

A Brief Commentary on the IOC Secretariat in Transformation

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Introduction

Ancient Greek philosophy has been and remains an important issue of modern Olympism. As with the Greeks and their concept of Arete, modern humankind quests to reach higher and aim further. An application of Arete to modern times has inspired a well known motto:

“Citius - Altius - Fortius”

Today, after more than one hundred years of history, in the year of the Centenary of the modern Olympic Games, the Olympic Movement is one of the most important cultural movements on earth. Its genesis took place in a close interaction with the social problems of its era and it has always endeavoured to encourage the physical and moral education of youth and to promote understanding between peoples. I would like to discuss some of the most important developments this movement has gone through recently.

Issues and Problems

High level sport has evolved so much that in order to be competitive at the highest level, an athlete must train intensively every day. In view of this fact, athletes must be allowed to find means of supporting themselves. The great progress in high performance sport and its immense popularity are the main reasons for the indispensable but controlled emergence of commercialization within sport. This can and must contribute to the development of sport, but the International Olympic Committee must not allow the spirit of commercialism to reign uncontrolled within Olympic sport. Olympic sport must respect the Olympic ideals. Olympism is idealistic, but it must not be naive. Its idealism must be clear-sighted and, consequently, obtain for its athletes and the development of the Olympic Movement a part of the

money that Olympic sport generates in the form of agreements with the economic sector.

The IOC and the Olympic Movement cooperate with governmental and non-governmental organizations involved with sport. The recent cooperation with the United Nations is an excellent example of this.

The International Olympic Committee gives great importance to the association of sport and Olympism with art, medicine and the sciences in general. The Olympic Encyclopaedia of Sports Medicine published by the International Olympic Committee and the International Federation of Sports Medicine and several scientists' meetings are examples of this cooperation.

The Olympic Movement is committed to a determined fight against doping, since this is a total negation of the spirit of sport and its role in society. At the same time, the IOC is concerned about the history and philosophical aspects of the Olympic Movement, for example, the new Olympic Museum in Lausanne, its Research Centre, meetings with scholars, new works published on IOC history, scholarships awarded to students, etc. This contributes to a general awareness of the value of the Movement and the need to preserve it in order to spread the tenets of Olympism.

The Olympic Movement has more financial resources than ever before and these are distributed more fairly and are better used in the realization of the Olympic ideals. There is a more equitable distribution of funds between the five continents. The IOC helps the different National Olympic Committees to take part in Olympic Games.

The International Olympic Committee has confirmed its firm opposition to social discrimination. The increased prestige of the IOC and the power of sport as a social phenomenon have had enough influence to play a significant role in the abolition of the apartheid laws in connection with sports activity in South Africa. In July 1991, the IOC recognized a National Olympic Committee from this country, since it finally obtained the legal means to respect the “Olympic Charter.” At last, South African athletes of all races may now compete in the Olympic Games.

Olympic Perspectives

Fifteen years ago, for the first time, women were elected to the International Olympic Committee and their role is expanding, though far more slowly than many would like.

The world is radically changing and sport likewise. As the year 2000 approaches, sport and Olympism are enjoying enormous prestige; they play an essential role in the peaceful development of human society and education. However, the scale and importance of this prestige and social role create, within the Olympic Movement and sport, a certain vulnerability. At present, a dispute is taking place as to whether the Olympic Movement has remained faithful to its original ideals, namely to spread sport among the young generation for the purpose of giving it a humanistic education and the furthering of understanding between peoples. Critics complain that the Olympic Movement has sacrificed the ethical substance for an ostentatious striving for spectacular Olympic performances and pompously organized Games. One however cannot deny the fact that it was the Olympic Movement that made, and still makes the idea of participating in sports so popular among the inhabitants of our globe. There are even countries where modern sport got a foothold only thanks to the desire to compete in the Olympic Games. And if today people are practising sports regularly or sporadically on every continent, motivated by the desire to enjoy physical exercise and experience success, or to cultivate social contacts and forget about the frustration of everyday life as well as to find partial contentment, then the Olympic Movement may rightly claim that through its existence and influence it has made its contribution to the striving of people for self-realization.

The Olympic Movement has to live with the laws of the market because at the moment, there exists no feasible alternative. However, it fights against doping and other illicit biological practices which aim at enhancing the market value of athletes while never accepting a health risk. It does this for the sake of the athletes' health, and also to forestall others from taking unfair advantages over honest competitors.

The Olympic Movement will have to find orientations for the relationships between the protection of nature

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and an enhancement of sport activities. It will have to face critical questions referring to the planning of sports venues for future Olympic competitions. It should use its authority to reach a sound symbiosis between sport and the environment.

Time and again, in the Olympic Movement, there have been attempts to abuse the Games for the implementation of hegemonistic plans. It was Baron de Coubertin who drew attention to this danger, reminding us of the duty of the Olympic Movement to serve peace and international understanding.

On October 12, 1986, the IOC inaugurated its new administrative headquarters in a beautiful building next to the existing one which became too small for its needs.

Over the years, the IOC has changed from a volunteer organization to a professionally managed one. The IOC had long sought legal status to provide tax relief and security to its operation. Furthermore, it has sought exclusive rights to the use of its symbol, flag, motto, emblems and anthem. When the IOC gained legal status as an international non-governmental, non-profit organization from the Swiss Federation in 1981, it could bring the Movement into a new phase of existence. Since then, the IOC has gone through a considerable evolution, its organization has become more complex and corporately intertwined.

It has a secretariat which handles its daily operation. The size of this secretariat has changed with the growth of the IOC. In the early days of the Movement, Baron de Coubertin was very much the key figure in ensuring that business was done. He acted as secretary general in the first sessions and meetings. The IOC was like a sports club. The members filled various roles to carry on the operation of the organization. Non-IOC members first joined the secretariat in the 1920s. Mrs. Lydia Zanchi, a part-time employee from 1926 to 1946, handled many of the administrative tasks. Her work in maintaining the integrity of the IOC was particularly vital during World War II when IOC Executive Board members could not meet regularly. In 1946 Mrs. Zanchi became the IOC's full-time secretary, a position she held until her retirement in 1966.

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Otto Mayer was appointed Chancellor of the IOC in 1946, and he held this position until 1964. Mrs. Monique Berlioux was appointed as Director of Press and Public Relations in 1967. However, she filled the role of Secretary-General in addition to her press directorship until 1973 when she became a full-time Director of the IOC. Through her strength of character and capacity to work, Mrs. Berlioux took control of the secretariat and moved it through an expansion and rationalization process. The organization developed greatly and became much more formalized under her guidance. The secretariat grew from a staff of twelve in 1969 to eighty-three by 1986. Mrs. Berlioux' style of organizing and operating the IOC eventually resulted in a conflict with the IOC President which led her to leave the organization in 1985. She was replaced by Swiss IOC member Raymond Gafner who acted as "administrator délégué" until 1989 when the current Director General, Swiss lawyer, Francois Carrard, was appointed.

At present, the secretariat has over one hundred employees with others working in contractual positions. This number does not include the people working at the Olympic Museum, the archives and the Research Centre. By a grave mistake, in my opinion, the Research Centre, as well as the IOC archives, have been moved to the Museum and are subordinated to it. They do not have adequate premises there and the fact that those who administer the Museum are also responsible for the Centre hinders the latter's work and development. There are many who believe that the IOC Research Centre should closely cooperate with the Museum but be independent of it as these two cultural institutions of the IOC have different tasks and address different publics. The best solution, in my opinion, would be that the Research Centre be directly subordinated to the President of the IOC and have its own building. This would enable it to fulfill its main task, i.e., to promote by all possible means, the sociocultural study of the Olympic Movement and of sport.

I present briefly for you, an "evolutionary list" of the IOC General Secretariat and of the Administration:

Baron Pierre de Coubertin
Founder of the IOC - General Secretary

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1894 - 1896
(IOC President from 1896 to 1925)

Ernest Callot
IOC Member - Treasurer
1894 - 1919

Count Eugne Brunetta d'Usseaux
IOC Member - General Secretary
1908 - 1919

Baron Godefroy de Blonay
IOC Member - Treasurer
1909 - 1923

Jiri Guth-Jarkovsky
IOC Member - Session Secretary
from 1920

Fred Auckenthaler
Chancellor
1922 - 1925

A.G. Berdez
(Deceased January 9, 1940)
1925 - 1940

Lydia Zanchi
Secretary
(1929)/1946 - 1966

Otto Mayer
Chancellor
1946 - 1964

Eric Jonas
General Secretary
September 1964 - April 1965

Johann W. Westerhoff
General Secretary
1966 - 1969

(Upon the resignation of Johann Westerhoff, IOC Member Hugh Weir momentarily takes charge of the administration.)

(The position of General Secretary is replaced by that of the Director.)

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Monique Berlioux
Director
1969 - 1985

Raymond Gafner
Deputy Administrator
since 1985

Francoise Zweifel
General Secretary
since 1985

Francois Carrard
General Director
since 1989