

PERSONALITY, BIOGRAPHY

“The Century of the Spectator: Avery Brundage and the Impact of the Modern Olympics on Non-participants”

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The modern Olympic Games are a prime example of the sports spectacular. In the past century, the rhetoric of Olympism has created a global event with immense popular appeal. As Pierre de Coubertin and Avery Brundage sought to impose Olympic ideals on the reality of twentieth century international athletic competition, inconsistencies arose due to the increasing popularity and size of the games, sports nationalism, elitism and the role and influence of spectators and media broadcasters. After 1968, when sports spectacles became television productions, the International Olympic Committee's profits undermined its efforts to control the professionalization, politicization, commercialization and media-domination of the games. Avery Brundage understood both the potential value of television rights and the problems that would result from the distribution of this new income and media control over what was seen by the viewing public.