



David COHEN

be seen from the photograph.

I do not know why this story was ever published. Any editor of a serious magazine

should have checked the contents of the story first of all. A simple call to the Netherlands Olympic Committee could have informed them about the real facts: that is that the real Tinus OSENDARP was still alive at the time (2002). It is surprising how much Olympic history can be distorted by this kind of false report.

The problem is that this might be the beginning of another "Genesis of Legends"!

BOOK PRESENTATION



Stephan WASSONG:
Pierre de Coubertin's US-amerikanische Studien und ihre Bedeutung für die Analyse seiner frühen Erziehungskampagne (Sport, Kultur und Gesellschaft, vol. III). Wüzburg 2002, Ergon

Verlag, pp. 256 (€29)

(STEPHAN WASSONG: *Pierre de Coubertin's US-American studies and their importance for his early educational campaign*. English version; published by the Amateur Athletic Foundation of Los Angeles in autumn 2003)

Although it is well known in sport history and sport pedagogy that COUBERTIN travelled in the USA in 1889 and 1893 for a number of months, this fact is treated with a lot of reserve in current research. This lack of research has been successfully filled with the monograph Pierre de COUBERTIN'S studies in the USA and their importance for his early educational campaign. As sources not only COUBERTIN'S books *Universités transatlantiques* (1890) and *Souvenirs d'Amérique et de Grèce* (1897) were used which he published on his two study trips in the USA but also almost unknown and unconsidered articles by COUBERTIN. In addition the correspondence between

COUBERTIN and US-American educators, scholars, journalists and university presidents have been analysed.

In the monograph COUBERTIN'S travels in the USA are not only investigated from the Olympic perspective through which it is only stressed that COUBERTIN travelled to the USA to find allies for his attempt to re-establish the Olympic Games. It is demonstrated that COUBERTIN gained a deep insight into the educational aims of US-American higher education and into the educational utilisation of sport and gymnastics at universities, schools, as well as public and private sport clubs in the USA. A detailed interpretation of COUBERTIN'S statements about these areas stresses COUBERTIN'S profile as a progressive-minded educator. In completion to COUBERTIN'S experiences with athletic education at English public schools it is shown by COUBERTIN'S attraction to the aims of US-American higher education that in his educational concept the French Baron aimed not only at a moral, intellectual and physical education of the youth but that he also propagated guidelines for a universal political education of which the aims were the consolidation of republicanism and the development of a peaceful internationalism.

Particularly by analysing COUBERTIN'S concept of political education his intentions to revive the Olympic Games can be outlined. In this context traditional research results are challenged like the overvaluing of the role that the ancient Olympic Games seemed to have

played in COUBERTIN'S mind and the widespread prejudice that COUBERTIN invented the Olympic Games for the only purpose to stimulate athleticism in France as a useful educational means to develop a strong French youth.

For the first time it is shown that COUBERTIN'S endeavours to revive the Olympic Games were supported by a large circle of personalities in the USA. Apart from William Milligan SLOANE whom COUBERTIN – in contrast to current research – had already met before he travelled to the USA for his first time in 1889 – US-American politicians, educational reformers, social reformers and various university presidents found interest in COUBERTIN'S Olympic project that the US-patronage group did not regard as a mere archaeological spectacle but as a good opportunity to improve an international

understanding among the youth of the world. How useful COUBERTIN'S contacts were for the inauguration of the Olympic Games can *inter alia* be demonstrated by his early correspondence with Andrew D. WHITE who was the first president of Cornell University. A letter from COUBERTIN to WHITE can be presented to Olympic research as the earliest source up till now in which COUBERTIN utters his intention to revive the Olympic Games. The letter is dated from the early summer of 1892.

Finally it may be of interest to English readers that the monograph will be published in English by the *Amateur Athletic Foundation of Los Angeles*. The English version of the monograph will be available on the internet pages of the AAF (<http://www.aafla.org>) in autumn 2003.

OBITUARIES

Prince Alexandre de Merode (1934 – 2002)

Prince Alexandre de MERODE died on November 20th, 2002. Born in 1934 in Etterbek (Belgium) he began his career as President of the *Belgian Supreme Council for Physical Education, Sport and Outdoor Life*. Before he became an administrator in the *Belgian Olympic and Interfederal Committee* Prince de MERODE had been head of the *Belgian Ministry of Public Health*. Since 1964 he was member of the IOC.

It was due to his unceasing interest in preventing the integrity Olympic sport and sport in general from doping and any other abuses that IOC *Medical Commission* was founded in 1964. Prince de MERODE chaired this important commission from 1967 onwards. How much the *IOC Medical Commission* profited from Prince de MERODE'S

unceasing fight against doping can be stressed by the fact that the former IOC-president Antonio SAMARANCH did not accept Prince de MERODE'S offer to retreat from IOC *Medical Commission* before the Olympic Games in Sydney.

Next to this challenge he was a member of the Executive Board of the IOC from 1980 to 1990. As vice-president he chaired the Executive Board from 1986 to 1990 and from 1994 to 1998. In 2000 he was appointed to the IOC Reform Commission.

The *International Society of Olympic Historians* (ISOH) shares the opinion of the IOC-president that the world of Olympic sport has lost a remarkable colleague and a humanist at the service of sport. The ISOH expresses its deepest sympathy to the Prince de MERODE'S family.

Stephan Wassong