

be carried out due to political problems in the Balkans. Soon the Olympic Games 1906 in Athens were dismissed as an episode and degraded with the title of Interim or Intermediate Games. But for the true Olympic historian these were equal Olympic Games, like all the original ones from 1896 to 2000.

## Motion

At the IOC Session in 1948 the IOC member MEZÖ proposed to include the event of 1906 in Athens as "*IIIb Olympic Games*" in the list of the Olympic Games. The motion was rejected in 1949 without any historical analysis. The Executive Committee of the *International Society of Olympic Historians* founded in 1991 decided in 1999 and again in 2001 to recommend, like Ferenc MEZÖ did in 1948 to include the *Second International Olympic Games 1906 in Athens* in their list of Olympic Games and to assess the event as what it had been: real Olympic Games.

Should this not happen it does not change anything about the fact that these real Olympic Games did take place.



## NEW ISOH WORKING GROUP „ANCIENT OLYMPIC GAMES“

By Manfred Lämmer

There can be no doubt that the Olympic Games are the most intensively researched area in the history of sport. Thousands of books and special studies fill the libraries around the world. However, a closer look clearly shows that authors who come from the fields of sport and sports science largely examine the origin and development of the modern Olympic Games, while the contests held in ancient Olympia are almost exclusively the domain of ancient historians, classical philologists and archaeologists. There are but few exceptions.

The main reason for this situation is to be found in the fact that only few representatives of the modern history of sport or Olympic Historians have the necessary language skills and specialist knowledge with which to examine and evaluate original sources. On the other hand, the representatives of ancient history who, over the years, have compiled an admirable wealth of results, research findings and knowledge are, in most cases, only insufficiently acquainted with the technical aspects, the structures and the philosophy of modern sport. Pierre de Coubertin once emphatically stated: Celebrating the Olympic Games means referring to history. And there can indeed be no doubt about the fact that the essential foundations of the modern Olympic Games go back to their model in antiquity. Greater consideration for the ancient Olympic Games within the scope of our research work would therefore result in a decisive improvement in our understanding of what the motives of the founder of Olympism were and the goals of the Olympic Movement are.

Based on this conviction, the ISOH Executive Committee decided at its session held in Lausanne on 3 May 2001 to establish a working group called "Ancient Olympic Games", which will encourage research in this field and carry out projects.

The timing for such an initiative seems to be particularly favourable since the coming Olympic Games in Athens will increasingly focus the attention of the international public on this topic.

The working group will convene for its first meeting in Spring 2002 to exchange information and ideas and to discuss possible activities. ISOH members interested in taking part are kindly requested to contact: Dr. Karl Lennartz, ISOH Vice President, Sperlingsweg 16, D-53757 Sankt Augustin, Germany, Tel.: ++49-2241-333487, Fax: ++49-2241-342749, E-Mail: [lennartz@culda.de](mailto:lennartz@culda.de)