

# The National Olympic Committees

(continuation IV)

(see our editions Nr. 59 — 60 — 61)

## LEBANON — 1947

(Olympic Committee for Lebanon)

In Lebanon, the renascent activity in the field of sport began in 1920. From that date, we find that clubs of football, athletic sports, swimming, wrestling, skiing, boxing, weightlifting, etc. came to light in succession. These sports were practised for a while without the supervision of responsible authorities, and the federations came into being only in 1933. Although we did not possess an Olympic Committee at that time, a delegation presided by M. Pierre Gemayel was present at the Olympic Games which took place in Berlin in 1936.

It was only eleven years later, in 1947, that acting on the advice and directives laid down by M. Bolanaki, our first National Olympic Committee was founded.

This Committee dates therefore from 1947, It sent a contingent of athletes who participated in the London and Helsinki Olympic Games as well as Melbourne, also in the Mediterranean Games held in Alexandria and Barcelona.

The Olympic Committee for Lebanon is busily engaged preparing the 3rd Mediterranean Games which are to take place in Beirut in 1959.

## HONG KONG — 1950

(Olympic Committee of Hong-Kong)

It was only in 1950 that the Amateur Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong was formed. However, the history of amateur sport in Hong Kong goes back to the early years of its settlement by the British in 1841. In fact, the first sports club in Hong Kong - Victoria Recreation Club - was founded in 1849, but is believed to have existed even earlier because it is known that, before then, games were played and competitions held here.

Throughout the rest of the 19th century, many sports were sponsored and separate organizations set up to advance their interests. Intersport competitions were organized with other cities in this part of the world and several such friendly contests still take place annually between Hong Kong and

cities in countries nearby. In 1934 Hong Kong participated in the British Empire Games in London.

The need to bring all sports organizations together to promote their common interests prompted the formation of the Amateur Sports Federation soon after the Liberation. The Federation has grown from strength to strength; its membership is now made up of fifteen controlling bodies of various branches of amateur sport together with the three leading sports institutions.

In this short period of time, Hong Kong has participated in the Olympic Games in Helsinki in 1952 and again in Melbourne in 1956. Besides, it competed in the Asian Games held in Manila in 1954 and the British Empire Games which took place in Vancouver in the same year. Preparations are now underway to send a team to the Asian Games in Tokyo and the British Empire Games in Cardiff in 1958.

In this thriving and fascinating multi-racial community of nearly 3 million people, the Committee has an additional interesting role to play: it serves a most useful purpose in bringing all sections of the population together and in fostering better understanding through the medium of amateur sport in a way which is perhaps far more significant and important than is realized and experienced elsewhere.

## GREECE — 1903

(Greek Olympic Committee)

1. On June 13th, 1895 a special Committee was founded with 14 members under the Presidency of H.R.H. The Crown Prince for the organization of the 1st. Olympic Games in 1896 in Athens.
2. In 1903 the first National Olympic Committee was founded under the Presidency of H.R.H. Highness the Crown Prince Constantin and nine members.
3. In 1948 the Greek Olympic Committee has been renovated under the Presidency of H.M. the King and composed of fifteen members, all of them belonging to the National Federations of Greece.

4. Actually the Greek Olympic Committee is formed with ten members belonging to the Federations under the Presidency of H.R.H. the Crown Prince and under the Royal Patronage of H.M. the King.

## BULGARIA — 1923

### Bulgarian Olympic Committee

Bulgaria happens to be one of the 13 nations which was represented in the Olympic Games of Athens in 1896.

Just like Australia, Switzerland and Chili, Bulgaria was represented by one athlete only.

The Bulgarian Olympic Committee was founded in 1923. Under its supervision, Bulgaria has been represented at the Games of the VIIIth, IXth, and XIth Olympiads as well as at the Winter Olympic Games of 1936.

The Bulgarian participation at these Games was restricted. The weak performances obtained were a proof of the very low standard of the physical culture and the inadequate development of sport which prevailed in the country at that time.

The Bulgarian Olympic Committee of that time left no lasting trace of its activity, neither in connection with making sport popular on a large scale, nor in fostering the cult of the Olympic principles in the various sport organizations of the country. It is also most unfortunate that the records and the archives of this particular Committee happened to be destroyed in the war. On a par with the drastic reorganization of the sport Movement which took place in the country after the war in 1944, the Bulgarian Olympic Committee renewed its activity under the presidency of General-Colonel Stoitcheff (Member of the International Olympic Committee, Ed.).

The Democratic Bulgarian Republic did not consider itself sufficiently ready yet to send a contingent to the Games of the XIVth Olympiads which took place in London, but it sent a skiing team to the Winter Games of St. Moritz in 1948.

Our country was strongly represented by a contingent of athletes who competed in the Games of the XVth Olympiads at Helsinki in 1952. The boxing Champion Boris Guéorgiev was placed 3rd in his weight category, our basket team as well as our women gymnastics team were placed seventh. The results although still modest, gave evidence of the considerable development which has been taking place in the field of sport in the country.

The Bulgarian Democratic Republic devoted all its energy and spared no efforts in raising a contingent of 60 athletes which it sent to Melbourne in order to compete in the Games of the XVIth Olympiads in 1956. These athletes competed in the events of basketball, wrestling, weightlifting, boxing, gymnastics and football. It was there that our athletes obtained their first great success. They returned to their native land with a gold medal and three silver medals won in wrestling events as well as a bronze medal for football events. The basketball team was placed 5th and we must not forget to mention the very fine performance of Commandant Guénko Rachkov in the Summer Games of 1956, when he was placed 5th in the individual events of the complete contest in the Equestrian Games of 1956 which took place in Stockholm.

The Bulgarian Olympic Committee of the Democratic Republic sent its representatives to compete in the skiing events held in the Winter Olympics at St. Moritz in 1948 ; in Oslo 1952 ; and in Cortina d'Ampezzo in 1956.

The following statistics fully reflect the degree of development of the practice of sports in our country when drawing a comparison of the latter before and after the war.

Up to 1944, Bulgaria had 70,000 registered sportsmen ; whereas today their number has grown to one million.

The Bulgarian Olympic Committee is composed of representatives of all sports which figure in the Olympic Programme. It leads an active life, which is perfectly adapted to the principles of the Olympic Charter. Its main objects are to instil the Olympic spirit within the sport organizations of the country, to endeavour to make sports popular and to cooperate as much as possible to strengthen the bond of friendship among the sportsmen throughout the world. The Bulgarian Olympic Committee publishes since 1953 a Bulletin of information which will, from now on, be published in French and English as well. The Bulgarian Olympic Committee organized in 1957 the 53rd Session of the International Olympic Committee (with great success, *Ed.*). The following members of the International Olympic Committee for Bulgaria have been from 1906 to 1912 E.N. Tzokov ; S. Tchaprachikov from 1929 to 1944. The present member of the International Olympic Committee for the Bulgarian Democratic Republic since 1952 is Gen-Col. Vladimir Stoitcheff who has been nominated member of the Executive Board of the International Olympic Committee in 1956.