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# **INFORMATION LETTER**

**OF**

# **THE INTERNATIONAL PIERRE DE COUBERTIN COMMITTEE**



**1/98**

## PRESIDENT'S NOTES

I When almost one hundred years ago, Pierre de Coubertin considered the reason for choosing this beautiful city of Normandy as the venue for the first Olympic Congress, he justified his choice with the reasoning of the protecting father of the great modern sociological force which had been reborn three years before, at the historic congress of the Sorbonne on June 23rd 1894. Then, the incipient rolling of the Olympic machine and its governing organism - The International Olympic Committee - advised the genial humanist of the prudent measure, *«its staff was scarce, it said - the lack of material resources and above all its incipient character, without even the support of a complex administration of regularly constituted or recognised technical elements, does not allow me such imprudence.»*.

When the Committee International Pierre de Coubertin organised the Centenary Congress in Le Havre, they took the decision not only for nostalgic, historical or sentimental reasons but also for the installations and hospitality offered by the authorities of Le Havre and in particular those offered by the Council and the university of the city.

The Committee International Pierre de Coubertin can only count on a reduced work group for its work on spreading the humanism of Pierre de Coubertin throughout the world. This group is made up of nine members of the Bureau, each resident in their respective countries. The work that they undertake is to establish an individual structure in accordance with their own development.

However, the enthusiasm and the vocation of the directors has meant that in the course of an Olympiad (1992-1996) the number of its members has doubled. While in 1992 there were only two National Committees Pierre de Coubertin (Bolivia and France), in this period 16 countries are forming their own Committees: Puerto Rico, United States of America, Guatemala, Venezuela, Mexico, Hungary, Haiti, New Zealand, Iran, Yugoslavia, Greece, Turkey, Cuba, El Salvador, Dominican Republic, Chile and Benin. With regard to urbanism, several squares have been baptised with the name Pierre de Coubertin and in some cases a bust has been unveiled, in this way making clear the value of the famous French humanist, as for example in the cities of Guatemala, La Paz, Lima, Atlanta, Guayaquil, Santiago de Chile, Colombia, Granada, Armilla and Cáceres. His life, his work and his philosophy have been spread through conferences by the annual cycles of the Olympic Academies in territories which extend from the United States to Patagonia. Various books, brochures and leaflets have been written by members of the Committee International Pierre de Coubertin, and there is an iconographic exhibition in three languages on the life of Pierre de Coubertin which was formally opened during the Olympic Games of Lillehammer and on view in the Olympic Village in Atlanta. This exhibition was accompanied by illustrated brochures, sumptuously published by the Olympic Museum in Lausanne. There were six thousand copies in three languages: English, French and Spanish. For the next Olympic Games in Nagano, this same brochure will be published in Japanese and Portuguese.

The Committee International Pierre de Coubertin has started its work in Africa. This year, through the Olympic Academy, the ideals of Pierre de Coubertin have been spread in Angola, Mozambique, Sao Tomé and in Guinea Equatorial. This work has culminated in the Regional Seminar for the formation of future directors of the National Olympic Academies in Cotonou, Benin from 1st to 7th December with the participation of French speaking west Africa: Ivory Coast, Togo, Mauritania, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Benin, Mali and Niger. The courses

dealt with the humanism of Pierre de Coubertin and are illustrated with slides and videos which were distributed on the life and work of Pierre de Coubertin. The enthusiasm created by this new knowledge led to the official constitution of the National Committee of Benin and the Olympic Academy of Benin. This committee will be presided over by Mr Charles Nobre, a member of the Committee International Pierre de Coubertin de Benin. Mr Nobre will be assisted by a group of competent collaborators, among whom will be the President of the Olympic Committee of Benin and the Olympic Academy of Benin, Mr Mario Francisco. The Regional Seminar, which received the collaboration of the Office for International Co-operation of the International Olympic Committee, and particularly that of the Head of the Office of the President, Mr Fekrou Kidane, has had great success in the spreading of the philosophy of Pierre de Coubertin in this part of Africa.

To conclude this summary of activities, one must mention the enormous success achieved by the Centenary Congress of Le Havre, where one hundred and fifty delegates from thirty-seven countries gathered to hear thirty-five experts of the highest level, who spoke on the life and work of Pierre de Coubertin, the ethic, Olympism, the rights of man, humanism, democracy, etc. His Excellence, Judge Keba Mbaye, Messrs. Luc Ferry, Bertrand Doring, Yves Boulouge, Norbert Müller and Jean Durry, among others, intervened brilliantly on complex subjects such as, «Coubertin and Olympism: projects for the future».

Aside from this congress, and drawn by Professor Müller, 132 participants from educational institutions took part in a Youth Forum, thus injecting life and joy into the congress. These participants will be the future of the movement and the hope for the future.

Thanks to the enormous effort put in by the members of the Bureau of the Committee International Pierre de Coubertin, Messrs. Jean Durry, Yves Boulouge, Norbert Müller, Geoffroy de Navacelle and Mrs Ada Wild, the Centenary Congress of Le Havre was a complete success. This Congress was closed by His Excellence, Marquis Juan Antonio Samaranch accompanied by a member of the International Olympic Committee for France, Jean Claude Killy and by Mr Fekrou Kidane.

**Conrado Durántez**  
**President**  
**International Pierre de Coubertin Committee**



Guatemala, 5 October 1994 with Fernando Beltranena



San Juan de Puerto Rico, 11 November 1994



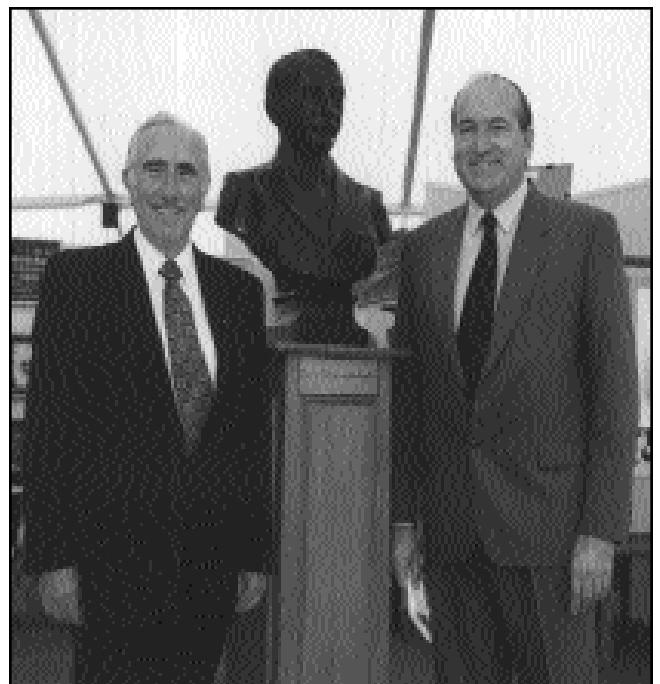
San Juan of Puerto Rico with Richard Carrión, Héctor Cardone and Mrs Marimer Olazagasti



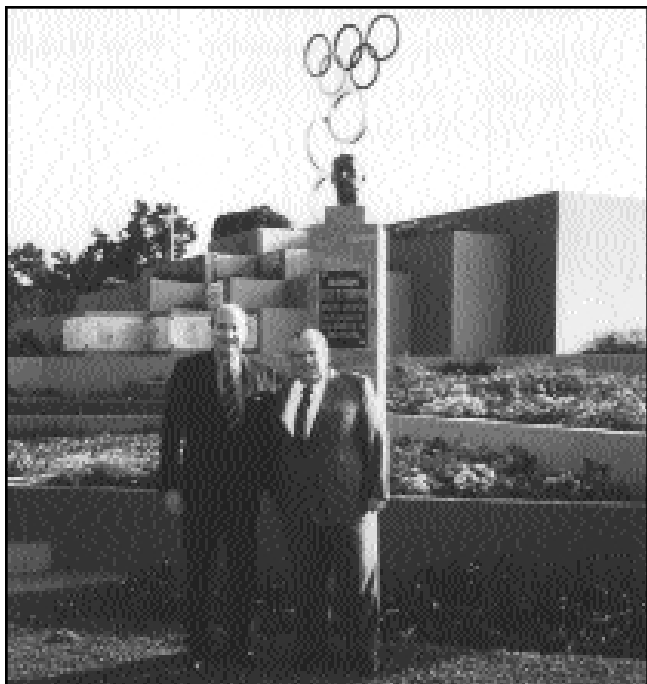
Armillá, Granada 26 April 1995 with the Board's Members



Granada, 25 April 1995



Santiago de Chili, 7 Nov. 1995 with Sergio Santander Fantini



*Lima (Peru), 4 November 1996 with M. Luis Woolcot*



*Guayaquil (Ecuador) with Franklin Andrade and Norma de Justamond*



*La Paz (Bolivia) with M. Jorge España*



*Bogota, (Colombia), 20 November 1996 with M. Jorge Herrera Barona and M. Mario García y García*



*Cáceres, 28 April 1996 with any personalities*



*Olympia, 11 May 1996. Wreath presentation in front of the Stela where lies the Pierre de Coubertin's embalmed heart.*

## **Centennial Congress at Le Havre 17<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> September 1997 under the Theme: «Pierre de Coubertin and Olympism; Questions of the Future»**

There are moments of great importance in the life of an association, above all of an association made up of volunteers driven solely by their passion to see man progress towards greater harmony and peace.

The Committee International Pierre de Coubertin has just lived these moments with the organisation of a congress called the Centenary (Le Havre 17/20 September 1997).

The challenge was not insignificant, since it dealt with no less than questioning the philosophical and pedagogical bases of the Olympic movement, with the aim of examining which of these were still relevant at the doors of the XXI century (according to the proposal of Donald Anthony, member of our Bureau).

One hundred years ago, the future of modern Olympism was in a very precarious position, in spite of the visionary lucidity of Coubertin and his faith in the destiny of the Olympic Movement which was still in its infancy. The wounds of contemporary sport: commercialisation, nationalism, cheating and the soon to be seen drug-taking, threatened to derail Olympism risen again from its Hellenic limbo from the paths of honour and democracy, where the pioneers had placed it. The Games of 1896 had revealed the great potential, but at the same time the weaknesses and inadequacies of a movement, maintained by the will of just one man, were clear to see. One of the greatest dangers was that by public demand, the Olympic Games would become a show of muscles, with its spirit concealed.

A solution to this deplorable state of affairs was needed. Coubertin set aside this conception, reminding the world that Olympism was established as a culture in itself to attract education.

But why choose Le Havre, a small city in North East Europe, when it would have been easier for him, a lover of the great capitals of the world, to choose one of the capitals of the old or new Continents.

We can only suggest that this was due to the fact that he wanted to draw the attention of the politicians and administrators of education to the obligations in a democracy to work principally on the education of the child and adolescent, far from the sensationalist press and the bustle of the great cities.

Pierre de Coubertin felt at home in Le Havre, Normandy, (Mirville, his mother's family home was only a few kilometres away) close to his roots. Moreover, the International Olympic Committee was still weak and Coubertin was not yet prepared to present it on the world stage.

The program of the Congress of 1897 bore the mark of this vision and determination: The Congress will be of a pedagogic nature and will forget for a time the great festival of the Games which were obviously useful in the project, but only as a means of focussing public attention on the obligation to educate the adolescent in Olympism.

In 1897, the Congress debated the subjects of hygiene, sport and pedagogy, dominated by the Coubertinian pragmatism,

strongly influenced by British utilitarianism. Delegates came from all corners: Germany, Bohemia, Spain, The United States, France, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, Switzerland and Sweden. It was an indication of the importance that modern sport had attained in the life of the nations, and also a sign of the personal charm at an international level which, this devil of a man, Coubertin, possessed and he was barely thirty years old.

The Congress of 1897 was symbolic of what Coubertin wanted Olympism to represent: an exceptional means of education for young people. It is the reason why the most emblematic figures at the Congress were the doctors of pedagogy, (such as Dr. Tissié of France), pedagogues - men of God (such as The reverend Coury Laffon from Great Britain and the reverend father Didon from France), adventurers (such as the French explorer, Bonvalot). In the eyes of the world, and the world of sport in particular, Coubertin showed that Olympism was full of meaning and that it was important to invite the youth of the world to join in this launch, which was exciting, but at the same time so difficult.

One hundred years later, The Committee International Pierre de Coubertin and the French Committee Pierre de Coubertin, wanted to highlight the event in the same city of Le Havre, destroyed in the second world war, not to bury itself in a fruitless past, but to ask questions about the future.

The restrictions and programme of this centenary congress dominate: it cannot be held anywhere other than in Le Havre. One must remember the past in order the future in a better way.

The two presidential delegates, Yves Boulouge and Jean Durry had the task of organising the Congress. Jean Durry was given the responsibility of the material organisation and Yves Boulouge that of public relations with the regional authorities and the departments of the city of Le Havre. The two co-presidents were joined by Norbert Müller, vice-president of the Committee International Pierre de Coubertin, a recognised specialist in Olympic history and head of the Forum on youth.

This troika was soon joined by Ada Wild, General Secretary of the CIPC, Geoffroy de Navacelle de Coubertin, Honorary President of the CIPC, Ivan Curkovic (ex leading international footballer, Olympic champion in Tokyo in 1964) and Hermann Andress, responsible for the school education programme in Austria, the two chosen from the CIPC.

The Congress was received very favourably and positively from all sides: from President Samaranch, Mrs Zweifel, General Secretary of the IOC, as well as Mr Ruffenacht, President of the region of Upper-Normandy, from Mr Charles Revet, President of the General Council of Seine-Maritime, From Mrs Annick Faury, deputy mayoress of Le Havre, in charge of international relations in the city, from Mr Jaques Lebas, head of the University of Le Havre, and not forgetting the Franco-German office for youth and of course our friend Pierre Rodtini, President of the French Committee Pierre de Coubertin and Henri Serandour, President of the National Olympic Committee and French sport. The collaboration of The French Ministry of Youth and Sport and the direction of the minister, Mrs Georges Buffet were specially appreciated by everyone.

Great speakers presented their lectures. Firstly we would mention Judge Keba Mbaye (Senegal), representing President Samaranch as well as Norbert Müller, Roland Naul, Otto Schantz, Michaela Lochmann, Karl Lennartz (Germany), Robert Barney (Canada), Luis Moréal (Spain), Lamartine Da Costa (Brazil), Katalin Szikora (Hungary), Elena Galinovskaia (Russia), Yves P. Boulouge, Bertrand Durring, Jean Durry,

André Rauch, Luc Ferry (France), Andrés Stetton (Australia), Michael Kadoodooba (Uganda). Round tables, notably directed by Doctor ..... (Germany) Hermann Andrecs (Austria), Conrado Durántez (Spain) allowed each of them to express themselves as best they could given the time restrictions of the programme. Our committee will shortly publish the minutes of a Congress which, from now on, will have a special place in the history of Olympism.

Between the two congresses, that of the end of the XIX and this at the end of the XX century, there is a common thread, firmly divided in the past by Pierre de Coubertin and today by his successors who understand not only how to endow sport with an ethic, but also what is the most difficult and passionate task, to make sport an ethic. It is not by accident that the two congresses have been predominated by investigators of human science who hope to study in depth the philosophical meaning of modern Olympism, today contemporary. A great lesson can be learnt from the Centenary Congress of Le Havre: Olympism is a way of life which conforms to the laws of individual morale of societies. Sport without conscience is man's ruin, sport and a sense of life is the grandeur of man: Olympism is humanism.

It for this reason that the actions of the CIPC should go hand in hand with democracy. Everything that enslaves man must be denounced by Olympism. Thanks to the IOC for fighting against Apartheid. Everything that concerns man should be of interest to Olympism: Thanks to the IOC for deepening worldwide coubertinian thinking. Olympism is a positive way of life that we should develop and propose to young people.

It is for this reason that the CIPC should ensure that Olympism be included in the different levels of education, and in particular in higher education. All over the world, the CIPC must place itself at the disposition of the IOC and the National Olympic Committees, of the Olympic Academies in order to confer the fruits of its beneficial experience, in the slow and patient conquest of the spirits. Let us rejoice! One of the most positive results of the Centenary Congress has been, thanks to the unlimited vocation of our vice-president Norbert Müller, the gathering of one hundred young Europeans from Germany, England, Austria and France who came to gain a better understanding, to help each other, in the practice of Olympism. Young people such as these bear great hope. They dictate our task.

**Yves P. Boulong** vice-president IPCC

## **THE CONGRESS IN MIRVILLE**

19th SEPTEMBER 1997.

One hundred years ago, , days after the first Games of Athens, an International Congress was held in 1897 on the initiative of Pierre de Coubertin, it was known as the Congress of Le Havre, the name of a great Norman port and the city where it took place.

The Committee International Pierre de Coubertin celebrated this centenary by organising its 1997 Congress in the same city.

The hospitality is exceptional, not only that offered by the Mayor, President of the Regional Council, but also from the authorities of the Department, of the region and the University, whose modern facilities house the group of debates on the subject. (Coubertin and Olympism, Questions for the Future).

The future is the youth of the world, this is the reason for the initiative of professor Norbert Müller and with the collaboration of the Franco-German office for youth, young schoolchildren from Germany, Austria, Great Britain and France are gathered in a centre close to Le Havre. The majority of its centres of Education bear the name of Pierre de Coubertin. It is the Youth Forum, and they lend their enthusiasm and dynamism.

The schedule of the Congress plans an excursion for the participants to the Pays de Caux, this territory in Upper-Normandy which Pierre de Coubertin loved so much.

It is here, in the heart of a city known for its special charm, situated on the edge of a small lake, where the small chateaux of Mirville lies, surrounded by water and dating from the sixteenth century.

Pierre de Coubertin lived here during his youth and worked on his projects. This family home belonged to his mother, a descendant of a companion of the first Duke of Normandy, the Viking, Rollon.

Nowadays, the property is a family society, headed by Geofroy de Navacelle, whose great-uncle was Pierre de Coubertin.

Mirville is living a great day on that 19th September 1997.

A marquee awaits the visitors with an afternoon snack for the young people, followed by a cocktail-dinner.

The Olympic flag flutters at the top of the flagstaff.

After visiting Etretat and Fécamp, one hundred young men and women with their partners invade the lawn in front of the chateaux, where according to tradition, lawn tennis was first played in France.

On their arrival, they hear the chorus of the Ninth Symphony, The Song of Joy, followed by modern music and some short speeches. The young English and German participants perform a mime of a game of cricket, dances and gymnastic exercises.

At the end, all the young people from the five different nations join hands to form the Olympic rings in a great show of enthusiasm.

The place echoes with their joyful shouts and laughter.

Pierre de Coubertin would feel happy to see and hear them.

Shortly after their departure to their lodgings, the coaches arrive carrying the delegates and their guests of honour.

Beneath the porch, they are welcomed by Mr and Mrs Navacelle, master of ceremonies and President Durántez accompanied by his wife.

Once again, the chorus of the Ninth Symphony, so loved by Pierre de Coubertin (the tones were incomparable).

Gathered once more at the foot of the chateaux and facing the small valley of Mirville, with its great oak and beech trees we listen, with great attention to the inevitable speeches which are of a high standard.

As the day comes to a close, the guests gather for a well earned meal in pleasant atmosphere with background music.

It is now that the beautiful English and German schoolgirls repeat their dance and gymnastic displays to great applause. As night fell, the guests are asked to gather on the lawn in front of the chateaux. The Olympic flag flies, illuminated by a projector. Light shines from Pierre de Coubertin's window on the first floor, and the voice of Pierre de Coubertin is heard with great emotion.

After seconds of deep silence, the Olympic hymn sounds while the spotlights illuminate the walls of the chateaux and its grounds with the great trees.

The hosts of Mirville are given a pleasant surprise when they receive several letters from their guests. Also on behalf of her fellow students of William Brookes School, Karen O'Neal wrote, «The highpoint of our stay in France was the party to which we were invited. The meal was excellent and it was a great honour for us to dance in Mirville in the presence of the members of the Committee International Pierre de Coubertin.»

The great, internationally renowned pianist, Icheline Osterwey, three times Olympic gold medallist said, «Welcomed by Beethoven, greater than ever in this wonderful setting, captivated by the lights which enhance its nobility and its delicacy, comfortably installed in a warm atmosphere and moreover deeply moved to discover the precise voice of a great and venerated man, truly your numerous guests have been fitted in every way. And the international contacts were full of charm and future...».

In this way, the pilgrimage to what was the home of Pierre de Coubertin finished, but it will remain a lasting memory in many hearts.

## A SPEAKER'S COMMENT ON THE CONGRESS

### Declaration

The International Committee Pierre de Coubertin organised a jubilee congress at Le Havre from 17<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> September to commemorate the Le Havre Congress of 1897, organised by Pierre de Coubertin after the first modern Olympic Games in Athens 1896. The jubilee congress was organised under the theme «Le Havre 1897-1997, Pierre de Coubertin and Olympism; Questions for the Future».

150 participants from 40 countries and continents participated. The congress coincided with the centenaire of the second olympic congress of the IOC (International Olympic Committee) that took place in Havre in 1897.

Four aspects were at the centre of the debate:

- A look at the past - history of Olympic Development;
- Continuation of the congress of 1897;
- Sports ethics, olympism and reality;
- Olympism for tomorrow.

These questions were treated by eminent conferenciers from 11 countries. The conferences and discussions were held in an informal and friendly manner with an excellent atmosphere.

At the end of the three days of cultural and academic exchange, the Directors of the committee synthesised the works and arrived at the following observations:

1. The reality and significance of the work of Pierre de Coubertin are of constant value to olympisme.
2. The congress was grateful since the symposium of Lausanne 1986 a number of new significant researchers in numerous countries has increased the amount of research about de Coubertin and his philosophy. This development points at the need for continued reflection and discussion over the work of de Coubertin in order to address and relay his ideas to the real needs of societies and cultures of the whole world.
3. The development of the olympic movement into the future requires the visions of Pierre de Coubertin in order to assure its appropriate vocation of a universal education through olympism.
4. The congress appealed to all athletes national and international sports organisations to recognise and respect the guidelines of Pierre de Coubertin in the practice of physical education and sport more particularly the:
  - a) Harmonious development of the body, spirit of love and goodwill alongside with sportive, intellectual and education is important.
  - b) The voluntary acceptance in sportive action of the basic ethics aimed at the development of character of the individual, likewise the views of Pierre de Coubertin such as fairplay, mutual respect and human understanding between persons.
  - c) The freedom and dignity of sportsmen and major sports as a permanent medium and approach for and emancipation of the individual.
  - d) The recognition of sportive excellence and performance as a dynamic development of the accomplishment and progress of man.
5. The efforts of the International Olympic committee in the dissemination of the heritage of its founder, particularly through the exhaustive edition of the writings of Pierre de Coubertin concerning sports activities of the Olympic Museum of Lausanne and other numerous initiative is duly recognised.
6. The International Olympic Academy and the National Olympic Academies contributed particularly and happily with International Committee Pierre de Coubertin and its members, contributed particularly to the dissemination of the collection of ideas of Pierre de Coubertin.
7. The congress of Havre symbolises an important state in the understanding of the work and spirit of Pierre de Coubertin especially after the first symposium of the International Committee Pierre de Coubertin in Lausanne 1986.
8. As Pierre de Coubertin would have wished, the responsibility of journalists, the media should be solicited and reinforced in a better way to promote the interests of olympism and public opinions about sport.

The congress particularly stressed the question of an olympic education of the youth and underlined the particularities of each culture which should not only be respected but enriched for olympisme.

9. In the perspective of the Sydney 2000, the multi cultural society of Australia offers a special chance and impulse for the communication of the development of the ideas of Pierre de Coubertin.

10. Research about de Coubertin, the dissemination and application of his ideas in the world should be intensified.

Students of all faculties and universities of sport should be stimulated through discussions to expose them to the views and ideas of de Coubertin concerning the future of sport, olympism and humanity in general.

11. Following the award of the 2004 Olympic Games to Athens, research over de Coubertin should receive new significance and should be deepened through another congress of the International Committee Pierre de Coubertin in 2001.

12. An edition of the writings of Pierre de Coubertin in English and Spanish is an urgent necessity, the production of which needs the assistance of the International Olympic Committee in order to be realised.

13. The role of universities in crucial for the preparation of teachers and researchers in the area of Coubertin studies. It is therefore indispensable that each country sets up an olympic centre for university research.

14. The first interschool forum for the Pierre de Coubertin schools was organised under the auspices of the congress and allowed a unique experience. Six of the schools from 4 different countries represented by 120 participants came to Le Havre. The carnation of Pierre de Coubertin, a true certificate of competence established by the International Committee Pierre de Coubertin was created for the first time on this occasion and should be disseminated to the world. Such international meetings of Pierre de Coubertin schools should be organised every two years by the International Committee Pierre de Coubertin with support from IOC and respective National Olympique Committees. By the year 2000 it is hoped that a school in each country of the world should bear the name of Pierre de Coubertin.

15. The International Committee Pierre de Coubertin in total and amicable cooperation with the International Olympic Committee, National Olympic Committees and universities, the movement of educational and sports associations thank the participants and speakers present at the congress for their involvement in the course of olympism.

**M. A Byaruhanga Kadoodooba**  
**Senior Lecturer Department of Sport Science ITEK**



*Congress at Le Havre, SE Juan Antonio Samaranch, Conrado Durántes and B. Kadoodooba*



*A. Rufenacht, Conrado Durántes and Keba Mbaye*



## THE COUBERTIN YOUTH FORM

The Congress of Le Havre provided the opportunity for the organisation of an international Youth Forum for the Coubertin schools inspired by the youth camps of the Olympic Games.

It is the wish of the CIPC that each country has at least one school which bears the name of Coubertin. This should be either a school with a sporting, musical and above all cultural vocation so as to present in the best possible way, the requirements of coubertinian pedagogy like the schools in places such as Much Wenlock, Rugby or Olympia which have a strong influence on the development of Coubertin's ideals.

The first Youth Forum took place from 14th to 21st September 1997 in the youth centre of the association St Thomas d'Aquin in the small town of Saint-Vincent Cramessnil, situated 25 kilometres from Le Havre in an old manor house, lying in magnificent settings.

There were one hundred students accompanied by a dozen teachers from the Coubertin schools from Bolbec and Calais (France), Berlin and Erfurt (Germany), The William Penny-Brooks School, Much Wenlock (England) and the federal gymnasium from Dornbirn (Austria).

The preparations began in the spring of 1997 in the above schools. Apart from the journey, special dedication was given to the contest known to the participating students as the «Coubertin Card».

This was a «Coubertin» distinction, developed by Professor Dr Norbert Müller (of Mainz), vice-president of the CIPC, which would first see the light in this forum. This certificate, described below, shows the four disciplines in which each student takes part.

- **In the sporting sector:**  
Long Jump - Greek style with weights.  
English shot putt.  
Discus throwing in a standing position  
Obstacle race
- **Artistic performance sector:**  
Very different performances can be presented. The Coubertin gymnasium of Berlin will present, in French, the Moliere piece, «The Imaginary Invalid». The Coubertin school of Erfurt the «Flegende Klassenzimmer» by Erich Käster, a German writer. The English students perform a parody of Cricket, others perform music or sing songs.
- **Specialist knowledge sector:**  
A question sheet must be completed on the life and work of Pierre de Coubertin and Olympism.
- **Social Work sector**  
The social services of the young students and the compromises of each of them (for example the Red Cross, Fire Services) should be considered and must be confirmed in writing by the school.

This highly satisfactory contest lasted four days in the Coubertin camp. Moreover, profound reflection is required to measure the integration of this man's ideal. The Coubertin award could not be given to everyone at the end of the contest as there were notable differences in the preparation - very notable.

The program of the week of the Coubertin Youth Forum, allowed for the differences in the practical, theoretical and social

interpretation to be shown, thanks to the participation of more than a hundred young people from different countries. The confrontation with French culture, that of Normandy, the country of origin of Pierre de Coubertin, was obvious. For many of the participants it was their first visit to France and the first time they had seen the sea. For the greater part of the students, this week was also an intensive meeting with young people of their age from different countries, practising different languages (French, English or German) and having to make themselves understood throughout the week. Everyone managed really well. The common activities (sport, disco, painting, songs, music, camp-fires and excursions) were a great success, as were the arduous group discussions on Olympic questions (the definition of Olympism, fair play in the school, sport as means of understanding between different nations, Coubertin and the current importance of his ideas). The meeting with the great-nephew of Pierre de Coubertin, Geoffroy de Navacelle-Coubertin, who had been very much involved in the preparation of the youth camp in the grounds of the castle of Mirville made a great impression on all the participants. Not only did he greet everyone in Pierre de Coubertin's name but he also gave a presentation of slides on his great-uncle, putting himself at the disposition of the young people for an hour of very animated discussion. In the opinion of many of the young people, the highpoint was the visit to the château of Mirville, the reception and hospitality shown by the Navacelle de Coubertin family.

The participants at the Coubertin camp were also, of course, guests of the Congress of Le Havre. Although they were not particularly captivated by the opening conference composed of four presentations and various speeches, they took a very active part in the festival of closure in the presence of the President of the IOC.

They were also able to present, at the same time as slides were shown, a very colourful presentation of the events of the week with commentaries by the students from all the participating schools. The highpoint was the presentation of the «Coubertin Cards» to the young people at the end of the party by the President of the IOC, Marquise de Samaranch in person. The directors of the Coubertin schools unanimously approved the Youth Forum as a great event and the «Coubertin Card» as a very interesting personal challenge for each pupil of Coubertin. During the closure of the Le Havre Congress, the director of the Coubertin gymnasium of Berlin expressed thanks to the CIPC in the name of all the schools, and expressed the hope that the Coubertin Youth Forums could be organised on a regular basis, every two years from one school to another, thus allowing them to be held in each of the different countries.

**Prof. Dr Norbert Müller**  
vice-president IPCC

# Program of forum

## Program 14<sup>th</sup> september

Travel to Le Havre from the different countries

20 h. Diner at Castillon

## Program 15<sup>th</sup> september

8 h. Breakfast

Staff Conference

9 h. Opening session:

- Introduction M. Geoffroy de Navacelle de Coubertin, CIPC

- Getting-to-know each other M. Holger Preuß

10 h. Info about «Coubertin Performance Awards» (Sports-Sciences-Arts-Community Service)

11 h. Informal Games

13 h. Lunch

14 h. 30 Guided tour City of Le Havre including Tour of Harbour

18 h. 30 Diner

20 h. Film

## Program 16<sup>th</sup> september

8 h. Breakfast

9 h. School presentations, programmes on physical education and olympic matters

11 h. 30 Coubertin's Life and Work (Diapanorama) by Geoffroy de Navacelle de Coubertin (Grand nephew of Pierre de Coubertin)

12 h. Lunch

14 h. 30 Olympism in School & Fair-play Education by Dr Norbert Müller, IPCC Vice-President

15 h. 30 Discussions groups about Olympism in Schools

17 h. 15 Sports activities in mixed int. groups (Basket, Volley, Football, Cricket)

19 h. Diner

20 h. 30 Social evening (int. contributions from each school)

## Program 17<sup>th</sup> september

8 h. Breakfast

9 h. Sports and Sciences Tests for the «Coubertin Performance Awards»

13 h. Lunch

14 h. Departure for Opening Ceremony by Le Havre

15 h. Participation in Opening Ceremony and Congress

18 h. Reception by the Mayor of Le Havre in the City Hall

20 h. 30 Diner at Castillon

## Program 18<sup>th</sup> september

8 h. Breakfast

9 h. Arts performances for the «Coubertin Performance Awards»

12 h. Lunch

14 h. Groups discussions about topics of the previous day «Olympism and Human Rights»

16 h. 30 Sports activities

18 h. 30 Diner

19 h. 30 Rock Concert in Le Havre of 20 h. 30

## Program 19<sup>th</sup> september

8 h. Breakfast

9 h. Excursion in Normandie with visit to Mirville, Castle of the Coubertin's Family with reception by the Grand nephew of Pierre de Coubertin

20 h. Free evening

## Program 20<sup>th</sup> september

8 h. Breakfast

9 h. Sports activities

11 h. Evaluation of the Olympic Youth Forum in groups

13 h. Lunch

14 h. 30 Preparation of presentation of the results for the Closing Ceremony of the Congress

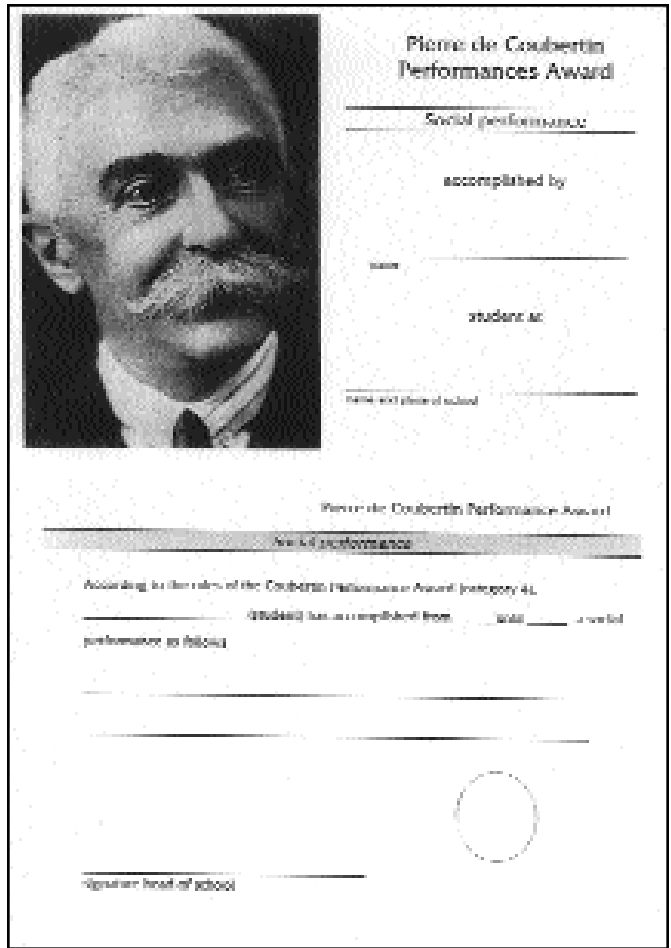
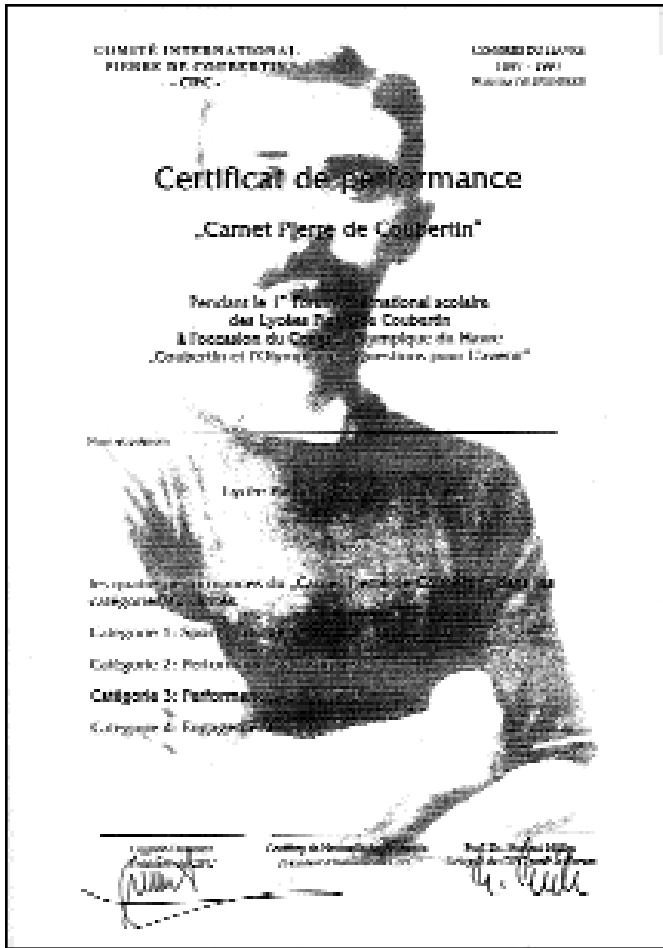
17 h. Departure for the Closing Ceremony of the Le Havre Congress, Presentation of «Coubertin Performance Awards» to the participants of the Olympic Youth Forum

20 h. Diner

21 h. Fair-well-Disco/Party

## Program 21<sup>th</sup> september

Departure after breakfast.



Youth Forum in the Castle's park of Mirville, 19 September 1997

**Below, translations of texts written by two youth Forum's participants coming from the Erfurt's Pierre de Coubertin Lycee.**

## **OUR MEETING WITH MR GEOFFROY DE NAVACELLE**

The most significant moment of the week was our meeting with Mr. de Navacelle. Some of us had already met him on a previous occasion seeing that, back in 1933, he did us the honour of coming to Erfurt for the inauguration of our school.

Mr. de Navacelle's great-uncle was a man whose personality was as wide-ranging as that of Pierre de Coubertin. And similarly, one can notice at first glance that Mr. Geoffroy de Navacelle is not simply the «nice old man living next door». One can tell by his words, his open-mindedness that, just like his great-uncle, he attaches an enormous value to contacts between people and of course between nations.

Besides just like Coubertin he shows great interest in youth, which was constantly obvious from the content of his words. He made an effort to integrate us in events linked to the Olympic Games or Pierre de Coubertin and his efforts were very successful. Nobody could have managed any better!

Whenever he speaks, while delivering a speech at the Congress, while taking a walk through Mirville or showing slides, Mr. de Navacelle speaks with so much kindness and admiration for his uncle, with sparks and passion in his eyes, he is so radiant that anyone could notice, just as it was the case in Erfurt, that he is both proud and respectful of his uncle and his achievements.

Throughout his life, his beliefs have been dominated by Pierre de Coubertin's Ideas, as well as his main work and achievement, that is to say the Olympic Games of the modern era. Mr. de Navacelle spends most of his time in Mirville, a place that Pierre de Coubertin was forced to sell for financial reasons shortly before dying.

Such a task is not an easy one. Nevertheless Mr. de Navacelle's efforts are all aiming at maintaining the property and memory of Pierre de Coubertin.

Mr. Geoffroy de Navacelle is a very interesting character. Some of his gestures could easily remind us of his famous uncle. That may be why, being close to Mr. de Navacelle made us feel at least for a short while closer to Olympism and the spirit of Pierre de Coubertin.

Meeting Mr. de Navacelle was both a great honour and an unforgettable experience.

**Franziska Petzoldt**

## **EVENING PERFORMANCE IN MIRILLE**

On Friday afternoon, September 18th 1997, all participants in the Youth Forum went to Mirville and immersed themselves in the atmosphere of Pierre de Coubertin's life and naturally that of Mr. de Navacelle. On that very same evening Mary and I had to present our show during the official reception organized for all participants in the Congress.

From the moment we arrived in Castillon we were in a state of panic! All we had was ten minutes to change our clothes. Then, back in Mirville with two British participants and Mrs. Nikolau. As we arrived in Mirville the tension gradually started rising given the number of people attending the reception.

First of all, the British presented a very funny cricket game set to music, and which the audience enjoyed very much. Then, only after dinner, the British ballerinas and the two of us had to give our own entertainment performances. Seeing that we still had some time ahead of us, we managed to visit the castle, which had been impossible during the afternoon. Unfortunately we were so tense that we were unable to really enjoy it. We spend the whole time rehearsing our rather short and easy performance, which we had already presented in our theater play.

Then our turn finally came. We showed the best of our acting to an audience that was representing so many nations of the world. We ourselves were representing our School, our town, our country, and our sport in front of such an audience. Everything went so fast that we had no time to think : the music started and then go! At first the silence was almost oppressive, there were only the music, the two of us and hundreds of eyes watching us.

Our level of concentration was at least twice as high as the concentration during a championship . . . no mistake allowed! We hardly noticed what was surrounding us. Only when the music stopped did we hear the audience's enthusiasm! The applause broke out and became a real ovation. Such applause meant so much to us and made us feel so proud of ourselves. As we were going backstage, someone came and told us the audience was asking for more. Our second performance was a little easier and we were then able to establish a contact with the public. Everybody was applauding once again and a great sense of satisfaction filled our hearts. This wonderful and intense feeling lasted throughout the evening.

The British ballerinas presented a remarkable performance and as beautiful as ours! After the show we had something to eat from the buffet. We also had some interesting conversations and were congratulated by various foreign delegates. That reception probably was the most wonderful evening in our entire lives.

**Franziska and Mary**

## **THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE PIERRE DE COUBERTIN ON INTERNET**

We have pleasure in informing you of the creation of a prototype of the International Committee Pierre de Coubertin site on Internet.

All one has to do to access the site is to get connected to the address:

<<http://www.unil.ch/idheap/coubertin/home.html>>

and to click on the different sections of this new home page. The site is provisionally lodged on a University of Lausanne server which is attached to l'Institut de hautes études en administration publiques (The Institute for Higher Studies in Public Administration), where Jean-Loup Chappelet teaches, instigator of the site and CIPC member.

Notably among the sections, there is an extract from the statutes of the Committee International Pierre de Coubertin as well as a list of the honorary presidents, vice presidents, general secretary and members of the bureau. Pierre de Coubertin's life and work, of which a whole series of his quotes extracted from his work on Olympism, are equally accessible.

The section called the «Pierre de Coubertin International Committee Information Letter» is provided to allow our members and anyone else interested in it to become acquainted with it through this new Internet site. All important events, for example the 17-20 September Le Havre Congress, will appear here in future.

To our knowledge, this is the only site exclusively dedicated to Pierre de Coubertin on the world's net, which is Internet.

A site version in English and other languages is under consideration, and will be created if this first model receives your approval (for the moment, and as an example, only the part about Pierre de Coubertin is translated). The creation of this site offers the Committee the chance to make itself better known all over the world. An update of the data will be needed, but it is a worthy challenge. (We would be grateful if you would send any feedback directly to Professor Jean Loup Chappelet directly).

(Jean-Loup. Chappelet@idheap.unil.ch  
tel. +41 (0)21 694 06 30; fax +41 (0)21 694 06 09)

## **COMMENTS FROM THE SECRETARY GENERAL**

The main activity of the CIPC was the Le Havre Congress which has been dealt with in depth on the previous pages, so I will not repeat them.

The CIPC takes great pleasure in congratulating the members who received awards:

Jean Durry, member of the Bureau and director of the National Museum of French sport, was named a Knight of the Legion de Honor.

Daniel Deschârtés received the Grand Prix of Sports Directors.

Ada Wild the gold medal of the Ministry for Youth and Sport of the French Republic.

Professor Yves P. Boulouge, Dr Karl Lennartz, and Dr Otto Schantz were named in the Council for investigation of the Centre of Olympic Studies.

In February, Ada Wild, Secretary General of the CIPC, opened the exposition, «Journey to the heart of Olympism» in Commeny. Under the guidance of its creator, Fabrice Bougoin, the visitors discovered an important collection dealing with twenty different subjects: The Olympic Games of Greece of 776 BC until the election of Athens 2004. This exposition is worthy of being seen in various French cities so that students and inhabitants can, through the images, discover the work of Pierre de Coubertin.

Since the end of November, we have been delighted to welcome in the CIPC various members from Algeria and we look forward to the creation of a National Committee Pierre de Coubertin in this country.

The publication by Jean Durry, «The Real Coubertin», in English can be ordered from the French Committee Pierre de Coubertin at a price of 50 FF.

## **SOME IMPRESSIONS ON THE NAGANO GAMES**

The appreciation of the Olympic Games, varies according to whether one is an athlete, for whom the Games are designed, a head of a delegation, a trainer or simply a spectator, or even a simple guest as was my case, thanks to the courtesy of President Samaranch who decided to honour Pierre de Coubertin by associating a member of his family with the Olympic Games.

The atmosphere in the Hotel KoKusai, where the Olympic family gathers was always warm.

I can give no more than the overall impression, without going into great detail, of a spectator who spent a short week in Nagano.

Just getting there is an adventure, from the departure in Paris: an eleven and a half hour flight, an hour by the express train which joins the airport to the centre of Tokyo and another two hours to reach Nagano.

This city of 360,000 inhabitants lies in the centre of a group of mountains with an average height of 2,500 metres and all of this is situated more or less on the same latitude as Athens or Gibraltar. The spectacle is very beautiful, it is as if one has landed in another world. I have seldom met such a great language barrier or such cruel problems with the written word, with such a different mentality and such a deep rooted sense of tradition. Among the 36,000 volunteers who would from now on create the atmosphere and the success of the Games, were the interpreters who were full of good intentions but who had some difficulties in using the language written on their armbands. The flattery and wide smiles easily made up for these shortcomings. Faces were saved!

One must mention the friendliness of the city in general towards foreigners who it would appear they don't see very often, or at least in such great numbers. Tourism is not very developed.

The organisation, as the President mentioned during the closure, was perfect. Thorough and slow, our Japanese friends left nothing to chance in the well run competitions, but the adverse weather conditions tested them to the full. Events were delayed several times, entire nights were spent rebuilding and cleaning slopes. An impeccably dressed police force was omnipresent.

The coaches to the venues left and arrived almost exactly on time, driven by drivers in white gloves.

Unfortunately travelling to the venues for the competitions meant journeys of between 30 minutes and two hours depending on the distance from the city. We had met this problem in Alberville and to a lesser extent in Lillehammer.

The street signs and directions, in French, English and, of course, Japanese, were correct.

Great attention was given to preserving the environment due to the awareness of public opinion on this subject, to the point of choosing the dishes of biodegradable potatoes for the strong at heart. We also encountered something similar in Lillehammer.

The Village for the 3,000 athletes looked more like a housing complex, but the convenience for meeting people and for receiving information seemed sufficient seen from the outside. A good example was the impressive Press Centre.

The difficulties which faced the snow events favoured those held on ice which were attended in large numbers. The pairs skating was, as always, a great success, the Imperial family, Presidents and leading personalities were present. Some of the scores of the judges caused some suspicion, and I believe that a serious look at this event is needed.

As far as the speed skating events were concerned, we were able to see the small differences, fractions of a second, which separated the first three places, and often the fourth and fifth places. This fact is also true of many other events.

The enthusiasm of the Japanese public for their champion in 500m speed skating showed how deeply rooted their national pride is. The lap of honour with the gold medal has great significance when it is done in the presence of the Imperial Family.

The ice-hockey, played by women's teams was something new for me. Play is more flexible rather than more intelligent. The high pitched screams and shouts of the players was surprising.

I naturally asked myself, «What would Pierre de Coubertin have thought of these games?»

Enormous sums in play! Such spectacle! So much excess, as for example the case of the members of the United States hockey team, who, unable to bear their defeat, broke everything they could lay their hands on in the Olympic village. The medal table for nations when the competitions are between individuals, etc. etc.

I believe that the essentials are safe, and that if Coubertin had known television, he would have adapted his thinking to save «the spirit».

Above all, this fantastic concentration of young people from 75 countries of the world.

All the athletes who return to their countries without a medal, but happy at having being selected and understanding that «Life is what is important, not the winning, but the struggle».

All these young people who meet and who learn to understand each other, reach the «mutual respect» so loved by Pierre de Coubertin, for a better understanding between nations. One has to do no more than take part in the ceremony of culture to participate in the glory, the festival of all those young people, all the nations joined - objective achieved

The ceremonies have a characteristic which the organisers love. The large participation of children on the theme, «When children laugh in the world».

The cultural aspect gains more and more importance and responds to the desire of Coubertin, that of giving the nation which stages the Games the opportunity to express its art and culture.

In this respect, the spectacle offered in the Opening Ceremony achieves this perfectly. In Purest Japanese tradition, with its customs, its music, numerous drums, the temple bell, the sacred pillars, the presence of the Sumo wrestlers, naked in the cold, but no doubt protected by their weight! One would be tempted to find similarities with the spectacle offered in Seul. This bore certain Mongol influences, but there is a subtle difference, and what a difference compared to Atlanta with its southern air.

The finale of the opening ceremony is exceptional, while the dancers in the centre of the stadium change to the rhythm of the music, the conductor and the two thousand members of the choir of the Nagano Winter Orchestra appear on the two huge screens playing Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. As it said in the programme which was given to those present, «Pierre de Coubertin would have wished that this hymn to joy would have become the hymn of the Olympic Games, and of New York, Berlin, Peking, Sidney and Cape Town, in short, of the five continents. Other choirs join them thanks to a satellite broadcast.» A brilliant technical performance, intense artistic emotion.

The texts in the programme are also in French in honour of the great humanist.

It is well worth remembering that President Samaranch, who never fails to mention Coubertin, followed the rule of the Olympic Charter dealing with the section of protocol for the opening which states, «The President of the IOC should make a speech which contains a reference to Pierre de Coubertin».

In conclusion, I would like to mention the publication of a brochure, in French and Japanese, entitled, «The Olympic Flame of Chamonix in Nagano» which includes a competition organised by the cultural network of French businesses in Japan with many questions on the Olympic Games and Pierre de Coubertin.

In his presentation, Mr Jean Bernard Ouvrieu, French Ambassador in Japan points out, «Organising this competition aimed at the Japanese schools where French is taught during the relay of the Olympic torch, the NAOC and France wish to present the Olympic ideal to the maximum number of people as possible». The President of NAOC ended this presentation ..... in Japanese.

I had the pleasure of meeting the director of the Franco-Japanese Institute of Tokyo, who is my niece, Maria Christine de Navacelle, who introduced me to Japanese life in Tokyo, but that is another matter.

In conclusion, I echo the words of President Samaranch during the closure, «Alligato Nagano: Thank you Nagano».

**G. de Navacelle**

## INFORMATIONS

### AUSTRIA

Among the activities of the Austrian Olympic Academy in the past year three events should be mentioned:

In May 1997 the yearly Olympic-Seminar was organized at Zell am See featuring two main topics «Women and Sports» and «Fair play». For the first lecture Professor Gertrud Pfister/Berlin had a large audience as not only the members of AOA had been invited but also interested people from the town, among them also several former participants of Olympic Games. The topic of fair play was accompanied by an exhibition of posters on this subject created by pupils of the local schools. Workshops and discussion groups further dealt with the two items.

**The second** is a continuation of the project «Olympische Tage in der Volksschule» (Olympic Days in Elementary School) that was organized in 1995/96 in close relation to the Olympic Games 1996 at Atlanta. The recent project is addressing the age group 10-14 with the Olympic Winter Games at Nagano as an immediate incentive. «It is more important to participate» is the title of the brochure which has been handed on to all schools of grade 5-8.

**Third:** Inspired by the recommendation of IOC-President Samaranch to install Pierre de Coubertin-Schools in each country and encouraged by the very positive experience of the «Youth Forum» at the Le Havre Congress 1997 the Austrian Olympic Academy has taken measures to find a candidate for this idea. However, we are still trying to define the preconditions a school awarded with this famous name should fulfil. International advice in this matter is welcome.

### BENIN



The Pierre de Coubertin Committee was founded in December 1997 under the presidency of Charles Nobre, CIPC member. The others members are:

Secretary: Julien Vinakpon Minavao  
Members: Marius Francisco  
Nicolas Adgbe  
Martin Adjagodo  
Mansourou Aremou

## FRANCEHE YEAR 1997 IN THE «FRENCH COMMITTEE PIERRE DE COUBERTIN»

The most important event for the «Deacons of the French Committee» was without doubt the «International Congress» an indispensable respite following the Centenary Games. Although they were magnificent, we should not forget the errors and the dangers for the future.

It was a great honour for France to offer this «intellectual panorama» which was not only a résumé of a century of sport at the highest level, but also a project for the future of an innovative civilisation.

One must give thanks to those disciples, travelling under the protection of our «International Committee»: «the driving force» Conrado Duránte - Ada Wild, the team of deacons or French representatives, the Müllers, Anthony and other Coubertin «fans».

From these four days of interchanging ideas and constructive plans born from a common ideal, a surprising richness of suggestions and documents of key ideas was to arise. To classify, publish and reflect on this pact will be the aim for 1998 and the most relevant contribution to Coubertinism, necessary for the 21st Century which seeks to find itself, even though as times it goes adrift. The «children of sport» have to attempt to concentrate on this objective.

We will now sum up the most modest tasks which have concerned us in the year 1997.

As a result of the quadrennial examination of conscience, our Committee has begun the review of its structures, with the primary aim of achieving recognition as a public body on a French basis, which we believe would be legitimate approval of our activities.

In the same way, we have set out to promote the erection of commemorative plaques in public places - schools, stadiums, museums, etc. - which remember the often unknown Pierre de Coubertin and his work, in accordance with the idea raised at several foreign conferences.

Coubertinism should be a school and a model: we have created a specific medal to be presented to the volunteers who fight so effectively to defend our educational work.

We have commenced a series of «conferences» in the very fashionable form of «breakfast reunions» with a wide ranging objective, basically socio-economic.

Following the publication or republication of our works on Pierre de Coubertin, justified by the success of «Mieux connaître...» (Get to Know...) and «Vrai Coubertin» (The Real Coubertin) a «pocket book» on Coubertin (published in French and English), or the artistic brochure on the Centenary Olympic Games which continues to be in demand, we have started a study on the specific hymns so loved by Coubertin, also referring to his texts, such as «Sport de l'Aviron» (The Sport of Rowing) which was published to coincide with the 1997 World Championships.

What is important is «to think Coubertin», to always remember him, be it directly or with the help of friendly institutions, such as «The French Association for Sport without violence and for Fair Play»; the National Assemblies for Sport; The International Panathlon, etc... which are essentially very close to us.

Coubertinism can be the saviour of sport in its educational mission.

**Jean Rodenfuser**

## **YUGOSLAVIA ENRICHMENT OF THE OLYMPIC TRADITION**

The idea of modern Olympic Games has spread throughout the world over the past century. The last several years have witnessed an increased interest in studying that idea in general as well as the life and work of its father, Pierre de Coubertin. The International Olympic Committee (in further text «IOC») and the International Committee «Pierre de Coubertin» provide significant incentive to the activities in this field.

The Olympic Games idea has deep roots in Yugoslavia. Since the First Olympic Games held in Athens in 1896, there have always been some athletes from these parts who competed in the Olympics even if under the flag of some other country. The Olympic Club of Serbia, founded in Belgrade in 1910, organised the participation of two athletes in the Fifth Olympic Games, held two years later in Stockholm, which was the first time that the Kingdom of Serbia appeared on the list of participating countries. During these Olympic Games, the Olympic Club of Serbia was admitted into the International Olympic Committee. It is from that membership that the Yugoslav Olympic Committee, founded in Zagreb in 1919, derives its legitimacy. Since the Stockholm Olympics, Yugoslavia has participated in Summer Olympic Games on a regular basis, and in Winter Olympic Games, with a very few exceptions, since 1924.

Being one of the oldest members of the Olympic family, Yugoslavia is trying not to lag behind in the study of modern Olympic Games idea as a distinctive philosophy and a phenomenon of our times. That, of course, implies both study and popularization of the rich heritage Coubertin left behind.

Therefore, in 1996, the Yugoslav Olympic Committee (in further text «YOC») decided to establish the Yugoslav Committee «Pierre de Coubertin».

The Committee members are: Ivan Curković, President, Predrag Manojlović, Vice President, and Miodrag Jovanović, Secretary.

The Committee develops and directs its activities towards popularization of the Olympic movement ideas, its history and tradition, pedagogic and human values, as towards making the public more familiar with the history and the place the Yugoslav Olympic movement has in the modern Olympic world.

Accordingly, the Committee supplies IOC and the International Committee «Pierre de Coubertin» with the necessary information and has close cooperation with these two organisations.

One of the most significant experiences the Committee has had so far was its participation in the International Committee «Pierre de Coubertin» Congress held in Le Havre (France) in September 1997.

All the members of the Committee's delegation attended the Congress. Among the participants in the Congress (around 150), the organiser pointed out Mr Curković and Mr Manojlović as champion sportsmen, participants and medallists in the Olympic Games who today are distinguished members of the athletic world.

On the occasion of a 100th anniversary of the First Olympic Games of the modern age, in the course of 1996, several publications dedicated to this jubilee were issued in Yugoslavia. One of them is «The First Hundred Years», a book written by Miodrag Jovanović, which was published with the help of the

Yugoslav Committee «Pierre de Coubertin» and whose impact was felt even outside this country.

In November 1997, YOC fully adopted the Yugoslav Committee's report from the Congress in Le Havre which was successful in every respect and which represents an important stimulus for further activities on recognition of the Olympic principles and comprehensive study of the Olympic movement ideas.

The initiative to name one institution – i.e. the Sports Academy in Belgrade – after Pierre de Coubertin was also adopted.

Through a number of articles in the daily press, the Yugoslav public has been fully informed about the Congress in Le Havre and its conclusions which represent a valuable signpost for further activities of the Yugoslav Committee «Pierre de Coubertin».

The Committee is an active member of YOC with whom it coordinates its activities. They also work together on carrying out the conclusions and guidelines set by the International Committee «Pierre de Coubertin» at the above mentioned Congress, and in general on re-establishing the ideas of both modern Olympic movement and Coubertin himself.

The activities on providing better working conditions for YOC as well as some of its bodies, including the Committee «Pierre de Coubertin», are under way. Thus, the plans for this year include moving into the new building, «Olympic Home», where the Committee will have certain premises at its disposal.

The year 1998 should be a landmark for further recognition of the Committee's work which should at the same time yield more significant results. Apart from the said goals and directions, a special emphasis will be placed on studying modern Olympic movement ideas in schools, i.e. on education, as well as their popularization by means of the mass media or in any other possible way.

Cooperation with the International Committee «Pierre de Coubertin», IOC and international athletic society in general will continue to be one of the top priorities as far as the activities of the Yugoslav Committee «Pierre de Coubertin» are concerned. Frequent contacts and mutual exchange of information are necessary for more comprehensive presentation of the Yugoslav Olympic movement to the world and vice versa.

**Ivan Curković**  
**President of the Yugoslav**  
**Committee «Pierre de Coubertin»**

## **POLOGNE**

### **THE PEDAGOGICAL AND SPORTING PASSIONS OF COUBERTIN**

*The Olympic Movement, represents only part of my activity: possibly more or less half of it.*

**(Baron Pierre de Coubertin)**

Throughout the history of the nations and the entire humanity, eminent personalities who have excelled in several spheres sometimes gain distinction. These personalities are usually admired and appreciated for only one aspect of their activities, the most spectacular one. Winston Churchill will be remembered in history as the politician and President of the Allies; a man whose resolute determination contributed in an important way to the victory of the anti-Hitlerian coalition during the



Second World War. Thus, his literary works are worthy of reflection - his works are impressive because of their richness of style, and the relevance of their reflections and thoughts. He was also the author of beautiful water colour paintings (a fact known to few people).

In Poland, there was Jozef Pilsudski, universally known as the organiser of the Legions. He is the politician who brought about the revival of independent Poland, the military leader who achieved victory in the war against the Bolsheviks. He too was a remarkable writer, his numerous works amaze because of their rich, elegant style, and for his profound knowledge of history and the correctness of his thinking

Let us take the example of **Pierre de Coubertin**, known and admired for being the creator of the International Olympic Committee and the promoter of the re-establishment of the Olympic Games. Recently, thanks to the anniversary of the creation of the International Olympic Committee (1994), and of the first Olympic Games of modern times (1996), some articles have been dedicated to showing his merits in the development and spreading of the Olympic ideal. The same happened during the life of the Baron, who did not appreciate the fact that people talked only about one aspect of his activity (see inscription).

Pierre de Coubertin was also an illustrious writer, a pedagogue, a reformer, a thinker and, what distinguished him from some of our protectors and militants of physical culture, a sportsman himself - (he practised fencing, riding, boxing, cycling and rowing). He was interested in painting and also used to paint. He knew a lot about art and declared that art was something indispensable in offering beauty to man. In addition, he was a very skillful and talented pianist. The teachers, who claimed that the practice of sport should be excluded from studies and some other activities, should reconsider their beliefs.

Today, I would like to talk first about both the pedagogical and sporting activity of Coubertin, who, it should be remembered, was born in 1863 to a rich, noble, catholic family with promonarchist ideas. In 1895, he married a Protestant, Marie Rothan. They had two children who were a source of multiple worries and problems. The Baron died in Geneva in 1937 and was very active until the end of his life. His grave which in accordance with his last will is in Lausanne, but his heart rests in Olympia.

He spent his youth in Paris and at Mirville in Normandy, in a chateaux which belonged to his family. He commenced his studies with the Jesuits in Paris, and after a short spell at the famous Saint-Cyr school the Baron studied law and political science. Like Napoleon, he described mathematics as «the raw material among the sciences», and he also took a personal interest in history. He studied many works on history and pedagogy with great interest (the book «Tom Brown's School Days» particularly impressed him) as well as the treatises of Tocqueville, Taine, Le Piny and Thomas Arnold. He never forgot that «The past influences the future, and that it is impossible to build a future without considering the past.» It was only later, when he retired from the presidency of the Olympic Committee, that Coubertin published his «Universal History».

For a full understanding of the ideas and activities of Coubertin, it would be necessary to go back a little in time, to try to look at things in the context of the second half of the nineteenth century.

At that time, France was morally «annihilated» after the heavy defeat in the war against Prussia (1870-1871), and the popula-

tion had to adapt themselves to the changes caused by the development in industry (provoking a new economical life) and science. Pierre de Coubertin realised that the system of education, in other words the teaching and pedagogy of the time, was not adequate for the needs of modern times. Influenced by his studies in politics and by the reading of many pedagogical works, he went to England to familiarise himself with the English educational system. He returned very surprised at the importance given to sport and physical education (based on team games) in schools and in higher education.

On his return to France, the Baron tried to introduce these novelties into the French educational system, in an attempt to make evident the importance of physical instruction in the general educational process of young people and in social life. The accuracy of his views was confirmed with another trip, this time to the U.S.A., where he was able to appreciate the substantial role attributed to sport and physical education in the Universities.

The educational system in French schools was at that time based on the military model, without taking care of the pedagogical aspect, the aim of which should be one of developing the students' independence, and treating them as the subject and not the object of education. Sport was neglected and was even presented in a partial and negative way. A renowned writer, known for his conservative and nationalist ideas, Maurice Barre, went so far as to write, «Those who practice sports are idiots, cardiac cases, feeble and brutish» (Truly!). Fortunately today these kind of ideas are not very widespread. But last century, sports were the target of attacks by many teachers, priests, and surprisingly, doctors. Women were particularly alert against the negative influence of physical activities on their beauty and maternity. Since then, the situation has changed considerably, and women even dare to practice sports such as weight-lifting, body-building and some even want to fight with their fists and their feet. All extreme attitudes risk becoming absurd, I shall never get tired of repeating it.

Coubertin fought to introduce modifications to the education system so as to give sport more importance. He tried to mediate with many institutions and personalities but his opinions and his activity were often criticised. However, at the end of the nineteenth century, sport started to develop in a very dynamic way and numerous sporting clubs were created, as well as national and regional institutions. The Baron himself created a Fencing Association, which owned a hall in the Rue Bourgogne in Paris. The pedagogical penchant of the founder of the International Olympic Committee was expressed through the creation of the Universal Pedagogical Union. The Baron wished to connect physical activity and muscular effort to spiritual values, culture and Olympic ideals. He had a high regard for the importance of physical work, and became deeply interested in the fate of working class people, according to the testimony of Ada Wild,<sup>1</sup> Secretary of the Pierre de Coubertin Committee - «Education was also the aim of the activity of Pierre de Coubertin, who had much respect for the proletarians and emphasised the importance of manual work». The Baron himself wrote, «the fight against the prejudice that considers physical work humiliating compared to intelligence and culture needs to be encouraged»

His works on worker's education and suggestions for creating popular universities testified the modernity of his thought and his sensitivity on the subject of social problems. It was this same worry which inspired his proposal to ensure free access to sport for the entire population of the country. It was at that moment when his idea of creating modern gymnasiums inspired on antiquity and adapted to modern life was born.

The Baron had a passion for all sports, but he was particularly interested in horsemanship and fencing. The famous painting which shows Coubertin holding a sabre in his right hand and the reins of a horse bears testimony to this. In the Olympic museum in Lausanne, we can admire the numerous foils, sabres, and swords which belonged to the Baron. I succeeded in finding a picture of Coubertin fencing with Mr. Vienne in the garden of the Paris Utilitarian Sports School (in that period, fencing was considered as a training for duels, it was practised outdoors, on paths or yards). Master Dubois who taught fencing at the Paris Opera had the role of referee in this match, and there were many other men present wearing bowler hats<sup>2</sup>.

We know of the existence of books which, during the course of their history, have had some amazing adventures, according to the saying «Habent sua fata libelli» (I have already told the surprising fortune of a book of Nicolas Bernstein in one of my articles)<sup>3</sup>. But this is not only the case with books. This kind of «adventure» may happen to a painting too. The painting I referred to above (Coubertin, sabre in hand and horse) - has experienced equally amazing adventures. This painting, the only oil painting of the person who resurrected the Olympics, was painted by the Belgian artist, Jacques Lalaing. Soon after the death of Coubertin in 1937, his widow presented it as a gift to the International Olympic Committee. In 1939, the German Olympic Committee borrowed it for an exhibition, but when the Second World War broke out, the President of the German Olympic Committee removed the painting from its frame, and actice it, it corresponds to the knightly elegance of our forefathers; for us fencing is a national sport and at the same time the most poetic of sports. This does not mean that long distance boat racing, or taking promenades by the rivers or across fields full of greenery and sunshine or horse races on the mountains are not poetical; but the subtle fight which makes the mind participate, the quick, courageous fight, the crossing of two swords, the tension of muscles, the raising of the spirit... wouldn't all of this be an excellent introduction to the most noble values of man, and to the fullness of virile aspirations?».

The great educator published a surprising number of books, works, analysis, articles, etc. - in all 20'000 pages (twenty thousand!), of which half are related to sport. In life, he liked to apply his motto «*Look far ahead, talk forthrightly, act with firmness*».

If I quote Coubertin many times in this article, it is because I consider that his style expresses the most typical features of his character. What surprises most, is especially a certain humanist and poetic note. One could reproach Coubertin for this «poetic vision of the world». But it must be remembered that perhaps it was precisely this «poetic attitude» that helped him to fulfil his dreams. As with all famous men of action, Coubertin also had opponents who criticised him, but - thanks to his passionate nature and his enormous energy - he fulfilled his dreams. This slightly poetic vision did not hinder him from correctly understanding many matters and foreseeing the future.

Pierre de Coubertin especially foresaw (with restlessness) the evolution of great sport into a mania of gigantism and commercialisation. This foresight has unfortunately appeared to be right and Atlanta's nomination to hold the Centenary Olympic Games, instead of Greece, has been an example. «Coca Cola» won the battle against the high Olympic ideals.

This short article that wished to present the Baron de Coubertin in a different light, could not finish in any other way other than with the words of our hero: «*I beg you to hold aloft the flame of the Olympic movement and to protect its essentials and its institutions*».

<sup>1</sup> Wild A.: Pierre de Coubertin «Escrime Internationale»

<sup>2</sup> The number of famous people, who at different times have practised fencing is surprising and provides a great deal for reflection. This was the case of Michelangelo, Agrippa, Marshal Augeraux, John Mc Arthur, Alexandre Pushkin, Hjalmar Ring, Jean-Joseph Renaud, The Baron of Dazancourt, Winston Churchill, Benito Mussolini, Tito and Napoleon, who, during the period when he was still a young cadet at military school used to chase his colleagues who joked about his Corsican accent, holding a foil in his hand. During the twenties, General Wladyslaw Sikorski, prepared for a duel and took fencing courses with my first master, Jan Pieczynski, in Lvov. The famous general Wieniawa Dlugoszewski was, for a time President of the Polish Fencing Union. The second half of the nineteenth century represented the golden era of fencing. Several different movements have been developed: the utilitarian movement (military instruction and duels); entertainment (demonstration and «galas» by great masters and amateurs in front of a public from the upper classes); the theatre and exploits. Fencing clubs, regional and national associations were created. Many national and international contests began to be organised, in which, contrary to the demonstration fights, touches were achieved as well as victories, and a champion was nominated. The large editorial offices, for example «Le Figaro», employed fencing masters in small rented halls so that the journalists, who because of their jobs were very exposed to the danger of duels, could be adequately prepared. The large theatres also prepared their actors in fencing.

<sup>3</sup> Czajkowski Z. «Sur le destin des hommes, livres et la victoire post mortem de Bernstein.» (On the destiny of man, books and the posthumous victory of Bernstein). «Sports de l'exploit» 1992, n° 3 - 4.

**Zbigniew Czajkowski**

## PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE

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

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## 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».

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