman than in someone who does not practise sport». (Sportsman's Pedagogics 1922 - p. 130).

For, «the fundamental question» of Coubertin's sportsman's pedagogics is certainly:

«Does sport succeed in fortifying character and developing what we could call the muscular moral of man ? There, undoubtedly is the fundamental question». (Notes on Public Education - 1920).

For Coubertin, the reply is positive: alone, amongst all the educative means available, does sport call upon the dosing of contrary qualities: audaciousness and prudence, impulsiveness and calculation, confidence and distrust, frustration and liberation, passion and reason. It is there, he said «the direct equilibrium of life» which must lead to «eurhythmy».

The Sportsman - Man of Duty

Thus the Coubertin sportsman is entrusted with a social and moral mission, and **the training of sportsmen becomes training for social and moral life.**

- 1) «The first of the social situations in which sports play a role is co-operation» (Sportsman's Pedagogics - 1922 p. 140). Or «Co-operation possesses the characteristics which make it a sort of preparatory school for democracy». (Sportsman's Pedagogics - 1922 p. 140).
- 2) Hence, the **importance of school sports associations** with a view to «ensuring the students the control of their games» and thereby introducing an embryo of freedom in their prison - like exercises.
(Taken from The Organization and Working of Athletic Clubs in French Secondary Schools and Colleges, University Review 5.5.1892).
- 3) Only in as much as the sports teacher is not considered as a second-degree teacher. «**The work of the teacher consists of making the germ bear fruit throughout the body (...) of transposing it (...) from one special category of activity to all the acts of the individual.**»
(University Review - 5.5.1892).

We are far from that unbridled hedonism, which despises the experience and wisdom of the adult teacher, and leads to so many disappointments in sports stadiums and civilian life today. That is how Coubertin's sportsman's pedagogics appears to historians of education. Less than didactics, and teaching methods, **it is a question of a general philosophy of education in which sports, elevated to rank of value, takes its place, nothing more than its place, the final goal being to make the adolescent male independent and sociable.**

Because it is to him, Coubertin continued to repeat that the future of democracy belongs. From the latter and its equilibrium depend the harmony of society. Obviously, it would be too easy, a century later, to demonstrate how far this restrictive attitude (neither children, nor girls were included) is open to criticism.

It nevertheless remains that Coubertin, turning his thoughts beyond Anglo-Saxon pragmatism did, the first in the world, theorize on sport and elevate it to the rank of a universal educative value. That is his real title to glory, more than the revival of the Olympic Games.

Yves P. Boulongne

INFORMATIONS :

Austria

Though there is no National Committee Pierre de Coubertin in Austria yet, the ideas and purposes of CIPC are disseminated among the members of the Austrian Olympic Academy as the board member of CIPC Dr. Hermann Andrecs is president of the AOA.

And in his capacity as responsible for physical education in the Federal Ministry of Education he promotes projects on Olympism and on the founder of modern Olympic Games Pierre de Coubertin in schools.

Bolivia

The Bolivian Pierre de Coubertin Committee is very active. It is preparing the issue of a teaching publication intended for students.

France

The French Pierre de Coubertin Committee, founded in 1950, is the «ancestor» in date of these groups which were created in the world of sport to study, to make known and to magnify the work of the great humanist and inspired precursor whose name they bear. That is why we take the liberty of greeting with joy the rebirth of this periodical with world-wide repercussions, which will enable the disciples linked by the same ideal to the faithful of the Olympic movement, in the full meaning of the term, to get to know each other better, to harmonize their points of view, in order to be more efficient.

It is fitting to introduce ourselves: We are 250, members of a legally constituted association, recognized by the public authorities, independent, but closely related to the French National Olympic and Sports Committee (CNOSF).

Our structure is classical: it is composed of a Board of Directors, elected from among our active members, a traditional Board (Chairman, secretary, treasurer...) and group together «volunteers men and women» having, for most of them, given proof of their athletic ability, then as leaders, all unpaid ... and enthusiasts.

Let us quote as examples: Chairman Pierre Rostini, a founder member, stimulator

of university sports, historians and hagiographers of Pierre de Coubertin, Yves P. Boulongne, Jean Durry, Geoffroy de Navacelle, a descendant of Pierre de Coubertin's who looks after the family seat, Mirville Castle, the academician, B. Doring, sports philosopher, the journalist, J.-F. Brisson etc... a very gifted team, motivated by the same ideal.

It takes part in all the movements of thought related to sport; research and reflections on ethics, voluntary organizations, fair-play, the struggle against violence.

It organizes events, lectures, exhibitions, played a notable role at the «Centenary Congress» of the I.O.C., publishes works which become authoritative. «Mieux connaître Pierre de Coubertin (Know Pierre de Coubertin Better), «Le Vrai Pierre de Coubertin» (The Real Pierre de Coubertin) or studies on a particular subject, such as: The Olympic Movement, doping and maintaining close and friendly relations with the «International Pierre de Coubertin Committee» in a spirit of total co-operation.

Jean Rodenfuser, General Secretary of the Pierre de Coubertin Committee was made an Officer of the Legion of Honour on 5th April.

Germany

Dr. Norbert Müller, Member of our Board, has been made an Officer of the French «Palme Académiques», a distinction awarded for services to education.

Great Britain

From April 27/30 1995 a party of 21 persons visited the IOC Museum in Lausanne at the invitation of the IOC President, H.E. Juan Antonio Samaranch.

This party comprised 16 students between 14-17 years and 4 adults; the headteacher of the school, the head of physical education, and the current secretary of the Wenlock Olympian Society, accompanied by his wife. During the visit the headteacher met her counterpart in Ouchy.

The British Olympic Association representative attending was CIPC executive member, Dr. Don Anthony.

The much Wenlock Olympian Society was established in 1850. Forty years later Pierre de Coubertin visited the founder Dr. William Penny Brookes and witnessed a special «Olympian Games» staged for his benefit. Coubertin stayed at a coaching inn - «The Raven».

In 1891 Coubertin was elected an honorary member of the M.W. Olympian Society and he gave a special medal to the society. This medal was presented to the winner of Brookes favourite event - «Tilting» (spearing rings on horseback) 24 hours prior to the visit of President Samaranch to Wenlock, in July 1994, when he conducted a tree planting ceremony, this medal was discovered and displayed to him by the winner's daughter, a Miss Farmer, then aged 91 years.

A copy of this medal (the original being now in the Wenlock Museum) will be presented to the IOC Museum by the head of the William Brookes School, Mrs Penny Cooper. The sharing of the forename «Penny» is purely coincidental !

On June 25th 1995 Britain's «Olympians» (Ex olympic competitors) will hold their annual General Meeting at the William Brookes School they will also honour a ceremony naming the new restaurant at the restored «Raven»- «Le Coubertin».

It is planned to stage suitable art exhibitions also at «Le Coubertin».

Brookes and Coubertin shared the view that the Olympic Games was the means to reach the end -«Mass physical education for all».

Brookes had tried to revive the Games internationally but always in Greece, since the 1870's. He wrote to Coubertin in 1894 saying that Coubertin's proposal for Games rotating between cities, was a better concept, and that such festival Games would «make a profit» which «should be distributed among the participating nations». A brilliant anticipation of modern-day «Olympic Solidarity».

Coubertin named Brookes as an Honorary Member of his IOC founding congress in 1894, but Brookes had broken his leg and was too ill to attend. He wrote a personal letter of support and a special Wenlock Olympian Society meeting reinforced this support.

Brookes died in 1895; two centennial events will honour him - the «European Youth Olympic Days» in Bath, England, July 10th / 14th 1995 and the Wenlock visit to Lausanne !

Dr Don Anthony
Chair BOA Education Trust
London
April 23th 1995

Greece

Mr Nicolas Vassiliades, an active member of the IPCC, wrote articles and presented on the radio texts on Pierre de Coubertin on the occasion of the 10th Anniversary of the Greek Olympic Committee.

Guatemala

We know that a Guatemala Pierre de Coubertin Committee has been created by the ex-President of the NOC but we have not yet received any information.

New Zealand

Pierre de Coubertin Committee

During the second half of 1994 the NZPCC investigated the possibility of establishing a university Centre for Olympic Studies in Wellington, attended a breakfast with the Minister for Sport in New Zealand, and held the 4th Session of its General Assembly in Wellington. The Committee also assisted the NOC with the development of its Olympic Academy programme, and was granted a permanent position on the NOC's Olympism Commission.

In 1995 the NZPCC has relocated its National Secretariat to the headquarters of the NOC, created its new quarterly publication «Coubertin Connection», prepared a new brochure on the Committee, and received approval for funds to produce a New Zealand brochure on Pierre de Coubertin. In collaboration with the NOC the Committee is promoting feasibility studies for the establishment of a permanent Olympic Academy, a small Olympic Museum, a University Olympic Studies Centre, Wellington as an Olympic City, and for the preparation of a history of the Olympic Movement in New Zealand.

Institut Pierre de Coubertin

Since May 1994 the Institute has been officially recognised by the Oceania National Olympic Committees, presented a paper at the Centennial Olympic Congress of Unity, commenced cooperative discussions with UNESCO, held the 3rd meeting of its Board of Trustees in Paris, appointed Ms Caron Living as Fund Development Manager, and been recognised in a special Declaration by the Institute's host City of Wellington and host Olympic Committee who, along with the host Government of New Zealand have provided the IPC's administrative funding.

In 1995 the Institute will begin its first year of programmes and events. The Youth Festival will take place on 9-10 September, the Olympism Programme during November and December, and «Ode to Sport», (the Institute's official publication), will be released for April, August and December.

Puerto Rico

We welcome the creation of the «Puerto Rican Pierre de Coubertin Committee» whose President is Hector Cardona and registered office is in San Juan. The first Vice-President Lcdo Pedro J. Codova, second Vice-President Lcdo Hector M. Col-lazo, secretary, Sr Joaquim Martinez-Rousset, members Ing. Luis J. Cuerda, Lcdo Jorge O. Sosa Ramirez, Sr. Jorge Rodriguez.

Yugoslavia

In April, Belgrade and the Yugoslav Olympic Committee received the visit of the President of the I.O.C. and Honorary President of I.P.C.C., H.E. Juan Antonio Samaranch. This visit was very warmly welcomed by the Yugoslav sportsmen and by the Yugoslavs in general. At the end of the visit, Ivan Curkovic, a member of the I.P.C.C. Board and Predrag Manoylovic, a member of I.P.C.C. took the initiative to propose the creation of a Yugoslav Pierre de Coubertin National Committee.

This idea was very well received by Mr Bakocevic, President of the Yugoslav Olympic Committee.

This Committee will, therefore, be formed shortly.

The International Pierre de Coubertin Committee

Our colleague, Jean Weyman, first secretary of the IPCC died at the age of 88. He was an enthusiastic and devoted propagator of the Olympic Movement. We will long remember him.

Our President Conrado Durantez has been appointed President of the Spanish Association of Olympic Philatelists, as well as the Olympic Academy Commission for Education in the African and Latin American countries.

Jean Durry, a member of the IPCC Board and curator of the Paris Sports Museum,

conceived and carry into effect a video-cassette «Pierre de Coubertin vivant» (Pierre de Coubertin alive) French National Sports Museum.

Our Committee will organize the Havre Centenary Congress in 1997. The working group will be directed by Yves Boulongne and Jean Durry, co-Presidents; Donald Anthony and Norbert Müller are also members of the group.

The theme retained will be:

COUBERTIN - THE OLYMPIC MOVEMENT AND THE FUTURE.

Publications Available

«Pierre de Coubertin, sa vie par l'image»

(Pierre de Coubertin, his life through pictures)

First numbered edition, limited quantity. Album illustrated by photographs and documents. Price CHF. 30.–.

«Actualité de Pierre de Coubertin»

«The relevance of Pierre de Coubertin today»

Report of the Symposium held in March 1986 at the University of Lausanne.
CHF. 30.–.

Bibliographie des œuvres de Pierre de Coubertin (Bibliography / Bibliografia)

Dr. Norbert Müller, in collaboration with M. Otto Schantz. CHF. 25.–.

La vie et l'œuvre de Pierre de Coubertin 1863-1937

(The Life and Pedagogic Works of Pierre de Coubertin 1863-1937)

Prof. Yves - Pierre Boulongne, CHF. 30.–.

Textes choisis de Pierre de Coubertin

(Chosen Texts by Pierre de Coubertin)

French edition, original texts. Box containing 3 volumes: «Révélation», «Olympisme», «Pratique sportive» and the album Pierre de Coubertin, his life through pictures, nearly 300 pages. Numerous illustrations and reproductions of documents. CHF. 80.–.

Brochures: **Pierre de Coubertin and the Arts**
 Pierre de Coubertin and History
 Pierre de Coubertin, the Unknown

French / English / Spanish editions.

Pour un humanisme du Sport

(For Humanism in Sport)

under the direction of Prof. Yves Boulongne, on the occasion of the Centenary Congress.

Published by the FOSNC, Paris.

Le Livre du Centenaire

(The Centenary Book)

Published by the I.O.C.

Volume 1 is already out and deals with:

1. Vikelas - Coubertin (1894-1925) by Prof. Yves Pierre Boulongne
2. Baillet - Latour (1925-1942) by Dr. Karl Lennartz

APPEAL

The reader will note the unequal importance of the above news and above all the absence of news coming from many countries where we are present and where there are certainly interesting events. It is for this reason that we launch an urgent appeal to all members that they furnish for the edition of this «Information Letter» these items worth bringing to the attention of our readers when they pertain to an action or an event related to Pierre de Coubertin and to his work.

Friends of the Olympic Movement, create National Pierre de Coubertin Committees.

We are at your disposal to send you our brochure «Instructions and suggestions for the creation of a National Pierre de Coubertin Committee».

Présidents d'Honneur:

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M. Geoffroy de NAVACELLE, Membre de la Commission CIO pour le CIPC (FRA)

Président:

M. Conrado DURANTEZ, Haut Magistrat Président de l'Académie Olympique Espagnole et de l'Association des Académies ibéro-américaines, vice-Président de la Commission CIO pour le CIPC (ESP)

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