

FROM THE OLYMPIC INSTITUTE TO THE INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY

Surprising as it may seem, the idea of creating permanent ties between Olympism and Lausanne's academic authorities came up before Pierre de Coubertin established the IOC in the capital of Vaud in 1915. However, more than 90 years went by before it was implemented, since it was not until 2000 that the AISTS (International Academy of Sports Science and Techniques) was founded in Lausanne with the support of Juan Antonio Samaranch, the seventh President of the International Olympic Committee.

In 1906, Pierre de Coubertin began looking for a site for his 'Modern Olympia', in other words, a permanent site for the Games, which, at the time, did not have many willing host cities. As well as Morges and Vidy, he was interested in Dorigny, where Lausanne's university was later located. The architects Monod and Laverrière began a project for an 'Olympia on the right shore of Lake Geneva', for which they won the gold medal in the architecture contest at the Games in Stockholm in 1912.

In Lausanne the following year, Coubertin organized the fourth Olympic Congress, whose theme, sports psychology, was scientifically innovative at the time. Coubertin saw this as an opportunity to appeal to the political and university authorities¹. The Congress opened in the presence of the rector in the university hall at the Palais de Rumine. Professor Maurice Millioud, who chaired the sessions, and his colleague Larguier des Bancels were members of the organizing committee².

This paved the way for the installation, two years later, of the IOC headquarters in Lausanne and the transfer of its

by Jean-Loup Chappelet*



archives on 10 April 1915. Once officially accepted by the city, Coubertin founded the IOL (Olympic Institute of Lausanne) and requested premises in which to base it. The City Council granted the use of some rooms at the Montbenon Casino along with other local firms. Nevertheless, Coubertin had high hopes for this institute, as he saw it as a pillar of cooperation between phys-

ical and intellectual education, as well as between art and science. From the moment the IOL was set up, courses on Olympism were planned, but it was not until 1917 that a first series of classes was organized from March to July. Professor César Roux took part, and Coubertin gave numerous lectures. A second series was held at the beginning of 1918 especially for the students at Lausanne University³. A final series was organized from the autumn of 1918 to the spring of 1919, but it met with little success among the public or the authorities.

The IOC resumed its activities after the World War I, and Coubertin no longer had any time to take care of the IOL, which lay dormant. Only after he stood down as IOC President in 1925 was he able to devote his time once again to his educational ideas. He thus founded the UPU (Universal Pedagogic Union) to



Plan of the stadium in a modern Olympia by architects Monod and Laverrière.

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bring together representatives of the academic world from every country, In 1926 he organized its first conference at the Chateau d'Ouchy, Lausanne, which proclaimed the use of public universities to diffuse general culture⁴, and the necessity of public sport for all facilities, He had been unable to gain approval for these ideas at the 1921 Olympic Congress in Lausanne.⁵

However, the UPU was not as successful as had been expected. Coubertin turned back to Lausanne where he founded, in 1928, the BIPS (International Sports Education Board). Unlike the UPU, the BIPS aimed to create a local network of doctors, teachers and military workers interested in sport, but worried about its excesses (already!). Thanks to a City Council grant, the body lasted until 1933, providing Coubertin with a framework and financing his activities, the essentials of which were the publication of a report and monographs under the BIPS name. Although an anthology of its works was published in 1933 by his friends and edited by the Pro-rector of Lausanne University, Arnold Reymond, Coubertin lost hope in arousing interest in his ideas among Lausanne's academic circles He drew increasingly closer to the League of Nations, whose headquarters had just been established in Geneva, and the ILO (International Labour Office)⁶, also in Geneva, whose then director, Albert Thomas, welcomed the idea of the working class university championed by Coubertin since the beginning of the century.

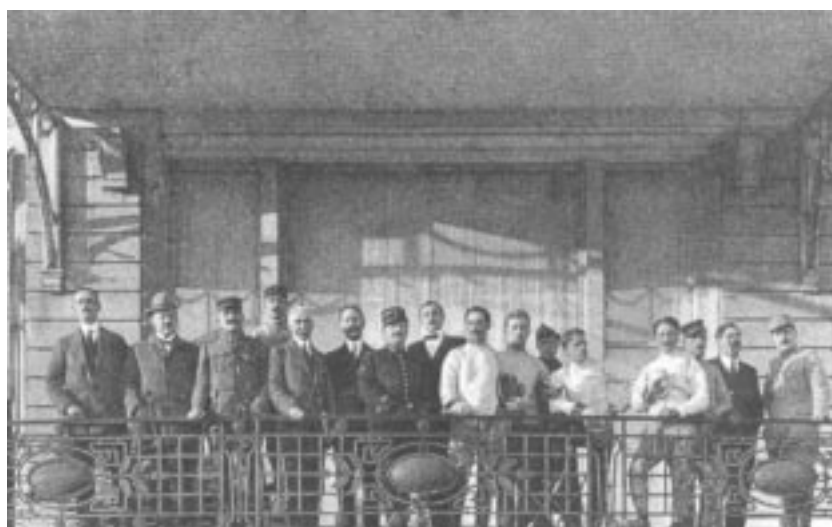
Coubertin also made regular visits to the South of France. His *Universal History* was published in Aix-en-Provence in three volumes for distribution among French teacher training colleges. In February and March 1934, he gave two lectures in Nice on Olympism, within the framework of the Mediterranean University Centre, directed by Paul Valery. He hoped that a chair of Olympism could be set up

there, and that he could be its first occupant⁷.

Shortly before his death in 1937, he wanted to found an International Olympic Institute⁸ in Berlin, which was actually created the following year by Carl Diem. He also asked the executor of his will, Francis Messerli of Lausanne, to establish cooperation between this

new institute and the BIPS. Mr Messerli went one step further, keeping the Board and the IOL in operation until the 1950s by way of numerous publications and conferences.

Coubertin's successors were not interested in these 'puppet' organizations and, until the 1970s the academic world, both in and outside Lausanne,



Coubertin (4th from left) with professors and students from the IOL.



Wrestling lessons.

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studiously ignored the social phenomenon that sport was becoming, with very few exceptions such as Jean Meynaud, professor at the UNIL (University of Lausanne)⁹. Nevertheless, towards the end of Brundage's Presidency, the Prince of Hannover, an IOC member, tried to reactivate the BIPS in Lausanne under the name of the Coubertin Institute for Modern Olympic Education. This proposal failed, mainly because of the existence since 1961 of an International Olympic Academy in Olympia, financed by the Greek Government and supported by the IOC. In 1975, however, a doctor and Olympic medallist from Lausanne, Paul Martin, created the CIPC (International Pierre de Coubertin Committee), which had its headquarters in Lausanne and aimed to perpetuate the topicality of the reviver of the Games. At the same time, a university sports centre was opened in Dorigny, on the exact spot where Coubertin had envisaged his 'Modern Olympia'.

Once elected as IOC President, Juan Antonio Samaranch set about establishing the IOC headquarters in Switzerland definitively. In 1981, the Federal Council granted a special status. In 1982, Samaranch opened an Olympic Museum and Studies Centre, which were temporarily based in Avenue Ruchonnet. In October of the same year, he proposed that the Cantonal Department of Public Education establish a chair of Olympism, which would constitute the first stage of an International Sport and Olympism University¹⁰. An IOC-UNIL working group met several times in 1983, and its primary aim was to initiate a series of lectures, which never took place. (The idea originated from one of the IOC representatives in this group, which was co-chaired by Rector Andre Délessert and Monique Berlioux, and later Raymond Gafner, for the IOC). In 1985, this group was expanded to include EPFL (Lausanne Federal Polytechnic) representatives, under the aegis of the CHEL (Commission of

Lausanne Universities). However, the members of the new group did not wish to address the issue. Another attempt was made in 1986 with the CFMEP (Training Centre for Physical Education Instructors), and then the project was shelved.

In the nineties, the project was reborn at the proposal of certain faculties at the UNIL which wanted to establish chairs of sports medicine, sports law and even sports management, however the IOC was no longer really interested. In 1995, it financed the creation of a chair of Olympism at Barcelona's Autonomous University for Professor Miquel de Moragas, who heads the Sport and Olympism Studies Centre, which was founded in 1989.

The idea of strengthening ties between the IOC and academic circles in what became the Olympic Capital was taken up again in 1995 with the proposal to create an RUOL (Lausanne Olympic University Network). However, a first meeting in November between the UNIL, the EPFL, the IDHEAP (Institute of



A boxing training session at the IOL.

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Further Studies in Public Administration) and IMD (Institute for Management Development), with the participation of President Samaranch, came to nothing. Around the same time, FIFA founded the CIES (International Sports Studies Centre) in 1996, along with Neuchâtel University, and the IOC expanded its Olympic Studies Centre at the Olympic Museum, which had been in Ouchy since 1993. An extensive library and media library are held there, and historical archives are sorted there. A research council awards grants to young historians. Cooperation is developing with similar centres in Barcelona, London (Ontario) and Sydney. Towards the end of 1998, the idea of a World Academy of Sports Administration was developed among university circles¹¹. A working group was set up, bringing together the Universities of Lausanne, Geneva and Neuchâtel, the EPFL and the IDHEAP. Its work resulted in the creation in Lausanne, on 3 March 2000, of an International Academy for Sports

Science and Techniques, in the form of a foundation, in which the IOC, Lausanne City Council, the Canton of Vaud and the Swiss Confederation participate equally as founders. Its headquarters is in the Olympic Capital. Thus an Olympic dream, almost a century old, came true: Olympia on Lake Geneva.

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- ² Müller, Norbert, *Cent ans de Congrès Olympiques 1894-1994 (One Hundred Years of Olympic Congresses, 1894-1994)*, Editions CIO, Lausanne, 1994, p. 95.

³ Gilliéron, op. cit. p. 73.

⁴ Lausanne's public university was founded in 1951.

⁵ Cholley, Patrice, *Pierre de Coubertin, la deuxième croisade* (Pierre de Coubertin, the Second Crusade), Editions Musée Olympique, History and Facts Collection, 1996, p. 93-96.

⁶ Cholley, op. cit., p. 133.

⁷ Cholley, op. cit., p. 197.

⁸ Chappelet, Jean-Loup, *Le Système olympique* (The Olympic System), Presses universitaires de Grenoble, 1991, p. 38.

⁹ Meynaud, Jean, *Sport et politique* (Sport and Politics), Payot, Paris, 1966.

¹⁰ Morath, Pierre, *Lausanne et le Comité International Olympique* (Lausanne and the International Olympic Committee), Cadebita, Yens, 2000, p. 220.

¹¹ Chappelet, Jean-Loup, "The World Academy of Sport Administration", Proceedings of the 33rd GAISF Congress, Osaka, Japan, 15 October 1999.



Site of the EPFL in Lausanne.