

IOA : Polish Experiences

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One of us was in Olympia in 1975, and the other in 1976. We were able to come into very close contact with the Olympic idea and exchange thoughts with people from all over the world, and we had the chance to put the theory into practice. Our stays also marked a starting point for writing new books on Olympic topics. This was possible because we were able to add to our knowledge during the lectures and debates organised at the IOA as well as by consulting the documentation collected in the Academy's library and in the archives of the Museum of the Modern Olympic Games. This work inspired Tadeusz Olszarjski's *"Higher over the Bar"* and Jan Lis' *"The Olympic Laurels"*, and the book they produced together called *"The Time of the Games"*. Among the collections in the Academy's library we found material unknown in Poland, and above all were inspired to many things. One was the Olympic Club founded in 1975 in conjunction with the Polish Olympic Committee and led by ourselves. It was here that meetings with participants in the Games and debates on topics of interest to the modern-day Olympic movement were held. At least ten meetings of this kind are organised each year with the participation not only of sports-men, but also of leading intellectuals, writers, producers, actors and musicians. It should be noted that within a few months of the 1976 Olympic Games there was a meeting of writers who were members of the PEN Club, headed by Jan Parandowski, at which the idea of a return to the ancient tradition of the Olympic art competitions was mooted. This idea is particularly widespread in Poland, and the club supports it.

In 1977 we proposed the establishment of an Olympic publishing house under the auspices of the "KAW" national printing agency in Warsaw. We have been working here for three years, with the issue of 25 items on Olympic and sports topics as a result.

What suggestions can we make to the International Olympic Academy on the occasion of its jubilee ?

1. Participants at the IOA, like the members of the relay carrying the Olympic flame, but this time bearing the torch of science, should act in their own countries, setting up branches or clubs where they could meet at least once a year and pass on their knowledge gained at the IOA. The

activity of the Olympic Club in Poland could serve as a model.

2. It would be a good idea to reflect on the development of the IOA. It has its dean, its base. There could be, as in universities, chairs for its three main sectors of knowledge, viz. the Olympic idea, the history of the Games, and the problems of contemporary sport. Each of these chairs would bring together extremely knowledgeable people from throughout the world, who would form its council, which would in turn prepare seminars to take place during the Games. Evidently, these bodies could meet from time to time, but the main link would take the form of correspondence.
3. The IOA should become the managing body of the ideological offensive of the Olympic movement. At the same time this would offer an opportunity of defending the humanitarian values of sport.
4. It would be a good idea for the IOA to be responsible for the revival of the Olympic art competitions. In a new form, obviously. For instance, a news or reporting competition after each Olympiad could act as a mirror for ideas. The result of this competition could be used as the basis of a book bringing together the most interesting pieces of work.
5. The literary or news documents and records referring specifically to the history of the ancient Games are spread out in a number of writings by various authors. In order to check a detail, it is sometimes necessary to consult Pausanius, Strabo, Pindar, etc.

Moreover, not every country has available translations of these works. There is much precious material in the Greek collections. We would suggest that, on the initiative of the IOA, an international committee be created which would have as its task the compilation of an anthology of the ancient Olympiads bringing together all the scattered information. This anthology would be edited in the three official languages of the International Olympic Academy, i.e. Greek, French and English.

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