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The Forgotten Decisions: **The IOC at the Eve of World War I**

At the eve of World War I, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) had its 6th Olympic Congress (June 15-23, 1914). While we know all of the festivities very well, its decisions were only published five years later. Scholars have taken the accuracy of these reports as a matter of fact but a review of the written accounts of 140 participants from 24 countries shows that they have been misguided in doing so. Frantz Reichel, Coubertin's keeper of the minutes and reporter for *Le Figaro*, was neither accurate in the paper nor in the official IOC report, as he seemed to have missed many of the points that were made in English; unless, that is, he intentionally distorted the reports. The paper is based on documentary sources of participants in German, English, French, and Italian. It shows that some of the decisions were taken differently than the IOC's records indicate.

This paper documents that the German struggle between *Turnen* and sport reached international proportions. The IOC gave in and was willing to side with *Turnen* for the benefit of the German organizers-but this put it in opposition to the young International Athletics Amateur Federation. This sheds new light on the question of the power relations between the international federations and the IOC. It shows, especially, that the international federations had good reason to demand greater participation later on, it indicates that medal tables were not abolished as claimed after World War II, and that Coubertin lost by 25 to 4 the vote on whether the medals of women should count as much as the medals of men. On this question he was at first willing to resign, but then half-heartedly accepted majority rule.

The paper discusses the role of the IOC in international politics. It discloses the incompetence of the IOC at the height of international tensions and that in terms of gender relations the IOC remained more conservative than the majority of its members. By 1914 staging the Games, no matter what the circumstances, was already the most important principle.