

THE INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC ACADEMY  
Olympic Conception and Research Centre

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"The Greek Olympic Committee thought of organizing an intellectual centre with the object of completing the institution of the Olympic Games in its teaching mission. Young people from Universities in all countries will come to be initiated in the Olympic principles under the direction of persons well known for their competence.

These young people, convinced of the accuracy of these principles, by their master's teaching, or by the influence of the climate in which the principles of harmony and ability were given birth and flourished, will become the apostles of these ideas in their countries

Later they will constitute cadres directing sport and will sponsor the continuation of the healthy Olympic conception."

Those were the words used by Mr. Jean KETSEAS in the explanatory memorandum presented in 1949 on the project of the founding of an Olympic Academy in Greece.

It is for this reason that every summer since 1961, hundreds of students from all over the world stay at Olympia. There they participate in the work of the International Olympic Academy (I.O.A.) for some weeks, following the tracks of the champions of Antiquity.

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Olympia, Fief of the Academy

The Institute has the benefit of 25 hectares of ground, situated to the east of the Kronion hill, on which the Temple of Cronos, the oldest Greek Antiquity was erected. It dominates the ancient Stadium. "Mecca of the Olympic Movement" and the sacred enclosures, the Altis. The Academy stretches over four valleys, over-looking the Alpheus Plain. In the serene and peaceful meadows and groves the students find the classic spirit still alive. They are all endowed with one goal; to be filled with the Olympic Spirit.

For their initiation, lectures, eminent personalities and professors, given them their knowledge, experiences and wisdom.

This is the first vocation of the International Olympic Academy.

But how did this Academy start?

How does it function?

#### The Foundation of the International Olympic Academy

The idea originated in Greece in 1927. Pierre de COUBERTIN had come to attend the inauguration of the Stele, erected at Olympia to commemorate the re-establishment of the Games.

Two members of the International Olympic Committee, the German Professor, the late Carl DIEM, and the representative of Greece, the late Mr. Jean KETREAS, defended the project with enthusiasm. In 1947 collaboration resulted in the presentation of a plan for the foundation. Two years later the envisaged action was unanimously accepted at the 43rd Session of the International Olympic Committee; which became patron of the Academy, the direction was entrusted to Greece? the Greek Olympic Committee insured the guardianship of the new organization.

Some years of effort were necessary for the Greek Olympic Committee to establish the basic materials for the functioning of the Institution. It was not until 1961 that they could even organize the first session. The "Carl DIEM" foundation of the Deutsche Olympische Gesellschaft insured the expenses of the organization of a trial session at the Academy.

#### What has to be known about the organization of the Academy?

The International Olympic Academy functions under the direction of the International Olympic Committee, it is administrated by the Greek Olympic Committee.

A Committee (Ephoria) gives an account of every subject concerning the organization, and functioning. It is composed of:

- Members of the International Olympic Committee
- two members of the Greek Olympic Committee.
- one amateur or one Greek athlete personality chosen by

the Greek Olympic Committee.

- the Chairman of the Ephoria - He could be a foreigner, he is elected by the International Olympic Academy and his nomination is proposed to the I.O.C. for ratification. He becomes an ex-officio member of the I.O.C.

The Honorary members of the International Olympic Academy may participate, honoris causa, at the Committee Meetings following a decision by the Greek Olympic Committee.

The decisions of the Academy Committees are taken according to the majority of the members present, the quorum of attendance being fixed at three.

The rules and statutes, altered in 1967, defines the objectives of the International Olympic Academy in these terms:

"To create a cultural international centre in ancient Olympia where the idea of athletic games was conceived and realised for the first time. It must keep alive and also maintain the Olympic spirit, study the educative and social principles of competitive sports and their organization, revive the modern Olympic Movement in the spirit of the ancient Greeks as well as that of Baron de COUBERTIN."

To encourage the scope of the International Olympic Academy and its connections with the International Olympic Committee, Mr. Ivar VIND, member of the International Olympic Committee for Denmark, has been named as President of a Commission to work with Prince GEORGE OF HANOVER. In an account given of the nomination on April 12 1967. President Avery BRUNDAGE stated:

"We hope to raise the level of the International Olympic Academy even more and to augment its importance to such a degree that to gain a diploma becomes much sought after and a great honour".

#### From the 1st to the 8th Session

Without waiting for its final installations to be completed, thanks to a provisional camping site, the Academy welcomed its first students, and lecturers on June 14 1961. They came from 25 countries.

From the second session everybody could note and rejoice in an evolution in the development of the courses. The

students, often of high university level, could take part in enriching discussions. Some seminars, debates and study groups followed the conferences.

Twenty-eight National Olympic Committees accepted the invitation for the 1967 Session. There were 121 participants including 43 women, and 13 lecturers came from eight countries. During this seventh session the participants could be housed in buildings and not tents (when the building is entirely finished, five or six hundred can be welcomed) The kitchen, a restaurant and a bar, a temporary library and an infirmary were completed. In addition, some sports installations, two grounds for volley-ball, two for basket-ball, a swimming pool as well as an open air Cinema, allowed the participants to confirm and increase contacts made during work. Thus as well as programmes of a purely intellectual order, physical and recreational facilities maintained the participants physical condition and amusements.

For example in 1967; Some Archaeological excursions were organized thanks to the co-operation of the Greek, German and United States Archeological Institutions; the students themselves organized their sports facilities (volley-ball and swimming were their favourites) the swimming pool was used practically day and night.

Some visits to the historical places of ancient Greece are traditionally included in the programme.

Those Entitled to Preference: The participants at the Sessions

The Students : The National Olympic Committees from various countries designate their own representatives. In a 1966 circular to the National Olympic Committees' Prince GEORGE OF HANOVER, President of the International Olympic Academy has written:

"Given that the Academy does not only teach but also applies itself to influencing the personality of the young people, and through them sports and competitions, we ask you to delegate some students to the Sessions. These students need not only be good athletes and excellent pupils but should also have qualities in character that would make them an example to the others."

The Lecturers: University Professors, coaches, Olympic champions..... are invited either by the Greek Olympic Committee after consultation with the International Olympic Committee, and with the consent of the International Olympic Academy or on the proposal of the National Olympic Committees.

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Up to now the Academy only sits during the short part of the summer, a works extension plan is being studied. Several sessions could be held, some should be reserved to coaches, doctors, artists, members of the National Olympic Committees and International Federations and journalists. Then the International Olympic Academy would sooner or later become a true centre of education in the Olympic Movement.

All those who intend to serve the Olympic ideals as they have been transmitted to us by ancient Hellas, who fight to preserve the purity of spirit in the modern Games and who search for a harmonious perfection in the body and the spirit, must reveal their experiences and researches to the bosom of the Academy. By doing this they will stir up the fire which burns the young students to the bottom of their hearts and spirits and who will become in their turn the best Olympic ambassadors.

The results of the works of the Academy published in a yearly report, represent an appreciable aid for those who must assume the vocation of the International Olympic Committee.

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