

# THE 2<sup>ND</sup> INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC GAMES IN ATHENS 1906



By Karl Lennartz\*

## Preliminary Remarks

For some years now the question of “recognition” of the 2<sup>nd</sup> *International Olympic Games* in Athens, falsely named “Intermediate Games”, has been discussed in circles of Olympic historians. In terms of source critics, as is mentioned below, it has been proved that at the time this event was regarded as a regular Olympic Games by the IOC and its president, Baron Pierre de COUBERTIN on the one hand and on the other by the organisers, participants and the entire public. COUBERTIN who argued against a second series of international Olympic Games did everything later on to rob the Games in Athens of their equality status and to discredit them as Intermediate Games. The in general ensuing Olympic historiography uncritically adopted his account. When the IOC member, the Hungarian historian Ferenc MEZŐ proposed a motion at the 41<sup>st</sup> session 1948 in London to recognise the event in Athens 1906 as “*IIIb Olympic Games*” the assembly transferred the appeal to the so-called *Brundage Commission*.<sup>1</sup> The committee with its members BRUNDAGE, Sidney DAWES (CAN) and Miguel Angel MOENCK (CUB) met in January 1949 in New Orleans’ and came - without examining the sources - to the conclusion that it would not be advantageous to recognise the Games as Olympic ones. Accordingly the item on the agenda concerning the “*Acceptance of the Intermediate Games 1906*” was officially “*rejected*” in the 42<sup>nd</sup> session 1949 in Rome.”

Rejection by the *Brundage Commission*:  
“*The position of the 1906 Olympic Games.*  
*It is not considered that any special recognition that the IOC might give to participants in these Games at this late date would add any prestige, and the danger of establishing an embarrassing precedent would more than offset any advantage.*”

This opinion has not altered within the IOC or any of its institutions. In official writings and publications these Games are still “overlooked”<sup>4</sup>. This leads to the question whether an organisation like the IOC can reach a decision on whether and when Olympic Games have been held. Must this not be left to experts? If historians have clear proof and there are not any serious objections should not the IOC be happy when a problem is taken of its shoulders and it is not continuously confronted with the question whether the event of 1906 was not the Games of an Olympiad but Olympic Games within an Olympiad respectively the *Second International Olympic Games in Athens*. This is to be proved again in the following with the help of the sources available.

## Olympic Games only in Athens in Future!

During the so successful First Olympic Games the Greek hosts developed the plan to permanently hold the Games in Athens. At a reception on April 12, 1896 King GEORGE I. expressed the hope that his country would be nominated the “*permanent and continuous arena of the Olympic Games.*”<sup>5</sup>

\* For the translation I owe a debt of gratitude to Gerard KING, to Tony BIJKERK for proofing the draft and Anne DÖRR for making corrections.

<sup>1</sup> «Dr. Mező [...] propose en outre que les Jeux intermédiaires de 1906 soient considérés comme Jeux Officiels, et qu'ils soient numérotés par IIIb» (Minutes of the IOC session London 1948, p. 15).

<sup>2</sup> MEZŐ and other members of the committee were not present.

<sup>3</sup> «Reconnaissance des Jeux intermédiaires de 1906 à Athènes. - Rejeté» (Minutes of the IOC session Rome 1949, p. 1. Brundage Commission Report, p. 2 [IOC Archive]).

<sup>4</sup> The three-volume festschrift *The International Olympic Committee – One Hundred Years* published by the IOC member Raymond GAFNER is an exception because the “*International Olympic Games*” in Athens were named in his statistical listing of all Games (Volume 2, Lausanne 1995, p. 212). Yves-Pierre BOULONGNE proceeded similarly with his examination of the sessions and the Games 1906 in Athens (Volume 1, Lausanne 1995, p. 98-99, 125-127). The matter becomes embarrassing when the Olympic Museum continuously shows photos of the Games 1906 and dates these with 1896 or when in the highly informative marathon-exhibition team medals of 1906 are presented as trophies from 1896. With the help of the author the photo collection has meanwhile been able to separate the photos from 1896 and 1906. In the museum’s library the books on the 1906 Games take up the same amount of room as those of 1896.

<sup>5</sup> *Die Olympischen Spiele. 776 v. Chr. – 1896 n. Chr. - The Olympic Games. 777 B.C. – A. D. 1896*, Vol. 2, POLITIS, N. G. / ANNINOS, Charalambos, *Die Olympischen Spiele im Jahre 1896 - The Olympic Games in 1896*, Athens/London 1897, p. 107.

The speech of GEORGE I. At his reception of the participants of the Games (excerpt):

*"Greece, who has been the mother and nurse of the Olympic Games in ancient times and who had undertaken to celebrate them once more today, can now hope, as their success has gone beyond all expectations, that the foreigners, who have honoured her with their presence, will remember Athens as the peaceful meeting place of all nations, as the tranquil and permanent seat of the Olympic Games."*

[...]

*The King's speech made a very favourable impression on the public at large, particularly because he had brought forward in both his toasts [in French and in Greek, remark of the author] the wish that Athens might become the permanent seat of the Olympic Games."*

*conviction that these games should never be removed from their native soil.*

*John Grabam, W. Welles Hoyt, Ellery H. Clark, James B. Connolly Gardner B. Williams, Thomas P. Curtis, Thomas E. Burke, Arthur Blake, Robert Garrett, Jr., Albert C. Tyler, Francis A. Lane, H. B. Jamison.*

*We, the undersigned, citizens of the United States, who have been present at the Games, heartily concur in the foregoing.*

*Eben Alexander, Charles S. Fairchild, Gifford Dyer, Benj. Ide Wheeler, George Dana Lloyd, T. W. Heeremance, Eugen P. Andrews, Joseph Clark Hoppin, Corwin Knapp Linson."*

[The signatures of the brothers John and Sumner PAINE, the coach Edward TURNER and Charles WALDSTEIN are missing.]

These ambitions were supported by a draft law of the Greek cabinet" and especially by the American team, which approached the crown prince in form of a letter which was also printed in the *New York Times*.<sup>7</sup>

COUBERTIN'S judgement of the Greek draft law:

*"Shortly after my departure from Athens the Prime Minister Delyannis brought in a draft law in order to secure further development of sport in Greece and to organise the event of the Olympic Games in Athens' stadium. This draft law did not consider at all how the revival of the Games had occurred and under which conditions the Games had been prepared."*

Declaration of the American participants:

*"Athens, 14. April 1896*

*To His Royal Highness, Constantine, Crown Prince of Greece.*

*We, the American participants in the International Olympic Games If Athens, wish to express to you, and through you to the Committee and to the people of Greece, our heartfelt appreciation of the great kindness and warm hospitality of which we have continually been the recipients during our stay here.*

*We also desire to express our entire satisfaction with all the arrangements for the conduct of the games.*

*The existence of the stadium as a structure so uniquely adapted to its purpose; the proved ability of Greece to competently administer the games; and above all, the fact that Greece is the original home of the Olympic Games; all these considerations force upon us the*

COUBERTIN had to argue against such a change since his idea was based on the Olympic Games being held at different places in the capitals and the cultural centres of the world: 1900 Paris, 1904 city in the new world, 1908 Rome etc. Meanwhile he had in accordance with the expectations of the Congress of Paris of 1894 their agreement being supported by the Session of Athens representing the next host country, taken over the presidency of the then called International Committee. This ruling would have lost its right to exist with Olympic Games only being held in Athens. For both – COUBERTIN and the Greeks – and to save face COUBERTIN, and later some IOC members of which some were present in Athens – Dimetrios VIKELAS, Ferenc KEMÉNY, Willibald GEBHARDT – made some new proposals: Games held every two years in Athens and in the international capitals (see below). COUBERTIN - possibly seemingly - accepted the king's proposal partly, when he paid parting visits to both Crown Prince Constantine and the King respectively and wrote them a letter of appreciation. He proposed to both parties to organise "Panbellenic Games" in Athens in between the international Olympiads.<sup>8</sup>

RICHARDSON'S report on the Olympic Games 1896 (excerpt):

*"In a semicircle conference with the Crown Prince he proposed what he wished to have regarded as a compliance with the general desire: that Athens should have its quadrennial games, and that foreign athletes should be invited to take part in them; but that these games should be called the 'Athenaia' as a more suitable name, and that they should take place in 1898, 1902, and so on."*

<sup>6</sup> »Peu après mon départ d'Athènes, un projet de loi avait été déposé par le premier ministre, M. Delyanni, dans le but d'assurer le développement de l'athlétisme en Grèce et de régler la célébration des Jeux Olympiques dans le stade athénien. Ce projet de loi ne tenait aucun compte de l'origine du rétablissement des Jeux et des conditions dans lesquelles ce rétablissement s'était opéré« COUBERTIN, Pierre de, *Une campagne de vingt-et-un ans*, Paris 1909, p. 129).

<sup>7</sup> Later in the year also printed in: RICHARDSON, Rufus, "The New Olympian Games", in: *Scribner's Magazine* 20(1896)3, p. 284. Also in German: MALLON, Bill, "Das erfolgreiche Team, die Amerikaner" in: LENNARTZ, Karl (ed.), *Erläuterungen zum Neudruck des Offiziellen Berichtes*, Kassel 1996, p. 91.

<sup>8</sup> »Enfin dans un long entretien avec son Altesse Royale le prince héritier, j'exposai mes raisons de persévérer et suggérai l'établissement de concours panbelleniques qui s'intercaleraient entre la série des Olympiades internationales. Le prince avait déjà eu cette pensée et il se montra très partisan d'une semblable solution.« (COUBERTIN, *Campagne*, p. 128. compare COUBERTIN, Pierre de, *Mémoires Olympiques*, Lausanne 1979, p. 24-25).

Rufus B. RICHARDSON, the head of the *American School of Classical Studies near Athens* already mentions – quasi as the first historian – this process in the April issue of *Scribner's Magazine*. For him "the air was full" of the idea of the permanent hosting formulated by the king, RICHARDSON who also printed the letter of the Americans reports on COUBERTIN'S proposal to the crown prince according to which foreign athletes were to be invited to these Games that RICHARDSON interestingly named "Athenaia".<sup>9</sup>

COUBERTIN'S letter to the editor from May 28, 1896 printed in the *London Times* (excerpt):

"An article printed in Athens and doubtlessly written by an enthusiastic Philhellenic has informed the European press of the news that the Olympic Games are to be held solely in Athens in future. This is not true. [...] It is very natural that the important victory we have just gained with our enterprise has inspired the Hellenic world to monopolise the Games in their favour."

On April 14, 1896 COUBERTIN bitterly complained in a letter to VIKELAS about that he as the true renewer of the Olympic Games had not been honoured sufficiently and even been criticised. On April 23, he sent a letter to the editor of the *London Times*<sup>10</sup> deftly arguing against Olympic Games permanently held in Athens, which letter was published on April 30.<sup>11</sup>

VIKELAS to COUBERTIN on May 19, 1896 (excerpt):

"The Games which were called into life at the Congress of Paris distinguish themselves from the Games of Athens in being called international and taking place in different cities. And yet it seems to me that both sides would gain by uniting the two series in order to make one and also give the Games of Athens the name of international Olympic Games. Thus Olympic Games could be celebrated every two years alternately in Athens and in an important European and American city."

Due to this letter the article in the *Times* and the attacks in the Greek press which insulted VIKELAS as cosmopolitan who had done too little for Greek national feeling VIKELAS formulated a detailed writing of justification to the new IOC president

COUBERTIN. He stated that he first sent this letter to COUBERTIN and then also as a circular to all IOC members thus saving COUBERTIN some work. This was tactically clever since VIKELAS could be sure that all his colleagues in the IOC would be informed. VIKELAS reported on the draft law of the Greek government to hold Olympic Games in between the International Olympic Games, which the Congress of Paris had decided upon. He compared them to the ancient Pythian Games which were also organised in the middle of an Olympiad. He then proposed two series of international Olympic Games alternately every two years in Athens and in European or American capitals. The IOC members were to inform COUBERTIN on their views on this issue. The according decisions could be reached at a Second Olympic Congress."

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KEMÉNY joined VIKELAS proposal. In his report on the Games he pointed out that he had already expressed this proposal at the IOC session during the Games in Athens."

KEMÉNY report on the Olympic Games 1896 (excerpt):

"An impartial, acceptable and for both parties advantageous solution bus to be in accordance with the modern needs thus enforcing a classical Olympics with the years 1898, 1902 etc. next to the alternately hosted international Olympics for 1900, 1904 etc.; the former in Athens and the latter for in the other world capitals. With the interval of four years being enough in ancient times the two-year breaks will not be to many.\*

\* This idea originally proposed by the abstractor and occasionally at the Comité sessions in Athens was retroactively worked out meritoriously by the former president D. Bikelus and recommended to the Comité to be accepted."

<sup>9</sup> RICHARDSON, "Games", p. 282-286.

<sup>10</sup> Similar letters were sent to the *New York Times* and the *Messenger d'Athènes*, compare YOUNG, David, *The Modern Olympics. A Struggle for Revival*, Baltimore 1996, p. 223.

<sup>11</sup> »Une dépêche lancée d'Athènes et rédigée sans doute par un philhellène enthousiaste a porté à la connaissance de la presse Européenne la nouvelle que les Jeux Olympiques étaient désormais fixés en Grèce. Il n'en est rien. [...] Il est tout naturel que l'éclatant succès que notre entreprise vient de remporter ait inspiré aux Hellènes le désir de la monopoliser à leur profit» (IOC Archive).

<sup>12</sup> »Ils seront distingués de ceux relevant du Congrès de Paris, par le fait que ces derniers seront intitulés Internationaux et que leur série restera distincte. Cependant, il me semble qu'il y aurait, des deux côtés, avantage à réunir les deux séries, pour n'en faire qu'une seule, en accordant aux concours d'Athènes le nom de 'Jeux Olympiques Internationaux'. Les Jeux pourraient ainsi être célébrés tous les deux ans : une fois à Athènes et l'autre fois, alternativement, dans une des principales villes d'Europe ou d'Amérique» (underlinings by VIKELAS, from: MORBACH, Andreas, *Dimítrios Vikélas. Patriotischer Literat und Kosmopolit*. Würzburg 1998, p. 240-241). Printed as facsimile and by translation into German (by Mirjam GASSE) in: HÖFER, Andreas, "Der Hellas-Plan. Die Idee einer ständigen Ausrichtung der Olympischen Spiele in Griechenland", in: LENNARTZ, *Erläuterungen*, p. 68. Also compare COUBERTIN, *Campagne*, p. 129-130.

<sup>13</sup> KEMÉNY, Franz. "Die Bedeutung der olympischen Spiele für die körperliche Erziehung der Jugend", in: *Zeitschrift für das Real-schulwesen* 12( 1896) 3/4, p.20.

On the other hand according to Jiri GUTH, VIKELAS was the sole initiator of the motion in the committee to "found new Games in Athens taking place every four years from 1896 onwards next to the Jeux Olympiques internationaux des Congresses. These would not bear the name but would have an international character and nature." Then a reference to the various local ancient Games follows.<sup>14</sup>

VIKELAS' offer was now taken up by GEBHARDT. On June 9 he wrote to COUBERTIN and asked for the holding of this Olympic congress in Berlin in the first half of September of the following year. GEBHARDT also claims that he proposed two series of Olympic Games during the session as would be confirmed by the protocol which apparently had not yet been sent out.<sup>15</sup>

GEBHARDT to COUBERTIN on June 9, 1896 (excerpt):

*"The protocol will show that I made the proposal for the Games to be held after each two Olympics in Athens and to intermediately host the same in a capital of a different country. Of course I am pleased that this motion proposed then is to be given new life even if in a slightly different form. This change to shorten the Olympic period into two series was also not proposed as a formal motion and accepted."*

The minutes of the session in Athens were published for the first time in 1996 as a facsimile of COUBERTIN'S handwriting, which he had formulated as secretary-general of the IOC and which were transferred into printed letters and translated into German. The topic of permanent hosting of the Games in Athens was addressed in the last session on April 14.<sup>16</sup>

Minutes of the session, April 14, 1896 (excerpt):

*"After the exchanging of opinions between Mr. Gebhardt, Mr. Coubertin and Jiri Guth it is unanimously declared that it is not desirable for the Games to belong to just one country; furthermore the committee has the task of enforcing the decision reached by the Congress of Paris on this topic; it also does not have the power to question this motion."*

COUBERTIN expresses himself very unclearly. For instance, he does not report on what GEBHARDT and GUTH stated. While the protocols of the previous sessions were each read out and

accepted the following day this "control" was dispensed with in the last session. This protocol was as GEBHARDT points out not yet sent to the members. Was it ever sent?

Gebhardt requested Coubertin in his aforementioned letter to supply him with a time indication for the Second Olympic Congress. GEBHARDT wanted to combine this Second Olympic Congress with German sport conference, which was already being planned by him for some time. On June 22 COUBERTIN assented to this proposal. This letter though has not been preserved for posterity. The date and content can however be deduced from GEBHARDT'S reply from August 18.<sup>17</sup> Following COUBERTIN'S apparent promise GEBHARDT called for a German sports day and a sport celebration and sent out invitations to an assembly on June 29, which was to elect an organising committee.<sup>18</sup> COUBERTIN himself saw the whole matter completely different afterwards. "Berlin, Stockholm and Paris"<sup>19</sup> were considered for hosting the congress but he could not have dared to alone call together the International Committee in "the bright light of a large capital"<sup>20</sup>. That is why he opted for the small harbour Le Havre in Normandy. He only incidentally mentions GEBHARDT'S wish, which would also have had the approval of VIKELAS, KEMÉNY and GUTH.<sup>21</sup> But this can only mean that GEBHARDT had also contacted these colleagues. In the letter mentioned above from August 18 GEBHARDT asked whether COUBERTIN had already invited the IOC members and stated that the sport celebrations had been scheduled from September 19-27. During this time the congress could also take place. He then states slightly surprised that he had received a telegram (from whom?), that COUBERTIN had "informed the town administration of Le Havre of holding the congress there. What does this mean?"<sup>22</sup> Actually COUBERTIN had already asked the mayor of Le Havre on June 25 for using the town hall for the congress." The council of the town formally accepted this request.<sup>24</sup> This obviously means that COUBERTIN never seriously considered holding a congress in Berlin. The argument of the "bright light" was only a pretext because 1894 the founding congress also took place in a large city. Why did COUBERTIN not want to go to Berlin? For one in Berlin there was a real danger of the decision being reached to hold the Games alternately in Athens and other cities. And secondly he might have received the support of German sport leaders but on the other hand difficulties might have arisen concerning the Olympic Games 1900 in Paris. Plans had long been made

<sup>14</sup> GUTH, Jiri, "Die olympischen Spiele in Athen 1896", in: *Zeitschrift für das österreichische Gymnasium* 11(1896). p. 974.

<sup>15</sup> Carl-Diem-Institut (ed.), *Dokumente zur Frühgeschichte der Olympischen Spiele*, treated by KOEBSEL, Volker, Köln 1971, p. 88.

<sup>16</sup> «Après un échange de vues entre Messieurs Gebhardt, de Coubertin, Jiri Guth, il est reconnu unanimement qu'il n'est pas désirable que les Jeux appartiennent exclusivement à un pays et que d'ailleurs, le Comité a pour mission d'exécuter sur ce point, la décision du Congrès de Paris et n'est point libre d'y porter atteinte. En conséquence, il n'y a pas lieu de revenir sur le protocole adopté l'avant-veille» (GASSE, Mirjam, "Die IOC-Session 1896 in Athen", in: LENNARTZ, *Erläuterungen*, p. 53).

<sup>17</sup> Carl-Diem-Institut, *Dokumente*, p. 89-90.

<sup>18</sup> *Sport im Bild* 2(1896)26, p. 413.

<sup>19</sup> COUBERTIN, *Campagne*, p. 133.

<sup>20</sup> COUBERTIN, *Mémoires*, p. 27.

<sup>21</sup> COUBERTIN, *Mémoires*, p. 27.

<sup>22</sup> Carl-Diem-Institut, *Dokumente*, p. 89.

<sup>23</sup> MÜLLER, Norbert, *Von Paris bis Baden-Baden*, Niedernhausen 1983, p. 35.

<sup>24</sup> COUBERTIN, *Campagne*, p. 133-134.

there to hold sport events within the framework of the world exhibition. The secretary-general of the world exhibition Alfred PICARD knew of COUBERTIN'S intentions but did not believe in his Olympic plans and had already been active in a different direction. Therefore COUBERTIN tried to convince the leaders of his government about his aims. This appeared possible to him in Le Havre. Felix FAURE, the president of the republic since 1895, lived there. COUBERTIN managed that the congress was held under FAURE'S patronage and that he received the participants in his house.

The uprising of the Christian population in Crete against the ottoman troops in autumn 1896 and the ensuing war between Greece and Turkey for the island resulting in a victory of Turkey forced the Greek state to concentrate on other things than the Olympic Games in Athens.

## The 4<sup>th</sup> IOC Session 1901 in Paris

However the "Greek plans" were again part of the agenda at the IOC Session 1901. The three German IOC members Prince Eduard zu SALM-HORSTMAR, Count Archambault de TALLEYRAND-PÉRIGORD and Willibald GEBHARDT had proposed a written motion<sup>25</sup> to alternately hold the Olympic Games every two years in Athens and other cities of the civilised nations.<sup>26</sup>

Motion proposed by the German IOC members:

*"In 1902 a congress of our committee shall take place in Athens, at which a precise program on the future Olympic Games – under special consideration of the future Games in Athens – is to be determined. Every two years international competitions take place alternately in Athens and other large cities of the civilised countries so that the Games will be held every 4 years in the Greek capital. In 1906 the Second Olympic Games are to be held in Athens; the Third in 1910 etc. In 1904 the Games will be held in USA; Germany reserves the right to host the Olympic Games in Berlin in 1908."*

In the handwritten protocol of the session by Godefroy de BLONAY the motion and the decision are summarised only incompletely and unclearly.<sup>27</sup>

Minutes of the 4<sup>th</sup> IOC session 1901 in Paris (excerpt):  
*"The German members propose via letter that a committee is to be formed in 1902 in Athens, which shall decide that the international Olympic Games in Athens will take place in between the Games already in existence, and that secondly the Olympic Games 1908 shall be in Berlin. The president has the view that the Olympiads, which are pure Hellenic, should be a national affair, which will not be under the responsibility of the international committee. After thorough deliberation and discussion the committee unanimously formulated its decision."*

In COUBERTIN'S report on the IOC session in the *Revue Olympique* the motion of the German members is also abridged and furthermore the account is not quite correct.<sup>28</sup>

COUBERTIN'S version of the German motion in the *Revue Olympique*:

*"The German representatives Prince Eduard von Salm-Horstmar, Count Talleyrand-Périgord and Dr. W. Gebhardt proposed a motion in three parts: 1) 1902 a congress be organised with the task to establish final and compulsory regulations for the Olympic competitions; 2) the Olympic Games 1908 be awarded to Berlin; 3) the creation of a second series of Olympiads, to be held in Athens every four years, in between the already established Olympiads, which will continue to be celebrated in the principal cities all over the world."*

The parts describing that the program shall be established according to the conditions in Athens, and that the Games were planned there in 1906 and 1910 are missing. It becomes clear by the manner of COUBERTIN'S account of the course of the discussion<sup>29</sup> how little he favoured the motion. Already five years earlier objections had been made concerning these plans. He does not mention which these might have been. The fact that the plan could not be accomplished for five

<sup>25</sup> In the minutes it cannot clearly be seen whether or not the three German members did take part in the session.

<sup>26</sup> The letter must have been handwritten by GEBHARDT. KOEBSSEL is said to have examined it in the IOC archive in Lausanne (Carl-Diem-Institut, *Dokumente*, p. 120). The author could not find it there however. The letter did exist though for it is mentioned in the minutes of the session. Compare *Revue Olympique* I(July 1901)3, p.34-35.

<sup>27</sup> «Les délégués d'Allemagne proposent par lettre qu'en 1902 un comité se réunira à Athènes, où il sera décidé que des Jeux olympiques internationaux auront lieu à Athènes entre les Jeux jusqu'ici [illegible], et que en 1908 les Jeux olympiques aient lieu à Berlin. Le Président fait observer que les olympiades purement Helléniques sont une chose nationale qui n'est pas du ressort du comité internationale. Après réflexion et discussion, le comité formule sa décision de la façon suivante qui réunit tous les suffrages» (Minutes of the 4. IOC session, p. 8-9 [IOC Archive]).

<sup>28</sup> «Les délégués Allemands, le Prince Edouard de Salm-Horstmar, le comte de Talleyrand-Périgord et le D. W. Gebhardt ont présenté un triple vœu tendant: 1° à l'organisation en 1902 d'un congrès chargé de rédiger un code définitif et obligatoire pour les concours olympiques. 2° à la désignation de Berlin comme siège des Jeux olympique de 1908. 3° à la création d'une seconde série d'Olympiades qui auraient lieu à Athènes tous les quatre ans dans l'intervalle des Olympiades précédemment créées, lesquelles continueraient d'être célébrées dans les principales villes du monde» *Revue Olympique* I[July 1901]3, p. 34-35).

<sup>29</sup> Apparently he printed his entire reply:

«Appuyé, au nom de la Suède, par le lieutenant Bergb, le choix de Berlin est envisagé avec sympathie par le Comité qui décide d'en prendre acte, sans toutefois juger possible de le rendre définitif si longtemps à l'avance. [...]

years shows that it would not be sensible for the IOC to take the initiative. Games in Athens would have a national character and therefore were not the responsibility of the IOC. The Greek IOC member, Count Alexander MERKATI thought that Games in Athens would have to be welcomed by the IOC; the IOC was to support the Athens' endeavours. COUBERTIN cloaked MERKATI'S words in a lot of ifs and maybes: "should the plan be realised", "if it came to pass"<sup>30</sup>.

In his report the sentence follows: "All these decisions were reached unanimously". The impartial reader could refer this sentence to the pleas made by MERKATI. In reality, the part concerning Athens and proposed by the German IOC members, must have received a negative voting. Changing the motion was never considered. Considering the knowledge about the original of the motion, the way in which the rendering of the motion was played down, the discussion and the vote, and adding a statement in the book *21 Years of Sport Campaigning* – "then in 1901 the German members had proposed [...] an identical motion"<sup>31</sup> - [...] when we accepted this motion"<sup>32</sup> - we should come to the conclusion: At the session 1901 in Paris the IOC decided that the Olympic Games should take place every two years, alternately in Athens and other cities.

COUBERTIN'S report on the discussion of the German motion:

"Lieutenant Bergh supported the candidature of Berlin in the name of Sweden and the committee was sympathetic towards this motion. It decided to take notice of it. However, it expressed itself incapable of committing itself definitely for such a long period in advance. [...]"

The idea of the Olympic Games in Athens is not new. It was already proposed by his royal highness the Duke of Sparta, later by the Greek government and also within the international committee by Mr. D. Bikelas and always the same objections were raised. The fact that circumstances over the past five years have already prevented Greece in realising a plan, which was always near to their hearts, shows that it would be a great imprudence of the committee, when would take the initiative without being able to guarantee its continuation. Furthermore such Games have rather a national than an international

character, and therefore cannot fall under the responsibility of the committee. Since the committee has taken up the view that the Games of Athens are in fact desirable, it decided, in accordance with the wish expressed by Count Mercati (Greece) to offer its help to the Greek authorities, thus securing the success of the Athens' Olympiads should they be realised. All these decisions were made unanimously."

COUBERTIN'S reserved view concerning the regular Games in Athens lead to harsh attacks against him in 1901 in the Greek press. He tried to "put the things right in a letter to the *Messenger d'Athènes*."<sup>33</sup>

He printed the letter in the 1902 January edition of the *Revue Olympique*.<sup>34</sup> COUBERTIN described the decisions of the IOC to organize the Games in Athens 1896, in Paris 1900, in Chicago 1904 and also mentioned the Greek intentions from 1896 to hold Games in Athens on a regular basis. With not a single word did he go into the decisions of the IOC from 1901 mentioned above and only vaguely mentioned of a plan<sup>35</sup>, which could not be realised because of the war with Turkey. In the leading article of this magazine in which he dealt with the planned Congress of Brussels in 1903 he correctly said that in order to realise the three decisions of the Paris session the event would be taking place in Belgium. But he was of the opinion that the IOC had no responsibility whatsoever of realising the Games. This was the task of the respective organisers of the Games.<sup>36</sup>

COUBERTIN'S explanation for the Congress of Brussels (excerpt): "The perception of this inevitable necessity resulted in the three motions, formulated by America, Sweden and Germany. In order to implement these motions, we had to decide organising the Congress of Brussels. Immediately it must be made clear that we will not take any responsibility for the implementation of the decisions. Concerning this question as well as the organisation of the respective Olympic Games our committee does not want to interfere with the autonomy of the individual partners."

Quant à l'idée de créer une seconde série de Jeux Olympiques à Athènes, elle n'est pas récente. Successivement émise par S.A.R. Mgr le duc de Sparte, par le gouvernement Hellène et au sein du Comité international par M. D. Bikelas, elle soulève toujours les mêmes objections. Le fait que les circonstances ont, depuis cinq ans, empêché la Grèce de mettre à exécution un projet qui lui tenait à cœur indique l'imprudence que commettrait le Comité en assumant une initiative dont il ne serait pas en mesure d'assurer ensuite la réalisation; de plus, les Jeux ainsi créés revêtiraient le caractère d'une institution nationale plutôt qu'internationale et, par conséquent, ne seraient pas du ressort du Comité. Admettant, toutefois, l'intérêt d'une semblable fondation, le Comité décide, conformément au désir exprimé par le comte Mercati (Grèce) de prêter, le cas échéant, aux autorités hellènes, son concours le plus chaleureux pour assurer le succès des Olympiades athéniennes du jour où elles viendraient à être fondées. Ces diverses décisions sont prises à l'unanimité des voix» (*Revue Olympique* 1[July 1901]3, p. 35).

<sup>30</sup> *Revue Olympique* 1[July 1901]3, p. 35.

<sup>31</sup> The same as VIKELAS, see above.

<sup>32</sup> «L'année suivante, M. Bikelas avait repris et développé l'idée d'une entente à ce sujet; puis, en 1901, les membres allemands du Comité International avaient émis en vœu analogue. Il ne nous avait pas été possible de paraître, en l'accueillant, empiéter sur les prérogatives du comité d'Athènes mais dès lors le Comité International s'était engagé par un vote unanime « à prêter, le cas échéant, son concours le plus chaleureux pour assurer le succès des olympiades athéniennes, du jour où elles viendraient à être fondées» (COUBERTIN, *Campagne*, p. 170-171).

<sup>33</sup> COUBERTIN, *Campagne*, p. 170.

<sup>34</sup> COUBERTIN, Pierre de, "Une rectification nécessaire," in: *Revue Olympique* 2[January 1902] 1, p. 10-12.

<sup>35</sup> Probably COUBERTIN'S proposal concerning Panhellenic Games.

<sup>36</sup> «C'est le sentiment de cette impérieuse nécessité qui a dicté le triple vœu, formulé en Amérique, en Suède et en Allemagne, que nous a vons résolu de convoquer le Congrès de Bruxelles. Il importe de dire tout de suite que nous n'entendons nullement prendre la responsabilité de rendre ses décisions exécutoires» (COUBERTIN, Pierre de, "Le congrès de Bruxelles", in: *Revue Olympique* 2[January 1902]1, p. 4).

He managed not to let the question of the Athens' Games become a topic within the IOC until the Congress of Brussels, which had been postponed and could only be held as late as 1905. There however he had to take notice of the statement made by the member MERKATI that an organising committee had formed in Greece that would hold international Olympic Games in Athens in 1906 and every four years from then. COUBERTIN admits this the existence of this statement in his report on the Congress of Brussels in his *Olympique Memoirs*.<sup>37</sup>

COUBERTIN on the announcement of the Olympic Games 1906:

*"For the year 1906 Games have been announced in Greece which do not belong in the proper order. It was agreed that the I.O.C. would lend its support, as well as the already existing organisations in various countries [!]."*

## The Preparations of the Second International Olympic Games in Athens 1906

After the termination of the Greek/Turkish war, the press often published plans to organise Olympic Games, respectively sport events named Olympic Games. The magazine *Spiel und Sport* reported on February 17, 1900<sup>38</sup> that the stadium in Athens would be renovated. At Easter 1900 the schools wanted to hold Olympic Games there, in the same way as in the ancient Games.

At Easter 1901, *Der Turner* reported on the Games held by pupils in the stadium of Athens. The pupils of Pyrgos wanted to organise a similar event in the stadium of Olympia and the pupils of Nauplia wanted to do the same in the stadium of Epidauros. Physical exercises of pupils in the Olympic stadium of Athens were followed by "Panhellenic Games" which lasted four days. The king and his family were present every day and distributed the prizes. "Also, the problem of holding new 'Olympic Games' shall be solved by the chairman of the Comité the Crown Prince Constantine."<sup>39</sup>

In the middle of 1901 *Der Turner* published a note disclosing that German, Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, and American athletic associations had agreed upon holding Olympic Games in Athens every four years. The next Games were to be held in 1903, to commemorate the 40-year celebrations of GEORGE I's accession to the throne. A representative of these associations wanted to inform the king on this. Nothing apart from this became known of this decision and from the German side in particular no further data were given.<sup>40</sup>

The Greeks though had in fact planned Olympic Games for 1903 or 1904. In connection with the international archaeology congress in Athens in the spring of 1903, or in the spring of 1904, Olympic Games were supposed to be held. This had already been ordained by a royal decree in 1901. Under the chairmanship of the crown prince a committee of ten convened.<sup>41</sup> Most members of this committee had already prepared the Games in 1896.<sup>42</sup> Two years were still to pass until it could finally be realised.

In spring 1905 the marble construction of the Panathenaic Stadium in Athens was completed.<sup>43</sup> The Panhellenic Games took place there as a final test. Now the IOC decision for 1906 could be realised. Already prior to the IOC session in Brussels invitations were sent to Olympic respectively sport associations in many countries. The Greek envoy Kleon

<sup>37</sup> »Des Jeux hors série étaient annoncés en Grèce pour 1906. Il fut entendu que le CIO y prêterait son appui ainsi que celui des rouages constitués déjà en différents pays par ses membres» (COUBERTIN, *Mémoires*, p. 48).

<sup>38</sup> *Spiel und Sport* 10(17.02.1900)7, p. 124.

<sup>39</sup> *Der Turner* 16(1901)6, p. 136; 11, p. 248-249.

<sup>40</sup> *Der Turner* 16(1901)16, p. 374.

<sup>41</sup> *Deutsche Turn-Zeitung* 46(1901)27, p. 571.

<sup>42</sup> SZYMICZEK, Otto, "The First Decade of Modern Olympic Games", in: *Report XV. Session IOA 1975*, Athens 1976, p. 158.

<sup>43</sup> *Sport im Bild* (11[21.07.1905]29) published a photograph of the completed stadium on the front page; see also *Sport im Bild* 11(29.09.1905)39, p. 938.

RANGAVIS presented Germany “the official invitation of the Comité des Jeux Olympiques à Athènes” on May 5, 1905.<sup>44</sup> The Greek IOC member MERKATI declared at the Congress of Brussels that an organising committee for the Olympic Games 1906 had been formed in Athens, and that these would be repeated every four years (see above).

In autumn 1905 the Greek organising committee sent the first information to foreign sport associations and scheduled the Games for spring 1906.<sup>45</sup> That autumn the president of the Association of Greek Gymnast Coaches, Ioannis CHRYSSEAFIS travelled to Stockholm, Copenhagen, Paris and Berlin in order to collect information on the competition rules of the most important sport disciplines. In December 1905 the official program containing dates<sup>46</sup>, amateur rulings and registration rules was sent out.

As IOC President, COUBERTIN stuck to the rules, in spite of the misgivings he had towards the Olympic Games in Athens 1906. He had the program<sup>47</sup> of these games printed in the January edition of the *Revue Olympique*<sup>48</sup>. But he described the period of the Games only vaguely from “April – May 1906”<sup>49</sup>; although the Greeks had given the exact dates – April 22 to May 2 - in their invitation, which had been attached to the program. COUBERTIN also did not neglect to mention at the end of the program that applications for participation were to be forwarded to P. LAMBROS. Secretary-general, Athens, University Street 3, until one month prior the commencement of the Games<sup>50</sup>. P. LAMBROS’ first name was Spyridon P., and COUBERTIN had known him as the secretary-general of the literature society *Parnaß* and one of the main persons responsible for the Games 1896. The statement “a month prior to commencement” was practically useless because of not mentioning any date indicating the actual beginning of the Games. Furthermore the Greeks had asked that nations from overseas should confirm their registration 40 days in advance. COUBERTIN simply left out the general regulations (amateur definition) that were named in the Greek circular. It does seem strange that he (Coubertin) “concealed” the “program of the Olympique Games in Athens” in the “unofficial part” of the magazine (*Revue Olympique*) in the last article. At the beginning of the magazine there is an “official part” with the subtitle “Bulletin of the International Olympique Committee”. In a foreword COUBERTIN explains what should be mentioned in the “official part”: “It will deal with public relations and all other activities of the International Committee”<sup>51</sup>. Did the Games of 1906 not belong to these “other

activities”? In the official part of the January edition it could be read that:

- the IOC had accepted two new members,
- BAILLET-LATOUR had received a French medal at the instigation of COUBERTIN,
- COUBERTIN had provided an *Olympic Cup*,
- in accordance with a proposal made by Count Egbert of ASSEBURG the planned Berlin IOC session had been rescheduled for 1907 in order to enable the IOC members to go to Athens.

So the Games in Athens could not entirely be overlooked. That also became clear towards the end of the official part. COUBERTIN could not simply leave out the IOC decision in which the IOC requested all countries and associations with which it cooperated to take part in the Games in Athens. He had, in accordance with the IOC’s mandate, written a letter to the countries and associations, pointing out the Games in Athens. The program of the Games in Athens should have been connected precisely to this part of the IOC bulletins.

The February edition merely dealt with the Olympique diploma.<sup>52</sup> The March edition reported on the meanwhile officially executed forming of the *British Olympique Association* and the reference to a conference of the IOC with the topic of art and sport, to be held at the end of May in the *Comédie Française*, as well as the mention of a challenge cup which the IOC had offered for the Games in Athens. The prize was handed over to the Greek envoy in Paris who was to forward it to Athens<sup>53</sup>. It is very probable that COUBERTIN himself provided this cup, which was awarded to the winner of the pentathlon, Hjalmar MELLANDER. Why does he sing the praise of this challenge cup, which was awarded during the Olympic Games – unwanted by him – for the first time? He possibly saw himself forced to act on behalf of the IOC because the Greek king had offered a challenge cup for the winner of the marathon race.

At first sight it seems surprising that the April edition of the *Revue Olympique* was published as a special edition with the title “published at the occasion of the Olympique Games in Athens”<sup>54</sup>. But whoever reads this edition will also be surprised for another reason. COUBERTIN managed to name the Olympique Games in Athens only once in 14 pages of text.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Bericht des DR AfOS, o. O. and o. J [Berlin 1906], p. 1, reprint in: *Jahrbuch der Leibesübungen* 34(1927), p. 65.

<sup>45</sup> *Sport im Bild* 11(1905)39, p. 938. *Deutsche Turn-Zeitung* 50(1905)41, p. 727.

<sup>46</sup> 22.04.-02.05.1906, originally the 16.-26.04. was scheduled (*Deutsche Turn-Zeitung* 50[1905]48, p. 847).

<sup>47</sup> *Revue Olympique* 6(1906)1, p. 14-16.

<sup>48</sup> The *Revue Olympique* was published every month from 1906 on.

<sup>49</sup> «Avril – Mai 1906» (*Revue Olympique* 6[1906]1, p. 14). The exact date had already been determined in autumn 1905.

<sup>50</sup> «Les demandes de participation aux Jeux Olympiques doivent être adressées à M. P. Lambros, secrétaire général, rue de l’Université, 3, à Athènes, un mois avant le commencement des Jeux» (*Revue Olympique* 6[1906]1, p. 16).

<sup>51</sup> «[...] contenant la relation officielle de tout ce qui concerne le fonctionnement et l’action du Comité International [...]» (*Revue Olympique* 6[1906]1, p. 3).

<sup>52</sup> *Revue Olympique* 6(1906)2, p. 19-20.

<sup>53</sup> *Revue Olympique* 6(1906)3, p. 47-48.

<sup>54</sup> «NUMÉRO SPÉCIAL. Publié à l’occasion des Jeux Olympiques d’Athènes» (*Revue Olympique* 6[1906]4, p. 49).

<sup>55</sup> «Nous voudrions grouper ici celles qui aideront les visiteurs des Jeux Olympiques de 1906, à mieux comprendre et à mieux apprécier le spectacle dont ils vont être les témoins et le cadre au centre duquel ce spectacle se déroulera à leurs yeux» (*Revue Olympique* 6[1906]4, p. 51).

COUBERTIN'S introduction to the special edition of the *Revue Olympique*:

"Here we would like to give room to reflections which are to help the visitor of the Olympic Games of 1906 to better understand and cherish the spectacle and its setting, they are about to witness."

COUBERTIN had also written a guide for people travelling to Greece. But such a visit could also have already taken place in 1904, or not until 1908. He wrote a history on Greece from the Doric migration until the last Greek-Turkish war, tries to define the term "Greekness", deals with Greek art, titles a paragraph "on sport" but only writes there about the ancient Olympic Games, and then names books which "one should carry with him"<sup>56</sup>. He ends his treatise with a description of the sights in Athens (excluding the Olympic stadium), Eleusis, Aegina, Delos, Argolis, Delphi, Patras, Olympia<sup>57</sup> and Euboea etc.

## The Second International Olympic Games in Athens 1906

The "Second international Olympic Games in Athens 1906" ("B. 'ΔΙΕΘΝΕΙΣ ΟΛΥΜΠΙΑΚΟΙ ΑΓΩΝΕΣ ΑΘΗΝΗΣΙ ΑΨ΄"), as they were described in all official documents of the organising committee, were opened on Sunday 22nd. April<sup>58</sup> 1906. By the early afternoon, the stadium was already filled with 50.000 spectators.<sup>59</sup> Shortly after 15.00, King GEORGE accompanied by his sister, the English Queen ALEXANDRA, King EDWARD VII. of England with his sister-in-law, the

Greek queen OLGA, followed by the Prince of Wales"<sup>60</sup> with his wife, the princess MARY, and the Greek retinue arrived at the stadium.<sup>61</sup> Following this, the competitors marched into the stadium in rows of four, in order of nations, every country with its national flag in front, taking up positions opposite the king's box.<sup>62</sup> Already as early as 1906, the March Past of the Nations had taken place (for the first time). Olympic historical literature almost always describes this part of the opening ceremony as originating at the Olympic Games in London in 1908.

COUBERTIN'S statement was uncritically accepted that: "for the first time a wish of the *Comédie Française*<sup>63</sup> was fulfilled: fifteen hundred athletes paraded behind their nineteen national flags."<sup>64</sup>

The German team entered the stadium first. As host nation the Greeks came in last, a custom maintained by the organisers up to the present day.

After the athletes had taken up position, crown prince KONSTANTIN, as chairman of the organising committee, came forward and gave a short speech<sup>65</sup>, in which he referred to the ancient tradition of the games and the Greek Law, which prescribed regular Games in Athens. The king declared the Games open and the Samaras-Hymn<sup>66</sup> was played, as had been the case in 1896. This part of the ceremony also has been retained up to today. The athletes then vacated the arena. The sporting competitions then began with the gymnasts.

The closing ceremony took place in the stadium during the afternoon of the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May. After gymnastic exercises by pupils from schools in Athens, the king and crown prince distributed the prizes to the winners. As in St Louis there were gold, silver and bronze medals for the individual winners<sup>67</sup>, silver and bronze medals of a different type for the team events, honorary prizes, diplomas<sup>68</sup> and olive

<sup>56</sup> Among others VIKELAS, Dimitrios, *La Grèce Byzantine et moderne*, Paris 1893. COUBERTIN, Pierre de, *Les Souvenirs d'Amerique et de Grèce*, Paris 1897.

<sup>57</sup> Strangely COUBERTIN claims, Olympia had been excavated "at the expense of Emperor Frederic III. – at that time still crown prince –." (p. 62) He must have known that these excavations had been undertaken by the German Reich. As early as 1889 he had intensively studied the excavations of Olympia and during the World Fair in Paris he had visited an exhibition and a lecture on this topic.

<sup>58</sup> According to the Greek calendar 09. April 1906.

<sup>59</sup> Eduard GIET, who reported from Athens for the „Turner“ (21[1906]13, p. 241), mentions "46000 numbered seats", 3.000 soldiers and four music choirs. Thousands of Athens' inhabitants stood on risings around the stadium. The ancient stadium had room for over 47.000 people.

<sup>60</sup> Later King GEORGE V.

<sup>61</sup> Very nice photographs of the atmosphere in the stadium and the entry of the honorary guests still exist, printed among others in: *Athletik-Jahrbuch* 3(1907), p. 47, 51. *Kraft und Schönheit* 6(1906)6, p. 163.

<sup>62</sup> *Report of the DRAFOS*, p. 4. *Athletik-Jahrbuch* 3(1907), p. 16. *Der Turner* 21(1906)13, p. 242.

<sup>63</sup> Baron de COUBERTIN meant the *Olympic Congress of Arts, Science and Sport* called by him in May 1906 in Paris.

<sup>64</sup> »Pour la première fois, le défilé des quinze cents athlètes marchant derrière leurs dix-neuf drapeaux réalisa un des vœux de la Conférence de la Comédie-Française« (COUBERTIN, *Mémoires*, p. 56).

<sup>65</sup> Text in: *Der Turner* 21(1906)13, p. 242.

<sup>66</sup> The hymn composed for the Games of 1906 by Spiridon SAMARAS, being the permanent official Olympic hymn today.

<sup>67</sup> The medal designed by Jules Clément CHAPLAIN for the Games of 1896 was reissued. This time gold, silver and bronze medals were handed out instead of silver and copper ones. Instead of "IN ATHENS 1896" ("EN AΘΗΝΑΙΣ 1896") this time "IN ATHENS 1906" ("EN AΘΗΝΑΙΣ 1906") was written on the back.

<sup>68</sup> This diploma created by Nikolaos GYZIS had already been handed out in 1896. Only the inscription – "Second International Olympic Games in Athens 1906" – had to be updated.

branches for numerous winners. Every participant received a commemorative medal<sup>69</sup>. In contrast to the events in Paris in 1900 and in St Louis in 1904, these fourth Olympic Games were a success, and are worthy – without resorting again to the above-described resolutions – of the name Olympic Games and they are to be compared with the first event in Athens in 1896. There was a stadium with spectators, games which were organised “in one block”, and a capital city, which for the duration of the games was a genuine Olympian City.<sup>70</sup> This had also been the case in 1896. This time the Games were also genuine “international” games with many foreign teams, in which world-class athletes took part in at least a few sport categories – above all in the track and field events. Even during 1896, 1900 and 1904, national Olympic committees, national sport organisations and sport associations sent athletes, while even athletes under their own initiative could make the journey to take part. Here for the first time only representatives of the Olympic Organisations attended, i.e. NOC, which had been founded in many countries. Since then this is an integral part of the Olympic Movement.

The organising committee published the “*Bulletin du Comité des Jeux Olympiques à Athènes*” in Greek and French during the year 1906. In the first edition from February 7, 1906, all royal decrees governing the Pan Hellenic Games, the Olympic Games for Schools, the International Olympic Games and the Committee of the Olympic Games, are to be found. In addition, the personal composition of all Olympic Committees abroad was printed.<sup>71</sup> The 4<sup>th</sup> issue of June 2, 1906 contains the “*Résultats Officiel*” of the “*Jeux Olympiques Internationaux 1906*”. The names of 903 athletes are listed and the complete results of the competitions.<sup>72</sup> These also must be seen as setting the trend for the subsequent Official Reports.

Many athletes lived in the *Zappeion*, i.e. in an Olympic Village.<sup>73</sup> Nevertheless there were enormous problems, because of the lack of space, the noise and the typical Greek food, which at that time was “strange”, encouraging athletes to find quarters elsewhere.

Two shortcomings must however be mentioned: The lack of rules for the individual Olympic disciplines and the lack of impartiality of many judges as well as the spectators. The first was clearly the fault of the IOC. The *German Reich's Committee for Olympic Games (Deutscher Reichsausschuß für Olympische Spiele)* had deliberately required international competitive judging.

Information on the Second International Olympic Games in Athens 22. April to 2. May 1906 (09.-19.04. in accordance with the Julian Calendar)		
Teams 22 AUS AUT BEL BOH CAN DEN EGY FIN FRA GBR GER GRE HUN ITA NED NOR RUS Sai <sup>1</sup> Smy <sup>1</sup> SUI SWE USA Athletes: 903 (7 <sup>3</sup> )	Name of the Organising committee: President: General secretary: Official Report: Ceremonies: Opened by: Duration: Honouring the winners: Olympic hymn: Winner's medal: Team medal: Winner's diploma: Commemorative medals: Film: Sports: Exhibitions: Special features:	Comité des Jeux olympiques à Athènes Crown Prince KONSTANTIN Spyros P. LAMBROS 1. Greek / French (Bulletin) [2. Greek?] Opening and closing ceremony (at the start and conclusion of the games respectively, marching in of the nations for the first time) King GEORGE I. 11 days At the closing ceremony by GEORGE I., in addition to gold, silver and bronze medals, Cups, Works of art and presents Spyros SAMARAS / Kostas PALAMAS (Text) Jules Clément CHAPLAIN unknown Nikolaos GYZIS 1. Nikiphoros LYTRAS, 2. unknown short films 11 (1 <sup>3</sup> ) with 74 (2 <sup>3</sup> ) disciplines 3 (1 <sup>3</sup> ) with 12 (1 <sup>3</sup> ) disciplines a Danish woman's squad demonstrated gymnastics
Explanations		
1 Football teams from the town Smyrna that belonged at that time to Turkey (English, French, an Armenian (?)) and Saloniki.		
2 A report in the Bulletin of the Organising Committee and a description of the Games by Pan. S. SAVVIDIS.		
3 From that also for women.		

Program			
Areas: total/quota of women	Disciplines: total/quota of women		
Sports:	11/1	74/2	
Demonstrations:	3/1	12/1	
Areas	Competitions	Dates	Localities
<b>Sports</b>			
Fencing	8	23 APR-01 MAY	Zappeion
Football	1	23-24 APR	Velodrom in New-Phaleron
Weight lifting	2	25-27 APR	Stadium
Athletics <sup>1</sup>	22	25 APR-02 MAY	Stadium
Cycle racing	6	23-26 APR, 01 MAY	Velodrom in New-Phaleron, Streets of Athens - Marathon and back
Wrestling	4	25-30 APR	Stadium
Rowing	6	24, 28 APR	Sea bay at Phaleron
Shooting	12	25-28 APR	Shooting booth / enclosed Shooting range in Kallithea
Swimming	5	24-28 APR	Sea bay at Phaleron
Tennis	4/2	23-26 APR	Ash court of the Lawn-Tennis-Club Athens
Gymnastics	4	22-26 APR	Stadium
<b>Demonstrations</b>			
Indoor cycling <sup>2</sup>	4	30 APR	Stadium
Gymnastics <sup>3</sup>	2/1	29 APR	Stadium
Swimming <sup>4</sup>	6	22 APR	The sea bay of Zea
Explanations:			
1 Including tug-of-war.			
2 Demonstrations of different forms of gymnastic cycling by German athletes (quadrille on high-wheelers, roundelay with normal cycles with 4 and 6 persons).			
3 Demonstrations of gymnastic systems from a Greek and from a Swedish male and a Danish female squad and Greek pupils.			
4 The Swedes showed diving, life saving, reviving, figure swimming und water polo.			

<sup>69</sup> There were two different souvenir medals. Since many of the 20.000 medals of the Games of 1896 were still left the “1896” on the back was stuck over with a vignette bearing “1906”. The second souvenir medal bears “OLYMPIC GAMES INTERNATIONAL IN ATHENS” stamped in on its back in Greek.

<sup>70</sup> Of course the Athens of 1906 cannot be compared with the today four-million city of Athens. In 1906 Athens had 150.000 inhabitants at the most.

<sup>71</sup> Corrections in the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of March 28, 1906.

<sup>72</sup> Both lists contain numerous errors and mistakes. But these are still to be found in the official reports today.

<sup>73</sup> Therefore the Olympic village of 1921 in Paris was not the first as often claimed in Olympic literature.

## The 9<sup>th</sup> IOC Session in Athens in 1906

When the Games in Athens in 1906 came to an end in May, COUBERTIN began to debate these directly and indirectly in the *Revue Olympique*. "At the suggestion of several readers", he allowed an article to be printed, which he had written for the *L'Indépendance Belge*<sup>74</sup> newspaper. He then provided the reason for printing this article in the *Revue Olympique*<sup>75</sup>, „because it seems necessary to repudiate many false assertions, which had appeared in Greece.“<sup>76</sup>

What had been maintained in Athens? What had to be repudiated? With his insinuations he could only have meant the IOC Session in Athens. But this should be discussed later in the suitable context. Firstly it seems necessary to take a closer look at the article in the Belgian newspaper, respectively in the *Revue Olympique*. COUBERTIN wrote his view on the history on the Olympic Games of the modern age. Why this history of the Games just now in 1906? In many passages it sounds like a justification. Above all he praises the importance of the IOC. He virtually flatters its members whom he calls independent ambassadors and guardians of the Olympic idea. He describes the problems which he encountered in Athens in 1896 in detail. He only very briefly touches upon the problems of the event in 1900 in Paris. The Games of 1904 in St. Louis were "a glamorous event"<sup>77</sup>, only the Germans had complained that the American athletes had been better. Also surprising is the then following assertion that the world exhibition had been a disturbance and that this would not happen to the IOC again, „the experience that one time would be enough“<sup>78</sup>. Had there not been a world exhibition in Paris 1900 as well? Was there not an exhibition planned in Rome in 1908?

Inevitably, in a history of the Olympic Games the organisation of the event in Athens in 1906 must be mentioned. COUBERTIN compares the Olympic Games 1906 with the Pythian and Nemeic Games of ancient times respectively the Nordic Games which he calls the "Nordic Olympic"<sup>79</sup>. With all criticism of COUBERTIN – the 1906 Games had been named "real" Olympic Games by the IOC – his tactical talent has to be

admired. This comparison was hardly open to attack. He must be given credit for having named the Nordic Games in 1901 "Nordic Olympia" at its first celebration.<sup>80</sup> The Nordic Games had his unrestricted support, which can hardly be said of the Games in 1906. COUBERTIN then dealt with the program of the Games in 1906. Much was supposed to be incomplete, a lot was missing, and the same applies "again to the Games in Athens. But in 1900 most sport disciplines were represented and interesting competitions were carried out."<sup>81</sup>

Here the question remains: Where did COUBERTIN take this nonchalance from? A little later he mockingly said that anyone could hold the Olympic Games: A newspaper, municipal authorities, a tourist association<sup>82</sup>. He compared these Olympic Games to „real international Olympics“. Where the false Olympics were to be found is not difficult to guess. COUBERTIN ends his article with the statement: „I myself could not regard my work as being complete if I left the Olympic waggon standing where it is now that is half way.“<sup>83</sup>

This conclusive remark and the article itself strongly indicate that COUBERTIN had something specific in mind in expressing himself in this manner: But more about this below!

His article is followed by what his text possibly was to prepare the grounds for: a short paper on the Olympic Games in 1906, bearing the title "Winner's list of the Games of Athens" and a report on the IOC Session in Athens with the title "Official Part"<sup>84</sup>. *Bulletin of the IOC*. Even the president of the IOC cannot comment on the reports from Athens other than that the event was "so glamorous as could be wished for". He briefly describes the magnificent opening ceremony and then adds that Count Eugenio BRUNETTA d'USSEAUX had represented him. He himself had been held up by the preparations for the *Olympic Conference of Sport and Art* in Paris. But this conference was actually a "private event" of the president. The Conference commenced on May 26, 1906, this was 24 days after the closing ceremony in Athens. COUBERTIN could have also organised it in autumn 1906. To begin with COUBERTIN overestimates its importance in calling the idea of including art competitions in the Olympic program as the second stage of the Olympic Games of the modern age. The IOC was not represented. After having used a not quite understandable excuse in 1904

<sup>74</sup> COUBERTIN, Pierre de, "La renaissance olympique", in: *L'Indépendance Belge* 77(23. 04.1906) p. 3.

<sup>75</sup> *Revue Olympique* 6(1906)5, p. 68-75.

<sup>76</sup> »[...]et aussi parce qu'un démenti est nécessaire à certaines assertions mensongères qui ont été émises en Grèce dernièrement« (*Revue Olympique* 6[1906]5, p. 68).

<sup>77</sup> »Elle fut brillamment célébrée (*Revue Olympique* 6[1906]5, p. 73).

<sup>78</sup> »L'expérience à cet égard est suffisante« (*Revue Olympique* 6[1906]5, p. 73).

<sup>79</sup> »olympiades boréales« (*Revue Olympique* 6[1906]5, p. 73).

<sup>80</sup> In: *Revue Olympique* 1(April 1901), p. 8. In this edition there is a very detailed description of the 1<sup>st</sup> Nordic Games in Stockholm (p. 1-9). The Nordic Games were supposed to have been modelled on the Olympic Games. On the Nordic Games compare KÖHNE, Kerstin, *Geschichte der Nordischen Spiele*, Diploma thesis, Köln 1996. HÜTTENEGGER, Theodor, "Zwei Vorgänger der Olympischen Winterspiele", in: *Der Winter* 43(1955/56), p. 468-469.

<sup>81</sup> »[...] et manquent à nouveau aux Jeux d'Athènes. En 1900, au contraire, la plupart ont donné lieu à d'intéressants concours« (*Revue Olympique* 6[May 1906], p. 74).

<sup>82</sup> *Revue Olympique* 6(May 1906), p. 75.

<sup>83</sup> »Pour ma part, en tous les cas, je ne jugerais pas mon œuvre achevée, si je laissais le char de l'olympiade moderne là où il se trouve actuellement, c'est-à-dire à mi-côte« (*Revue Olympique* 6[May 1906], p. 75).

<sup>84</sup> The „Winner's list“ of the Games 1906 belongs to the „unofficial“ part.

for not going to St. Louis, this behaviour now must be regarded as an insult to the IOC and the Olympic Games in Athens. This time he did not listen to WAGNER in Bayreuth, but prepared a conference in the *Comédie Française*.<sup>85</sup> During the Olympic Games in Athens the eight IOC members present came together several times<sup>86</sup> for the 8<sup>th</sup> Session: BRUNETTA d'USSEAUX (Italy), Count MERKATI (Greece), Count von der ASSEBURG and GEBARDT (Germany), Viktor BALCK and Count Clarence von ROSEN (Sweden), Baron Frederick W. van TUYLL van SEROOSKERKEN (The Netherlands) and GUTH (Bohemia). The representative of the *British Olympic Association*, Lord William Henry DESBOROUGH<sup>87</sup>, also took part in the consultations. Unfortunately there is no protocol of the sessions. The secretary-general BRUNETTA d'USSEAUX would have been responsible. He died in 1918. His inheritance has vanished. Thus, we depend on COUBERTIN'S report in the *Revue Olympique*, according to which the IOC members discussed „standardised rules for the future Olympic Games”. A commission was already to meet on this in January 1907 in The Hague<sup>88</sup>. The question of the rules was nothing new and unusual. COUBERTIN would not have had to write a résumé of his life's work or a justification for his activities for this? Was nothing else talked about in Athens? He remains silent in the *Twenty-one Years of Sport Campaign*. The time between 1905 (Brussels) and 1908 (London) is not mentioned, apart from the art congress in Paris. In the *Olympic Memories* there are at least hints to be found: The members were supposed to have lost the direction, had decided on a reorganisation of the IOC and offered the Greek crown prince honorary chairmanship.<sup>89</sup>

COUBERTIN on the IOC Session 1906 in Athens

*“The nine or ten colleagues who had come to Athens had temporarily lost the direction in the meeting and Brunetta d'Usseaux felt incapable of bringing them back on to the right track. They had come to a sort of decision of reorganising the IOC and even offering the crown prince honorary chairmanship.”*

So that was it! The IOC wanted to separate itself from COUBERTIN. To vote him directly out of office though had obviously appeared too risky to the few IOC members at the session in Athens. COUBERTIN had been elected president for ten years. So there were two possibilities: to found a new committee or to negotiate with COUBERTIN. They opted for the second, perhaps because the eight IOC members constituted only a part of the committee.<sup>90</sup> It is also possible that not all agreed. BRUNETTA d'USSEAUX being COUBERTIN'S representative was surely on his side. He also had been the only IOC member present in Athens as well as in the *Comédie Française* a few weeks later. Was COUBERTIN not open for negotiations? Was this the reason why BRUNETTA d'USSEAUX had been in Paris? At any rate COUBERTIN wrote 25 years later: „Apart from the last decision [?] all had to be approved by the president. He rejected all, including the honorary chairmanship of the crown prince.”<sup>91</sup> As to how far COUBERTIN had to make concessions towards the IOC he himself does not indicate. The Greek crown prince met COUBERTIN in Paris and had “a long conversation on this topic. It was neither pleasant for him nor for me but the whole matter was so grotesque that in the end we both had to laugh about it.”<sup>92</sup>

Apart from BRUNETTA d'USSEAUX, COUBERTIN was informed on the results of the session in Athens in letters by two further IOC members: TUYLL van SEROOSKERKEN<sup>93</sup> and MERKATI<sup>94</sup>. But they both refer to data already provided by BRUNETTA d'USSEAUX. Apparently he had sent out a form of protocol, so that they only go into two individual areas of the session while describing their personal evaluation. They both confirm that questions concerning rules were intensively discussed. Both mention the person of James SULLIVAN, the organiser of the Games 1904 in St. Louis and main critic of COUBERTIN. Apparently he took part in the sessions. TUYLL van SEROOSKERKEN and MERKATI consider integrating him by granting him membership in the IOC.<sup>95</sup> They do not comment on the intention of removing COUBERTIN from office. According to MERKATI though a reorganisation of the IOC

<sup>85</sup> In his *Mémoires Olympiques* (p. 50) he also openly admits that he had needed an excuse.

<sup>86</sup> In the previous sessions the participation was comparable: 1896 in Athens seven of 15, 1897 in Le Havre nine of 16, 1901 in Paris nine of 25, 1904 in London 14 of 31, 1905 in Brussels 15 of 29, 1906 in Athens eight of 31 members.

<sup>87</sup> Lord William Hippolyte DESBOROUGH of TAPLOW, born GRENFELL (1855-1945) was from listed as IOC member in the *Revue Olympique* from July 1906. Shortly beforehand he came in second in fencing (team rating) in Athens. COUBERTIN knew him since the London IOC Session of 1904.

<sup>88</sup> *Revue Olympique* 6(1906)5, p. 80. The 10<sup>th</sup> IOC Session 1907 in The Hague discussed the planned program of the Olympic Games 1908 in London in detail.

<sup>89</sup> «Assemblés, les neuf ou dix collègues venus à Athènes y avaient un moment perdu le nord et Brunetta d'Usseaux s'était trouvé impuissant à les maintenir. Ils avaient voté une sorte de résolution impliquant le réorganisation prochaine du CIO et en avaient même offert la présidence d'honneur au prince royal» (COUBERTIN, *Mémoires*, p. 53).

<sup>90</sup> COUBERTIN also indicates that: «Aussi bien la 'session' d'Athènes à laquelle ne participaient ni Laffan, ni Baillet-Latour, ni Blonay, ni Sloane, ne pouvait passer pour représenter la doctrine olympique de façon intégrale» (*Mémoires*, p. 53). Had these perhaps protested against the decisions made in Athens?

<sup>91</sup> «Tout cela d'ailleurs, sauf la dernière résolution, demeurerait soumis à l'approbation du président. Or, le président désavoua le tout, y compris l'honorariat décerné au prince royal» (COUBERTIN, *Mémoires*, p. 53).

<sup>92</sup> «Le prince et moi nous eûmes, à Paris, peu après, un long entretien à ce sujet. Ce n'étends agréable ni pour lui, ni pour moi, mais la situation était si grotesque que nous finîmes par en rire» (COUBERTIN, *Mémoires*, p. 53. Also in: *Revue Olympique* 7[1907]8, p. 319).

<sup>93</sup> On 30.04. and 20.05.1906 (*IOC Archive*).

<sup>94</sup> On 21.05. (*IOC Archive*). On the writing of DESBOROUGH to COUBERTIN see below.

<sup>95</sup> But COUBERTIN did not accept him.

was discussed. It was supposed to be grounded on a broader basis. Was a single large committee to be formed or were the national committees to gain more freedom and influence? MERKATI remarks that especially BALCK and GEBHARDT were completely dissatisfied with the work done by the IOC. That they had taken part in Olympic Games is not in the least questioned by both. A permanent holding of the Games in Athens has been discussed. MERKATI especially names SULLIVAN and BALCK as advocates as well as the royal family and the foreign (!) press. As long as we lack the protocol made by BRUNETTA d'USSEAUX we will probably never know what was really discussed in Athens.

MERKATI'S letter to COUBERTIN from May 21, 1906 (excerpt)

*"Dearest friend,*

*Brunetta of [?] must be back from Paris and told us all what happened during his stay there. I am sure that he did not neglect to give you a detailed concept of the [?] and the ideas of our colleagues as well as the various questions which we have treated.*

*I deemed it necessary to speak a little openly, apart from the interests of our institution, in order to avoid misunderstandings among our comrades. I even thought - for motives known just as well to you as to me -, to request the Germans and Swedes, for among our colleagues Balck and Gebhardt were those who were not too well-disposed towards the international committee [?] The rest is illegible].*

*We considered (to ask [?]) Lord Desborough to take part in all meetings of the committee since he formulated the idea of taking up negotiations with the king of England and other persons in order to see whether London could host the Olympiad in 1908 after Rome's refusal. I think it would also be in the interest of our international committee if also Lord Desborough were a representative of Great Britain. I think he is a persona grata with the king [?].*

*Thanks to Brunetta and Tuyll whose speech was very valuable we have managed to flatter Sullivan a little who appeared to be very dissatisfied with [?]. Balck seems to be neutral the same as Rosen who is very nice by the way.*

*I would not be surprised to see Gebhardt withdraw from the committee, my impression is that he feels a little downgraded or [?] by the presence of the general von der Asseburg who is always very proud and with whom [one, be?] cannot march.*

*The foreign press I do not speak of our own prefers the idea of holding the Games in Athens on a permanent basis. That is the almost unanimous view of the people who [?]. Sullivan and Balck are the first to proclaim that no city was more capable of holding these festivities every four years and that nowhere a [?] and a such interested crowd performing these tasks every day could be found. This year was truly a real success.*

*The king as well as the princes are thrilled by the success of the Olympic Games. Brunetta must have told them that Tuyll and I are of the opinion that our committee should work on the standardisation of the rules of all sport disciplines. A further topic was the reorganisation of our committee on a more solid and broader*

*basis. I do not exactly know what they think of that.*

*Not a few ideas have been exchanged on this topic and various solutions have been examined closely. Should a large, single committee be formed or full freedom be granted to the local committees, which have already been formed in various countries e.g. England, Germany or Greece? All this should be discussed in the near future. I deeply regret having not being able to take part in the Sorbonne meeting. [...] Tuyll bus proposed a friendly meeting of the committee in The Hague in January. I think that is a very good idea because it is necessary to exchange ideas among the members of the committee.*

*Should the royal prince arrive in Paris try to see him.*

[...]

*I have not seen the prince yet, so I cannot write to you which ideas and views he has.*

[...]"

## The Intentional International Olympic Games in Athens 1910 and 1914

In the summer of 1910, the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Olympic Games should have been held in Athens. In Crete, Eleferios VENIZELOS proclaimed the unification with Greece in 1908, although Crete had received an autonomous administration under Turkish supremacy after the Greeks lost the war of 1896/97 against the Turks. The same year the uprising of the so-called "Young Turks" commenced in Saloniki in Macedonia occupied by troops of European countries, which after many political and military entanglements eventually led to the first Balkans war in 1912. In October 1908 Bulgaria declared its independence. Austria annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina. When the government and the royal dynasty hesitated to recognise the affiliation of Crete a putsch by the army followed in 1909 and the "Military Alliance" appointed VENIZELOS head of the government. He also won a clear majority at the elections 1910 and 1912 with his new liberal party. The reputation of the royal dynasty and the old parties had reached an all-time low. In autumn 1912 the first Balkans war commenced when Montenegro, then Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece attacked Turkey in order to win the largest possible parts of Turkish ground in Europe. The Greeks occupied Saloniki. On March 18, 1913 the Greek King GEORGE I. was assassinated in Saloniki. His oldest son CONSTANTINE I. took his place. On May 30, 1913 a short peace period was arranged after mediation of the great powers, before the Second Balkans War broke out on June 26, 1913 in which Bulgaria attacked its former Greek and Serbian allies. Romania and Turkey took part in the fighting until the war could be terminated with

<sup>96</sup> COUBERTIN, Pierre de, *Annuaire*, Paris 1908, p. 10. Also in the *Annuaire* of 1911, p. 11.

defeat of Bulgaria and the peace treaty of Bukarest on August 10, 1913. After the assassination of the Austrian crown prince in Sarajevo in the summer of 1914 the First World War broke out.

The political situation outlined above made the holding of Olympic Games in 1910, 1914, or even 1918 impossible. The organising committee however prevailed and was active in preparing the Games 1910 and 1914. This is proved by numerous reports, which were printed, in the German gymnastic- and sport press. Similar findings were probably also available in other European countries and the USA.

As early as February 1907 the *Deutsche Turn-Zeitung* reported that the Greek crown prince had asked all NOCs via letter to come back to Athens in 1910. The Americans were supposed to have already accepted the invitation and president Theodore ROOSEVELT would receive an honorary presidency.<sup>97</sup>

On February 18, 1907 the Greek parliament decided to combine the Olympic Games 1910 with a 2400-year-celebration of the battle at Marathon.<sup>98</sup>

In March 1909 the *German Reich's Committee for Olympic Games* met in Berlin and unanimously decided on sending a team with representatives from all sport associations to Athens in 1910. Within the framework of the preparations a great summer sport festivity was to take place in June.<sup>99</sup>

On May 29, 1909 the organising committee had a meeting in Athens under chairmanship of Crown Prince CONSTANTINE and decided on the "definitive" holding of the Games. The event had been jeopardised by the costs amounting to "about 700000 German Marks". The Greek government however had been granted a loan of 250.000 DM by the national bank. As in 1906 "Olympic stamps were to be issued".<sup>100</sup>

For the first time, the possibility of cancellation was discussed in the autumn of 1909, after referring to the unrest in the army. However, the Greek legation in Berlin stated that "nothing was known of postponing the Games, or that Athens would cancel them altogether."<sup>101</sup> Secretary-general LAMBROS also tried to

appease by letter and named as a possibility the time of Easter, "the days around May 1<sup>st</sup>".<sup>102</sup>

By autumn 1909, the dates should have been determined all along, and the invitations sent out. Around the turn of the year the organising committee sent telegrams to the foreign NOCs "that because of political disturbances the Olympic Games could not take place."<sup>103</sup> However, the Panhellenic Games were organised in Athens from April 22-25, 1910.<sup>104</sup>

In the autumn of 1910, the Greek newspapers reported that the Olympic Games from 1914 would take place in Athens.<sup>105</sup>

Towards the middle of the year 1911, the Greek crown prince declared "that the political circumstances had been settled and that nothing would prevent the future holding of the Games". They would "definitely take place in 1914."<sup>106</sup> Crown Prince CONSTANTINE talked to COUBERTIN in Paris and emphasised again what is mentioned above.<sup>107</sup> In autumn 1912 the Greek government informed the IOC that, "Athens would carry out the Games in 1914".<sup>108</sup>

But in Europe the NOCs became sceptical because of the continuously flaring up of trouble spots. The *British Olympic Association* already decided in autumn 1912 not to participate. In Germany this was "not even considered". The USA, France and Sweden would probably support that view. It would be better to restrict the event to the allies of Greece in the Balkans.<sup>109</sup> In the autumn of 1913 there was again talk that the crown prince and the king absolutely wanted to organise the Games and that COUBERTIN supported them. The Greek government was supposed to have "provided a considerable amount of money".<sup>110</sup> The Games were to be held in April 1914 "and this shortly after the coronation of the king"<sup>111</sup>. New in the program were to be "balloon and aeroplane competitions".<sup>112</sup> However, in November complaints were heard that up to that moment no concrete preparations had been made and that the event would have to be postponed.<sup>113</sup> In January 1914 the Games were cancelled.<sup>114</sup>

<sup>97</sup> "Die olympischen Spiele des Jahres 1910", in: *Deutsche Turn-Zeitung* 52(1907)8, p. 139. Also in: *Illustrierte Athletik-Sportzeitung* 16(1907)13, p. 198.

<sup>98</sup> "Olympischen Spiele in Athen 1910", in: *Der Turner* 22(1907)4, p. 75-76. Also "Neue olympische Spiele in Athen", in: *Illustrierte Athletik-Sportzeitung* 16(1907)10, p. 151-152.

<sup>99</sup> *Deutsche Turn-Zeitung* 54(1909)13, p. 221.

<sup>100</sup> "Olympische Spiele 1910 in Athen", in: *Deutsche Turn-Zeitung* 54(1909)29, p. 513. Also in: *Der Turner* 24(1909)11, p. 208-209.

<sup>101</sup> "Olympische Spiele 1910 in Athen", in: *Deutsche Turn-Zeitung* 54(1909)41, p. 741.

<sup>102</sup> "Die Olympischen Spiele 1910 in Athen", in: *Körperkultur* 4(1909)11, p. 337. Also in: *Schwimmer-Zeitung* 17(1909)78, p. 1044-1045. Also in: *Der Deutsche Schwimmer* 5(1909)48, p. 93-94.

<sup>103</sup> "Keine olympischen Spiele in Athen", in: *Deutsche Turn-Zeitung* 55(1910)1, p. 16.

<sup>104</sup> "Panhellenische Spiele in Athen", in: *Körperkultur* 5(1910)5, p. 147.

<sup>105</sup> *Sport im Bild* 16(1910)32, p. 924-925.

<sup>106</sup> "Olympische Spiele zu Athen 1914", in: *Sport im Bild* 17(1911)31, p. 912.

<sup>107</sup> "Olympische Spiele in Athen 1914", in: *Körperkultur* 6(1911)10, p. 285.

<sup>108</sup> "Die Olympischen Spiele in Athen 1914", in: *Deutsche Turn-Zeitung* 57(1912)46, p. 868. Also compare 58(1913)6, p. 98.

<sup>109</sup> "Die Olympischen Spiele zu Athen 1914", in: *Der Turner* 27(1912/13)21, p. 417-418.

<sup>110</sup> "Olympische Spiele in Athen 1914", in: *Fußball und Olympischer Sport* (17.09.1913)75, p. 4.

<sup>111</sup> After the assassination of GEORGE I. in Saloniki CONSTANTINE I. succeeded him.

<sup>112</sup> "Eine Olympiade in Athen", in: *Deutsche Turn-Zeitung* 587(1913)40, p. 772.

<sup>113</sup> "Die Unklarheit über die Athener Olympiade 1914", in: *Fußball und Olympischer Sport* (10.11.1913)90, p. 3.

<sup>114</sup> "Olympische Spiele Athen 1914", in: *Deutsche Fechter-Zeitung* 2(1914)1, p. 21.

The *Deutsche Fechter-Zeitung* reports in January 1914 on the postponement of the Games:

*"In Athens one got the impression that the foreign participation would be missing in general since the nations are too occupied with the preparations for the Berlin Olympics 1916 and therefore it was decided to postpone the Games in Athens to 1918."*

After the First World War there apparently were not any attempts of reviving the idea of Olympic Games. At any rate no information is known to exist on this. The Games introduced by COUBERTIN became more and more important. An additional series would also have not stood a chance any more. But COUBERTIN took up his proposal of Panhellenic Games again with his article "The *new Panathenaic Games*"<sup>115</sup> which he had written in December 1927 for the IOC bulletin encouraged by the mayor of Athens who had received him on July 4<sup>th</sup> in the town hall. After pointing out that he had already presented this idea 1896 when the Greeks had claimed the right of permanently hosting after the success of the first Olympic Games, he developed a program with sport – but only with ancient disciplines e.g. running, jumping, throwing and wrestling – as well as artistic competitions. The celebrations were supposed to take place for the first time in 1930 and then every four years in the stadium of Athens respectively in the theatre of Herodes ATTICUS. But it only remained a plan even if its organisation had been considered twice for 1934 and 1938.

But with the Balkan Games a different project was realised. Since the Olympic Games of 1924 in Paris, and of 1928 in Amsterdam where the athletes of southwest Europe had been pretty unsuccessful, these Games had been developed by the sport associations in southwest Europe in order to better prepare their athletes for the Olympic Games. After they had for the first time taken place in September 1929, in the stadium of Athens, as some sort of curtain-raiser for the 1<sup>st</sup> *Balkans Sport Conference*, which then also formally decided on their establishment, the IOC declared a patronage of these Games. Until the Second World War, they only included athletics competitions for men. Although changing of the hosting cities had been agreed upon, the I. to IV Games (1930-1933) were held in Athens, and while the IOC could enforce a ban on the term "Balkaniad" or "Balkan-Olympics" the Balkan Games were always organised in the same years of the Olympic Games.<sup>116</sup>

## The "Hellas Plan"<sup>117</sup>

Seventy years after the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Olympic Games 1906 in Athens the idea of permanent Games in Athens underwent a relatively short but strong renaissance. In connection with problems which can be regarded as aftereffects of the Cold War, which put a continuous strain on the Olympic movement and appeared to make an undisturbed organising of the Games more and more difficult. Because of decreasing interest in the event, the Greek president Constantine KARAMANLIS again raised the topic of Athens after the Games of 1976 had been devaluated for the first time by a major, politically motivated boycott.

In a letter dated July 31, 1976, to IOC president Lord Michael Morris KILLANIN he presented the "Revival of the Olympic Games at their original location", and referring to ancient times held out the prospect of saving the Olympic idea, which could in this way be given "new weight as well as a new value".<sup>118</sup>

But only after repeating his offer on January 7, respectively February 2, 1980<sup>119</sup> any response was provoked. In regard to the events of the approaching Games in Moscow, which were coming to a head – a boycott call made by the American president Jimmy CARTER on the grounds of the Sowjet invasion of Afghanistan – the so-called "Hellas plan" became an intensely and heatedly discussed topic in the public arena, in Olympic circles and in political organisations.<sup>120</sup>

Special weight was given to the votes of the European council and the European parliament which each passed corresponding resolutions.<sup>121</sup> To begin with the IOC took a waiting, then a sceptic, and eventually a disapproving stance. Based on a well-founded opinion - forming a commission and questioning members - the IOC passed within the framework of the 84<sup>th</sup> IOC Session a „Resolution concerning the Greek proposal”.<sup>122</sup> In this the IOC did certify the Greek proposal as „loyal“ and of an „extreme importance“ but also states that Los Angeles and Seoul had already been nominated as the next Olympic cities and for 1992 there were also already various candidates in waiting. Thus at the moment there was no need of the well meant offer.

With all sympathy for the Greeks, for their commitment, and for the continuously disappointing endeavours, the aim of giving the Olympic Games a permanent home must be critically analysed from a distance. Here a position developed

<sup>115</sup> COUBERTIN, Pierre de, "Les nouvelles Panathénées", in: *Bulletin Officiel du C.I.O.* 2(1927)5, p. 5-6.

<sup>116</sup> Compare LENNARTZ, Karl, "Der olympische Kindergarten. Zur Frühgeschichte der Regionalspiele", in: *Stadion* 25(1999), p. 139-152.

<sup>117</sup> Closely following HÖFER, Andreas, "Hellas-Plan", in: LENNARTZ, *Erläuterungen*, p. 64-68.

<sup>118</sup> The Olympic writing can be found in a translation by MALAMAS, Dimitrios, *Die Idee der ständigen Austragung der Olympischen Spiele in Griechenland aus griechischer Sicht*, Diploma thesis, Köln 1981, p. 31-33, printed.

<sup>119</sup> Compare MALAMAS, *Idee*, p. 59-61.

<sup>120</sup> The history of the so-called „Hellas plan" is well described by FRICKE, Klaus, *Die Idee der ständigen Austragung der Olympischen Spiele in Griechenland*. Diploma thesis, Köln 1982, and MALAMAS, *Idee*.

<sup>121</sup> A selection of corresponding documents can be found in FRICKE, *Idee*, p. 115-137.

<sup>122</sup> The text is printed in: *Olympic Review* 12(1981)169, p. 641.

by Manfred LÄMMER should be followed that a realisation of the Hellas plan would have meant more a flight from the problems rather than solving them.<sup>123</sup> Furthermore the rotation of the Games today is not a randomly selected and arbitrarily changeable aspect. with more speaking for it's upholding, than for a romantic traditionalism. It is a guiding principle in relation to a world-surrounding peace-promoting character.

## The Second International Olympic Games in Athens Become "Intermediate Games"

Another problem should be focussed on in this context, which the IOC had to deal with in Athens and that was the location of the Games in 1908. Since the Olympic Congress of Brussels in 1905 it became more and more apparent that no preparations were being made in Rome for the Games 1908. In the *Revue Olympique* COUBERTIN remarks explicitly that Lord DESBOROUGH – not yet an IOC member – had taken part in the IOC Session in Athens in 1906, as the president of the *British Olympic Association*.<sup>124</sup> However, COUBERTIN did not give the reason for DESBOROUGH'S presence. In *Twenty-one Years of Sport Campaign* he expressed himself more clearly. The IOC „transferred the 4<sup>th</sup> Olympics to London.“<sup>125</sup> The *British Olympic Committee* was prepared to host the Games.<sup>126</sup> But those responsible in London were still very careful and first of all wished to reconsider the feasibility of the plan in England before announcing it publicly. The agreement reached by the IOC and the BOA was initially kept secret.. That is why it was not published in the *Revue Olympique*<sup>127</sup> nor was any „newspaper officially informed“<sup>128</sup>. COUBERTIN complied with this procedure. His “roman disgrace” was not discussed in public and his fondness of English sport was enhanced by the location of London: „Quietly the curtain fell on the settings of the Tiber and lifted again over those of the Thames.“<sup>129</sup>

On his way back from Athens to London DESBOROUGH stopped of in Paris to talk with COUBERTIN but he did not meet him. He wrote a letter to him from the Grand Hotel on May 14 telling Coubertin that after his return to London his committee would deal with the question of organising the Games in London in 1908. He wrote that he had already spoken to his king in Athens who had promised his support, Lord DESBOROUGH expressed his anxiety of being able to organise the Games as good as the Greeks had done 1906 in Athens. These had been marvellous.<sup>130</sup>

The IOC members stuck to the agreement of secrecy. In the reports on Athens in the press of the following months nothing was to be found on the location of the Olympic Games in 1908. On November 24, 1906 the British committee informed the public in a detailed press release that London would host the Games.<sup>131</sup> Lord DESBOROUGH informed the IOC president in various letters on the details of the planning. In a letter from December 30 he mentioned that at a reception of the court, the queen – Queen ALEXANDRA was a sister of the Greek king – had expressed herself critically that the Games did not remain in Greece forever.<sup>132</sup>

On November 26, 1906 the commencement of the preparations to the *Franco British Exhibition* in 1908 were ceremoniously opened. Lord DESBOROUGH held a speech that was already printed by COUBERTIN in the December edition of the *Revue Olympique*.<sup>133</sup> DESBOROUGH praised the ideas and merits COUBERTIN and listed the Olympic Games organised until then: Athens, Paris, St. Louis. Athens 1906 was missing! The events taking place in London were to be the 4<sup>th</sup> Olympic Games. The Games in Athens started to become no more than an episode, and became Intermediate Games.<sup>134</sup> The *British NOC* had not been represented in Athens by one IOC member; so it was not part of the “rebellion” against COUBERTIN. London was prepared to organise the Games in 1908. COUBERTIN needed a host for 1908 if he wanted to save his model of hosting the Games at different locations and if he wanted to remain as the president of the IOC. He came to an agreement and an arrangement.<sup>135</sup>

The author found the German term “*Zwischenspiele*” mentioned for the first time a few years later in the table of

<sup>123</sup> Compare LÄMMER, Manfred, „Die Zukunft der Olympischen Spiele liegt nicht in ihrer Vergangenheit“, in: NOK für Deutschland (Hg.), *II. Olympischer Kongress. Baden-Baden 1981. Bulletin* (Baden-Baden 1981)6, p. 12-17, 42-48.

<sup>124</sup> *Revue Olympique* 6(1906)5, p. 80.

<sup>125</sup> COUBERTIN, *Campagne*, p. 179.

<sup>126</sup> King EDUARD VII. possibly also played a part. He was honorary guest at the Olympic Games in Athens together with his wife ALEXANDRA and a definitely knew of the problems in Rome and had contact with Lord DESBOROUGH respectively he could speak with him on a carrying out in London.

<sup>127</sup> COUBERTIN, *Mémoires*, p. 53.

<sup>128</sup> COUBERTIN, *Mémoires*, p. 53. His *Campagne de vingt-et-un ans* was not published until after 1908. There Baron de COUBERTIN could report on this decision.

<sup>129</sup> COUBERTIN, *Mémoires*, p. 53.

<sup>134</sup> This was already prepared by a small article by Theodore A. COOK, in the IOC from 1909 until 1915, journalist and writer (sport history). COOK was captain of the British team in Athens. He now criticised the lanes of the stadium in Athens, they did not meet up to international standards anymore. The sun was blinding in the marble stadium. The English could offer a modern stadium for over 100.000 spectators. This is followed by a praise of COUBERTIN and French sport. COUBERTIN printed this article - of course (!) - in the *Revue Olympique* (6[1906]11, p. 175-176).

<sup>135</sup> He had already accepted Lord DESBOROUGH into the IOC in July 1906 (*Revue Olympique* 6[1906]7, p. 111), instead of Charles HERBERT who had retired for health reasons.

contents from a book by Carl DIEM on the Games of 1917 in Stockholm.<sup>136</sup>

Many times it has been claimed later, that the Olympic Games 1906 had been organised as the 10-year-celebration of the event in 1896<sup>137</sup> and also as the salvation of the Olympic movement in relation to the problems of the events of 1900 in Paris and 1901 in St. Louis.<sup>138</sup>

## Will the "Intermediate Games" Become Olympic Games again?

It has taken a long time to critically examine the history, the preparation and the organisation of the *Second International Games in Athens 1906*, using the most reliable sources. While MEZŐ gave in to the rejection by the *Brundage Commission* and the IOC and decided to "overlook" the Olympic Games of 1906 in his book *"Sechzig Jahre Olympische Spiele"*<sup>139</sup>, the well-known Olympic historian Erich KAMPER was the first one not bothering about the known views of the IOC. In his statistical works: *"Enzyklopädie der Olympischen Spiele"*<sup>140</sup> and the *"Lexikon der 14.000 Olympioniken"*<sup>141</sup>, he prints the full results of the Olympic Games 1906 in Athens; respectively lists all medal winners and their personal data.

The first critical study was published in 1985 by the author in his book: *"Die Beteiligung Deutschlands an den Olympischen Spielen 1906 in Athen und 1908 in London"*<sup>142</sup>. Numerous works followed on this topic.<sup>143</sup> It was not criticised negatively or rejected anywhere. In most popular scientific or journalistic writings - mainly works which were published as preparation for the next coming Games or in the field of the 100-year jubilee of the Olympic movement (1994), respectively the Olympic Games (1996) and often under commercial contracts, the results mentioned above were not repeated, since

"copying" from older Olympic histories was the normal rule. Three very important publications adopted the results respectively reached the same conclusions by critical study of the sources. These were the *"Golden Book of the Olympic Games"* by Erich KAMPER and Bill MALLON<sup>144</sup>, the *"Chronik"* by Volker KLUGE<sup>145</sup> and the *"1906 Olympic Games"* by MALLON<sup>146</sup>. It is also clear to many authors, who indulge in the study of the history of the participation of one nation in the Games that these, or any other teams, took part in the Olympic Games in Athens in 1906.<sup>147</sup>

## Abstract

After the so successful progression of the Olympic Games in 1896 in Athens the Greek government and the American team proposed to permanently hold the Olympic Games in Athens. COUBERTIN rejected these plans. Various IOC members proposed a compromise: Alternately holding the Games in Athens and in the capital cities of the world. The German IOC members formulated a motion from this, which the IOC agreed to at the session in 1901. COUBERTIN wasn't agreeable to this. After the final completion of the stadium in Athens a new organising committee was formed which sent out invitations to the *"Second International Olympic Games in 1906"*. The International Games took place for all athletes, officials, journalists, spectators and for COUBERTIN in the spring of 1906 in Athens. Coubertin announced this event several times in the *Revue Olympique* and also called them *"brilliantly executed"* Games. For the first time there was a march past of the nations, for the first time only the NOCs sent the athletes and at the presentation ceremony gold, silver and bronze medals were awarded. The scheduled third and fourth Olympic Games in 1910 and in 1911 in Athens were prepared for, but could not

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<sup>136</sup> DIEM, Carl, *Die Olympischen Spiele 1912*, Berlin 1912, p. 4.

<sup>137</sup> E. g. KAISER, Rupert, *Olympia Almanach*, Kassel 1996, p. 57

<sup>138</sup> E. g. ZENTNER, Christian, *Das große Buch der Olympischen Spiele*, Munich 1995, p. 13.

<sup>139</sup> MEZŐ, Ferenc, *Sechzig Jahre Olympische Spiele*, Berlin/Budapest 1956, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1959.

<sup>140</sup> KAMPER, Erich, *Enzyklopädie der Olympischen Spiele. Daten, Fakten, Namen*, Stuttgart 1972.

<sup>141</sup> KAMPER, Erich, *Lexikon der 14.000 Olympioniken, Who's who at the Olympics*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Graz 1983 (1<sup>st</sup> edition 1975).

<sup>142</sup> LENNARTZ, Karl, *Die Geschichte des Deutschen Reichsausschusses für Olympische Spiele*, Heft 3, *Die Beteiligung Deutschlands an den Olympischen Spielen 1906 in Athen und 1908 in London*, Bonn 1985.

<sup>143</sup> LENNARTZ, Karl/TEUTENBERG, Walter, *Die Olympischen Spiele 1906 in Athen*, Kassel 1992. LENNARTZ, Karl, „Athens 1906. The Intercalated Games“, in: FINDLING, John E./PELLE, Kimberly D., *Historical Dictionary of the Modern Olympic Movement*, Westport (Connecticut)/London 1996, p. 26-34. Although the contents appeared slightly different the publisher chose without knowing the term *"Intercalated"*. LENNARTZ, Karl, „Die Olympischen Spiele 1906 in Athen“, in: DECKER, Wolfgang/DOLIANITIS, Georgios/LENNARTZ, Karl (ed.), *100 Jahre Olympische Spiele. Der neugriechische Ursprung*, Würzburg 1996, p. 118-125. Latest LENNARTZ, Karl, in cooperation with Ian Buchanan, Volker Kluge, Bill Mallon and Walter Teutenberg, *Olympische Spiele 1908 in London*, Kassel 1998.

<sup>144</sup> KAMPER, Erich/MALLON, Bill, *The Golden Book of the Olympic Games*, Mayland 1992.

<sup>145</sup> KLUGE, Volker, *Olympische Sommerspiele. Die Chronik I. Athen 1896 - Berlin 1936*, Berlin 1997.

<sup>146</sup> MALLON, Bill, *The 1906 Olympic Games. Results for all Competitors in All Events with Commentary*, Jefferson and London 1999. MALLON had already published the athletics results in 1984 (*The Olympic Games 1896, 1900, 1904 and 1906. Part I: Track and Field Athletic*, Durham 1984).

<sup>147</sup> To be mentioned representatively: BUCHANAN, Ian, *British Olympians*, Bath 1991. BIJKERK, Ton/PAAUW, Ruud, *Gouden Boek van de Nederlandsche Olympiers*, Haarlem 1996.

be carried out due to political problems in the Balkans. Soon the Olympic Games 1906 in Athens were dismissed as an episode and degraded with the title of Interim or Intermediate Games. But for the true Olympic historian these were equal Olympic Games, like all the original ones from 1896 to 2000.

## Motion

At the IOC Session in 1948 the IOC member MEZÖ proposed to include the event of 1906 in Athens as "*IIIb Olympic Games*" in the list of the Olympic Games. The motion was rejected in 1949 without any historical analysis. The Executive Committee of the *International Society of Olympic Historians* founded in 1991 decided in 1999 and again in 2001 to recommend, like Ferenc MEZÖ did in 1948 to include the *Second International Olympic Games 1906 in Athens* in their list of Olympic Games and to assess the event as what it had been: real Olympic Games.

Should this not happen it does not change anything about the fact that these real Olympic Games did take place.



## NEW ISOH WORKING GROUP „ANCIENT OLYMPIC GAMES“

By Manfred Lämmer

There can be no doubt that the Olympic Games are the most intensively researched area in the history of sport. Thousands of books and special studies fill the libraries around the world. However, a closer look clearly shows that authors who come from the fields of sport and sports science largely examine the origin and development of the modern Olympic Games, while the contests held in ancient Olympia are almost exclusively the domain of ancient historians, classical philologists and archaeologists. There are but few exceptions.

The main reason for this situation is to be found in the fact that only few representatives of the modern history of sport or Olympic Historians have the necessary language skills and specialist knowledge with which to examine and evaluate original sources. On the other hand, the representatives of ancient history who, over the years, have compiled an admirable wealth of results, research findings and knowledge are, in most cases, only insufficiently acquainted with the technical aspects, the structures and the philosophy of modern sport. Pierre de Coubertin once emphatically stated: Celebrating the Olympic Games means referring to history. And there can indeed be no doubt about the fact that the essential foundations of the modern Olympic Games go back to their model in antiquity. Greater consideration for the ancient Olympic Games within the scope of our research work would therefore result in a decisive improvement in our understanding of what the motives of the founder of Olympism were and the goals of the Olympic Movement are.

Based on this conviction, the ISOH Executive Committee decided at its session held in Lausanne on 3 May 2001 to establish a working group called "Ancient Olympic Games", which will encourage research in this field and carry out projects.

The timing for such an initiative seems to be particularly favourable since the coming Olympic Games in Athens will increasingly focus the attention of the international public on this topic.

The working group will convene for its first meeting in Spring 2002 to exchange information and ideas and to discuss possible activities. ISOH members interested in taking part are kindly requested to contact: Dr. Karl Lennartz, ISOH Vice President, Sperlingsweg 16, D-53757 Sankt Augustin, Germany, Tel.: ++49-2241-333487, Fax: ++49-2241-342749, E-Mail: [lennartz@culda.de](mailto:lennartz@culda.de)