

Antwerp 1920: Proof of the Viability of the Olympic Movement

By Volker Kluge

In the shadow of the Great War. In front of the portal of the Olympic Stadium was a hand grenade launcher. The date inscribed on the plinth was 11 November 1918, the day of the armistice. The monument was the work of Albéric Collin, a well-known animal sculptor from Antwerp.

Photo: Erik Bergvall, VII Olympiaden, Redogörelse för Olympiska Spelen i Antwerpen 1920, vol. 3.



Postponing the Games of the XXXII Olympiad until 2021 is not the first major challenge the Olympic Movement has faced. Even as early as 1896, there had been proposals for adjusting the schedule of the Games.

A century ago, shortly after the end of the First World War, the organisation of the next Olympic festival in 1920 was also put to the test. The war had already claimed the Games of the VI Olympiad of 1916.

In the end, the IOC chose Antwerp to stage them, despite the appalling hardship that followed the war in Belgium and other countries. The decision came against the backdrop of Spanish flu, which claimed more lives than the Great War. The death toll from this pandemic is estimated at anything between 25 and 50 million.

Neutrality prevented division

On 4 August 1914, German troops marched into neutral Belgium. They intended to attack France on its northern flank and advance to Paris. For Great Britain, this was the

signal to intervene, thus initiating what the American historian and diplomat George F. Kennan eventually described as “the great seminal catastrophe of this century.”¹

Scarcely two weeks went by before Pierre de Coubertin was confronted with proposals to reschedule the 1916 Berlin Games, as he wrote in his memoirs.² The IOC President received tempting offers from the United States and neutral countries like Sweden, the Netherlands, and Cuba. He did not seriously consider any of them.

Coubertin's second concern was the official seat of the IOC. Technically, a decision by the Olympic founding congress of 1894 had stipulated that it was to be relocated every four years to the country in which the next Games were to take place. It is likely that, apart from Coubertin himself, most were unaware of this, as he had been running affairs from what was essentially a home office in Paris for 18 years. However, it was a possibility that the Germans would assert claims then, which is why he moved the headquarters to Lausanne as a precaution. In addition, in January 1916, he asked Baron Godefroy de Blonay of Switzerland to act as president *ad interim* for the duration of the war.³

Coubertin also reinforced the process of emphasising the neutrality of the IOC by refusing to favour one or other of the warring sides. As would be expected, this did not make him any friends. When, at the request of the Italian newspaper *La Stampa*, he declared that he “would not deprive Germany the right to manage the 1916 Games,”⁴ this infuriated the British IOC Member Sir Theodore Andrea Cook, who, as a journalist and influential editor of *The Field* sports newspaper, had intensively dealt with Prussian militarism and the atrocities it had led to in Belgium.⁵

Since Coubertin, who feared the splitting of the Olympic Movement, refused Cook's request to exclude the German members from the IOC, Cook sent his resignation to the Chairman of the British Olympic Council (BOC), the Duke of Somerset, and to the Honorary Secretary, Reverend de Courcy Laffan, on the grounds that:

*I will never be a party to any organisation, at the present time, in which Germans are admitted not merely as colleagues in administration but as competitors with representatives of other countries.*⁶

Although Cook had the sympathy of his fellow countrymen, and with every month the hopes of still being able to stage the 1916 Games dwindled, it still did not prevent him turning his back on the IOC.⁷ For Cook, it was a matter of principle, to which he remained faithful even after the war, when he was outspoken in his criticism of British participation in Antwerp.

A death blow to “Olympic shenanigans”

Although none of the warring parties had achieved their goals despite enormous human loss and had exhausted themselves on all fronts, the rejection of the 1916 Games by the German Reich Committee for Olympic Games (DRAfOS) was not an issue. The organisation head, Carl Diem, who had volunteered for military service, forecast optimistically that the “modern war would not last that long,” which is why the sending of invitations to the potential participating countries should be postponed “until a more peaceful time.”⁸

What followed was an angry outcry from the radical wing of the German Gymnastics Association (DT), whose anti-Olympic hostility had been something of a tradition. Its chairman, 88-year-old Dr. Ferdinand Goetz, combined his appeal to the gymnasts to fight the “slavonism that is not shying away from a world conflagration” and the “old hereditary enemy” of France, with the hope that the war would deal “a death blow to the Olympic shenanigans.”⁹

As far as the future was concerned, however, there was no official answer. It was not Diem, who was introduced to trench warfare in the mud of Champagne, but his friend, the German Athletics Association secretary, Dr. Martin Berner, who stated in an article that the Imperial Committee could only make a decision about the 1916 Games after the war, “because almost all of his leading men are in the field.”¹⁰ The announcement made by DRAfOS on 4 June 1915, at the request of the Austrian NOC, was almost identical, now supplemented by the statement that the prospects had been reduced “to a minimum” by Italy’s declaration of war on Austria-Hungary.¹¹

At the time, a number of reports suggested that Coubertin had withdrawn the Games from Berlin and would be awarding them to the USA, because the DRAfOS only wanted allied and neutral states to take part. In fact, none of this was true. The entire Olympic topic did not play a role in the discussions of the Competition Committee, which met again in February 1916 for the first time since the beginning of the war.¹²

Coubertin had already resigned himself to the fact that the Games would not take place in 1916 and said as much in an English newspaper.¹³ These Games were only important to him for statistical reasons: “An Olympiad may fail to be celebrated; its number remains. This is the ancient tradition.”¹⁴



Pandemic 100 years ago – how the precautions compare. According to Rule 12, all schools had to be closed indefinitely. Rule 5: As a remedy for the Spanish flu, it was recommended to gargle with carbonated water several times a day.

Photo: Exhibition Brussels, November 1918, BELvue Museum

In the hope that peace would reign until 1920, Coubertin focussed on the Games of the VII Olympiad. The President of the Belgian Olympic Committee (COB), Baron Édouard de Laveleye, had presented Antwerp’s application for the first time on the sidelines of the 1912 IOC meeting in Basel, before it was officially announced one year later. Budapest presented its own candidacy at the Olympic Congress in June 1914, but with the beginning of the war, Hungarian prospects declined.

Coubertin’s travels as a propaganda spokesperson for the French army led him to Lyon on several occasions. In October 1914, the International Urban Exhibition went ahead in the city, regardless of the events of the war.¹⁵ Coubertin visited the unfinished stadium, planned for 35,000 spectators. There Mayor Édouard Herriot confronted him and asked if the Olympic Games of 1920 or 1924 could be held there. Coubertin was careful not to answer “no”, in order to keep several options open. Later, on 15 September 1915, Herriot and Count d’Assche,¹⁶ who had led the Belgian delegation in Paris in 1914, signed a contract which included the following:

The City of Antwerp has applied for the Games of the VII Olympiad (1920). The City of Lyon has also applied for this date, but declares to withdraw in advance if the liberated Antwerp maintains its bid and in this case will postpone its request to the Games of the VIII Olympiad (1924).¹⁷

Promoter of the Olympic Games in Antwerp: Édouard de Laveleye (1854–1938). In 1906, the baron was the founding president of the Belgian Olympic Committee, which he led until 1923. He also became a member of the IOC in 1913.

Photo: Official Report, Berlin 1936



Count d'Assche headed the Belgian Section of the organisation, which provided aid to prisoners of War in Berne. Shortly after the armistice of 11 November 1918, Coubertin asked him whether King Albert and the Belgian government would agree to Antwerp hosting the Games in 1920 or 1924.¹⁸ However, it was too early for an answer. Prior to this, it was necessary to organise the ceremonial entry of the King, who had commanded the Belgian troops from the western most corner of Flanders during the war, which was scheduled for 22 November 1918 in Brussels.¹⁹

But it soon became apparent that not much remained of the enthusiasm with which the Provisional Committee had submitted the Olympic candidacy in 1914. That was understandable, because the country was now in a catastrophic state. Belgium had lost 100,000 soldiers, had 79,000 wounded, and 30,000 of her civilians had been killed during the war or in the aftermath of the war. The steel industry had been completely destroyed, and livestock had been reduced by half. In the Brussels area alone, there were 100,000 refugees displaced from northern France and Flanders.

It is true that in the Versailles Treaty of 1919 Germany made a commitment to repair the damage, estimated by the Allies at 269 billion gold marks. However, since the sum, of which eight per cent was allocated to Belgium, was to be paid in 42 annuities, there could be no mention of emergency aid.²⁰

Added to this was a new invisible enemy that spread rapidly between 1918 and 1919 – a pandemic that was wiping out young men between the ages of 20 and 40. Since the disease had also afflicted King Alfonso XIII and members of the Spanish government, as reported by the Madrid newspaper *ABC*,²¹ it was called the “Spanish flu”. The origin of the H1N1 virus is still a matter of speculation

today, and variously been suggested as China, northern France, or in an American military camp in Kansas. There were a number of conspiracy theories.

The majority against, the king in favour

After Belgian soldiers fell ill for the first time in April 1918, a second wave of the flu followed from August onwards. This proved to be far worse than the first. It affected a population already weakened by the war, and malnourished. Food was only available in the meagre amounts prescribed by rationing. It made the reluctant attitude of Prime Minister Léon Delacroix towards the Games all the more understandable. Delacroix also held the position of Finance Minister, and in March 1919 he stated Belgian public debt to be at 4,158 billion francs. He was supported by both the governor and the mayor of Antwerp.²²

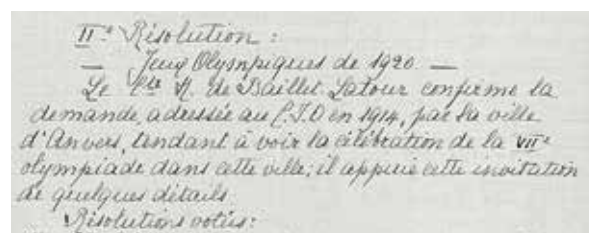
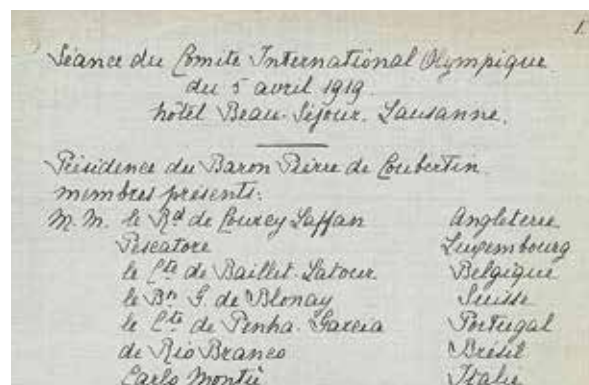
The attitude of the representatives of Belgian sport, who were confronted in February 1919 in Brussels with the unrealistic plan to organise the Olympic Games in Antwerp within a few months, was no different. The level of consent was virtually nonexistent. There were a few supporters, such as Baron de Laveleye, who had been a member of the IOC since 1913. He received support from Count Henry de Baillet-Latour, whom Coubertin had brought onto the IOC a decade earlier and would ultimately succeed him as President in 1925. Oscar Grégoire (swimming and rowing), Nicolaas J. Cupérus (gymnastics), Olympic fencing champion Paul Anspach, and Count Robert de Ribaucourt from shooting were also in favour.

The majority of delegates were opposed to going through with it. The spokesman was COB Secretary Léon Delfosse, who considered it impossible to prepare the Olympic Games within a year. “It is better,” he was quoted as saying, “to refrain from holding them ... from the outset, than to face the risk of a fiasco that could only lead to blame and reproach for the organisers.”²³

However, a final decision was not reached, not least because the most important sports association for the Olympic Games, the Ligue Belge d’Athlétisme, founded in 1912, was not available. Instead, those present agreed to draw up, by 1 March 1919, statements that were to be presented at the next meeting on 10 March.

The result was surprising. Instead of resistance, there was suddenly unanimous support. A propaganda campaign in the Belgian press had borne fruit. This was because it had enthusiastically welcomed the prospect of the Olympic Games in Belgium and, at the same time, accepted the request by the French Committee on National Sports (CNS) to exclude the Central Powers – Germany and Austria-Hungary – from taking part.

The Provisional Committee, which promised one million francs, also contributed to this change of



opinion, so that the financing of the Games seemed to have been secured. The cost at the time was estimated at 3.7 million gold francs.²⁴

When the Belgian sports associations met again on 24 March 1919, the structures of the future organising committee with various special commissions were already emerging. However, the headquarters were not in Antwerp, which had been destroyed by the war, but at Rue Guimard 14 in Brussels, an office building in the Leopold district, which is now known as the European quarter. The Secretariat-General worked here under the leadership of Albert Verdyck and with a number of employees of the Belgian Football Association. Only two months before the start of the Olympics did the office move to Antwerp, where the committee moved into rooms at a bank and at the recently completed stadium.

A proposal: postpone the Olympics to 1921

Since Baron de Laveleye did not take part in the 1919 IOC Session for unknown reasons, it was left to Count de Baillet-Latour to represent Belgian interests at the meeting in Lausanne. Before his departure, however, he was commissioned by the sports associations and, on 29 March 1919, by the Belgian NOC, to propose to the IOC that the Olympic Games be postponed to 1921 and that the next thereafter be held in 1925. However, he was left with room for negotiation. If this were not approved, according to the delegates of the sports associations, they would also agree to 1920.²⁵

Long before COVID-19, therefore, there was an intention to deviate from the Olympic cycle, which had begun with the first Games of modern times in Athens in 1896. The rules, first published in 1908, did not preclude this, because the IOC had only committed itself to

“ensuring the regular celebration of the Games.”²⁶ The rule that they were to take place every four years and that, even in the case of non-celebration, neither the sequence nor the intervals were to be changed, only appeared in the statutes of 1920.²⁷

It is not known whether Baillet-Latour ever mentioned a postponement at the IOC Session on 5 April 1919. The brief notes of the meeting drawn up by Godefroy de Blonay merely state that the Count confirmed the 1914 request, and the IOC unanimously decided to host the 1920 Games in Antwerp.

Although Coubertin had designated the session as marking the IOC's 25th anniversary, only eight members attended,²⁸ so it can only be assumed that the pandemic might well have prevented others from travelling. Switzerland was also hit by a second wave in autumn of 1918, which led to the deaths of 25,000 people. A third, somewhat milder wave followed in January of 1919.

The surviving documents do not indicate whether such problems were addressed during the session. However, Coubertin's recollections reveal that “certain circles”, which he did not define in detail, went to great lengths to discourage Baillet-Latour. Coubertin described Paris as the centre of a “peevish, disloyal opposition”,²⁹ where it was demanded that the Olympic Games be held in Alsace – in Strasbourg – which had been reconquered by the Germans.

Indeed, Coubertin explained that it was a matter of common sense that it would be imprudent for German teams to appear at the Olympic Stadium before 1924. On the other hand, he did not want to announce the exclusion of any country, which might have set a dangerous precedent. Since he was unable to avoid politics altogether, he came up with a solution that he presented as finding a “middle ground”.³⁰

Excerpt from the minutes of the IOC Session on 5 April 1919, attended by only eight members. Item 2 of the agenda was Count de Baillet-Latour's statement that Antwerp upholds its 1914 desire to host the 1920 Olympics. Far left: Hotel Beau-Séjour in Lausanne, where the IOC Session was held.

Photos: Olympic Studies Centre, Lausanne; Volker Kluge Archive



Kaiser Wilhelm in the “dock”: A protest in Antwerp on 27 June 1920 to prevent a “return of the Germans”. By this time however, the participation of the Central Powers in the 1920 Olympic Games was no longer an issue.

Photo: *Ons Land*, 27 June 1920; *The Games Reborn*, p. 28.

It was agreed that the Organising Committee should invite only those countries that would be represented in the IOC. Members from defeated countries were therefore, despite knowing better, declared dead, even though this was actually true of only one, the Baron of Venningen from Germany.³¹ The list of members, which had 48 names in 1914, shrank to 38 from 29 countries.³²

In Belgium, the IOC decision was seen as a justified reward for the bravery it had demonstrated in four years of war. The plans of 1914 were enthusiastically pursued again, but with only 16 months left to implement them. On 14 July 1919, the foundation stone was laid for the Olympic Stadium which had been designed by the architects Fernand de Montigny and Louis Somers.³³ In mid-March of 1920, King Albert paid an incognito visit to the construction site, and the official opening of the stadium took place in May.

While Belgium began to look forward to the Games, critical voices were heard elsewhere, and not only in countries that had been relegated to the “penalty bench” by the IOC. Instead of the Olympics, Diem was now organising German *Kampfspiele* (combat games), which had been discussed for years and to which the “ethnic” Germans were to be invited. He also announced, now that Germany had been excluded from participation, that “by no means would anyone imagine grovelling for participation in 1924.”³⁴

There was also resistance in the United Kingdom, where *The Times* published an entire series of articles challenging the Olympic Games.³⁵ Two prominent athletes, the 1912 Olympic 1,500 m champion Arnold Strode-Jackson and teammate Philip Baker, were signatories to a letter calling for the Games to be postponed until after the reconstruction of the countries which had been devastated by war. The first priority was

to “put our own house in order” and spend the money on other things.³⁶

That was grist to the mill for critics like Cook, who nonetheless submitted a Pindar-like ode to the Olympic Art Competitions, in which he described the Olympic festival as “Funeral Games” in honour of the fallen. He equated the participating athletes, which included Baker (destined to win 1,500 m silver), with the dead in the trenches of Ypres.³⁷ In an ironic twist, Cook was awarded a silver medal for his poetic work.

An important stage – the Inter-Allied/Pershing Games of 1919

One of the reasons why Baker and Strode-Jackson, then president of the elite Achilles Club, spoke out against Antwerp, was the fear that Britain would not be able to send a sufficiently well prepared and powerful team in the short time available. Many athletes had fallen in the war, and the survivors had little opportunity to train.

In addition, the UK, like France, was heavily indebted to the United States and had also been hit by a wave of deflation, which led to a collapse of the economy in 1921. Expensive government programmes, such as “homes fit for heroes” which provided for the construction of half a million homes within three years, had to be prematurely curtailed. Many war veterans saw themselves as having been deceived.

Another challenge was demobilisation, which followed the trauma of the Great War. This was a problem not only for the armies involved in the war, but also millions of prisoners of war, internees, and refugees, and their social, economic, and cultural reintegration into society. While the German and Austro-Hungarian soldiers were repatriated within a short period of time in accordance with the provisions of the armistice, the



“Don’t spit” – warning sign against the Spanish flu, posted at the Naval Aircraft Factory in Philadelphia.

Photo: picture-alliance / US Naval History and Heritage command

demobilisation of the Entente lasted for years, partly because the old conflicts were replaced by new ones.

A particular logistical achievement was the repatriation of the approximately two million uniformed members of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF), which had mostly been stationed in France. The majority were barracked in hastily built debarkation centres near the port of Brest, from where the trip across the Atlantic was to begin. However, the restrictions of the crowded camps, where the soldiers were condemned to aimlessly spend their time until departure, generated frustration and aggression.³⁸

In this situation, a project developed by Elwood S. Brown, the Physical Director of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), was just the right thing at the right time. To compensate for the lack of relaxation and distraction, he proposed an "athletic program for the demobilization period" to the General Staff. In a letter from October 1918, he wrote:

*Peace, whether it comes tomorrow or many months from now, should find us in a state of preparedness against the inevitable period of relaxation that must be met when hostilities cease. This period will bring about an increased danger from moral temptations, will be a time of impatient waiting for the day of departure for America and will call for very constructive and interesting bodily activity if the dangers of disorderly physical expression are to be avoided.*³⁹

Brown recommended four measures: 1. Athletics for everybody; 2. Official AEF Championships, starting with qualification competitions at the regimental level; 3. Physical pageants and demonstrations; 4. Inter-allied athletic contests, open only to soldiers of the Allied Armies, which Brown called "military Olympic Games"—a term Coubertin disapproved of, because he saw it as an attempt to suggest to the public that the regular Olympics would take place in Paris as early as 1919.

Coubertin even went so far as to approach US President Woodrow Wilson, who assured him that the Americans would never use the terms "Olympic" or "Olympiad".⁴⁰ This did not, however prevent the newspapers from describing the games as the "Pershing Olympics" or the "Olympic Pershing Games".

Apart from such questions of naming, Coubertin recognised the great benefits of the "Inter-Allied" Games, held from 22 June to 6 July 1919 under the aegis of General John J. Pershing. As the commander-in-chief of the American Expeditionary Forces, he even had a 25,000 seat stadium built by a French construction company in the Bois de Vincennes near Joinville. When workers went on strike in April 1919, Pershing ordered a troop of US soldiers to Paris at the beginning of May to finish the job. They worked around the clock in three, eight-hour shifts so the stadium could be completed on time.



Poster for the 1919 Inter-Allied Games in Paris, designed by US Army Lieutenant JH Dulin.

Photo: Volker Kluge Archive

The Inter-Allied Games became an important link between the Great War and the 1920 Olympics and helped the United States establish itself in Europe as a new world power. Twenty-nine teams from 18 nations accepted the invitation, which, of course, only applied to the victorious allied armies, including those in South and Central America, Asia, Africa, Australia and New Zealand, Africa, and the newly formed European states of Poland, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia. As they would do for the Olympic Games as well, Britain hesitated until the last minute before announcing its participation.

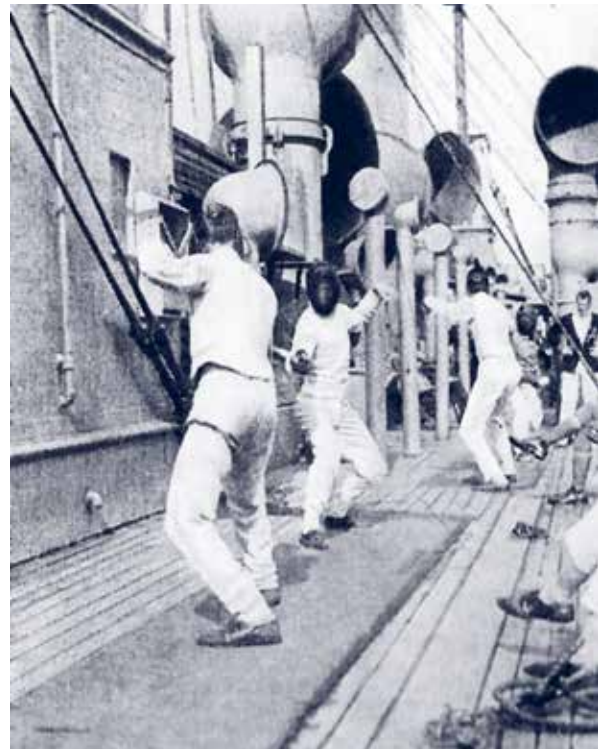
The level of these competitions was remarkable. They featured a number of athletes who were destined to play an important role on the Olympic stage one year later. The list of winners includes the names of 2nd lieutenants Charles Paddock (track and field) and Norman Ross (swimming), and the boxer, Captain Edward Eagan. Captain Nedo Nadi of Italy had won Olympic fencing gold in 1912 and won the foil competition here. There was even a world record. Chaplain Fred Thompson threw the hand grenade 79.929 metres. Nonetheless, the Pershing Games were not quite Olympic.

"Mutiny of the Matoika"

Wherever the H1N1 virus came from in 1918, floating US troop transporters also contributed to its worldwide spread. There were problems on the *USS Leviathan*,

“Training” facilities on board the *Princess Matoika* when crossing to Antwerp. The pool was made of canvas, but burst when it was first filled with seawater.

Photos: Report of the American Olympic Committee, Seventh Olympic Games Antwerp, Belgium 1920



Swimmer Norman Ross (1896–1953) a 2nd Lieutenant in the US Army, helped initiate a resolution complaining about conditions on the *Princess Matoika*. It was signed by nearly 200 athletes. Ross himself won five out of the six individual competitions at the Pershing Games. At the Olympics in Antwerp, he won the 400 m and 1,500 m freestyle gold.

Photo: Bibliothèque nationale de France

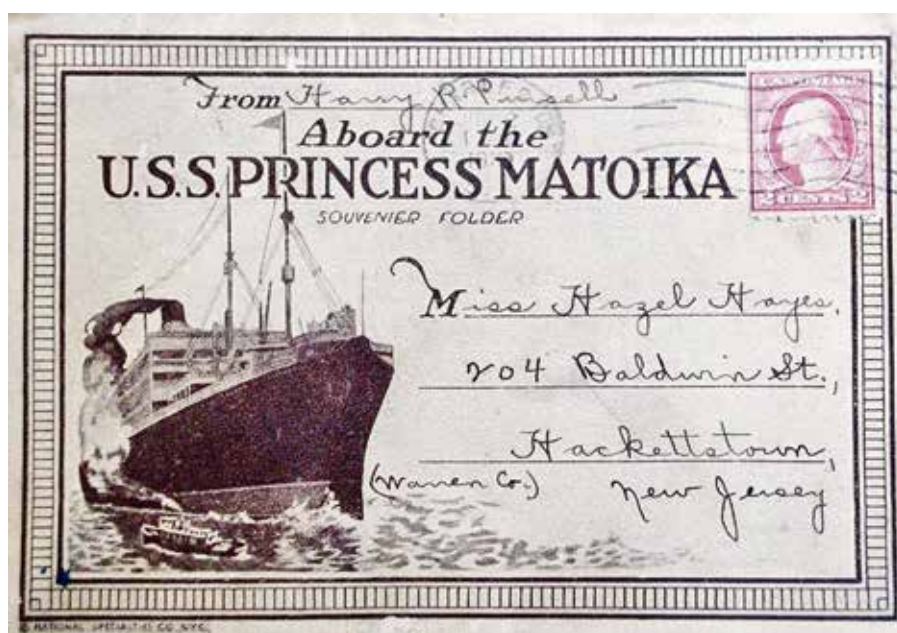


formerly known under the German name *Vaterland*, which had left Hoboken on 29 September 1918. Of 9,000 men on board, 2,000 fell ill in the course of the crossing. By the time the ship reached Brest, 91 of them had died.⁴¹

The number of passenger ships crossing the North Atlantic increased again with the gradual decline of the pandemic at the beginning of 1920, and with completion of demobilisation. These were still less than 40 per cent of the pre-war figures. That is why it was a wise move by American Olympic Committee (AOC) President, Gustavus Kirby, to offer both the US Secretary of War, Newton D. Baker, and the Secretary of the Navy, Josephus Daniels, the posts of Honorary Vice-President. As a result of their involvement, the Army and Navy agreed to transport not only the athletes within their ranks to Antwerp, but also civilians, which represented a cost saving of US\$70,000.

But the departure proved to be ill-starred. The *Northern Pacific*, which was due to sail with the majority of Olympic participants on 20 July 1920, lost a plate from its hull at the last minute, meaning that it had to be put into dry dock and taken out of service. As a replacement vessel, the army offered the *USAT Buford*, which had seen service in the Philippine–American War 20 years before. The press had dubbed it the “Red Ark” because it had most recently transported 249 designated “undesirable aliens” to Soviet Russia. The *Buford* proved to be too small for the Olympic team, however, and with a cruising speed of 11 knots (20 km/h), was far too slow to arrive in Antwerp in time for the opening day of the Games.

The only alternative was the *Princess Matoika*,⁴² which had brought over 30,000 soldiers to New York in eight transports since the end of 1918 and, on its last tour,



Back in the limelight: 1912 Olympic 800 m champion “Ted” Meredith had been the commander of the first US Aero Squadron in the Great War. In order to be able to report on the Antwerp Games, he succeeded in qualifying for the 1920 US Olympic team. Right: Greetings from on board the USS Princess Matoika, which carried the US Olympic team to Antwerp in 1920. Photos: Volker Kluge Archive

had also brought home the remains of 881 casualties. The team was delayed for a week and spent the time on Travers Island and in the Fort Slocum barracks, before they were finally able to board the ship, which departed on 27 July 1920.⁴³ Hardly had they boarded, when the first murmurs began about the “rusty old troop carrier”. The first-class cabins were occupied by army officers, government representatives, newspapermen, and AOC officials. Of the athletes, only the 15 female members of the swimming team were given preferential treatment.

The majority of the delegation was accommodated in the lower deck, which was also referred to as “steerage”. The athletes were forced into troopship quarters in four hatchways, where there was neither sufficient privacy nor adequate sanitation.⁴⁴ The longer the journey went on, trudging along at a speed of 16 knots (30 km/h), the more dissatisfaction grew. The sea remained calm at first, so few passengers suffered from seasickness. This changed when the hatches and portholes were closed due to the rain, making it even stuffier in the troop quarters. This was made worse because the ventilators did not work.

The increasingly rough sea and rain also hindered training. The deck became slippery, leading to the risk of runners falling. There was a cork track for the sprinters, but it was only 65 yards long. The swimmers also had to improvise, having been provided with a pool made of canvas, measuring only 4.57 m long by 2.75 m wide; the first time it was filled with sea water, it burst.

Meals were plentiful, but they were prepared by unskilled cooks and served by stewards who had taken this as casual work to finance travelling to Antwerp to experience the Olympic Games.⁴⁵

When the discomfort increased to a level where some athletes even threatened to throw one or the other disliked official overboard, a group was formed to speak up for their interests. It was made up of the swimmers Harry Hebner and Norman Ross, and track and field athletes Pat McDonald and Dick Remer. In the resolution they drafted, they described the quarters as uninhabitable for highly trained athletes and were critical of the food. For their stay in Antwerp, they demanded better accommodation, residence in cabins on their return journey, and reimbursement of the railway travel expenses from New York to their homes.⁴⁶

Officials such as AOC Secretary Frederick W. Rubien tried in vain to stop the athletes from signing the resolution. He asserted that a “Bolshevik” influence was evident in the Olympic team.⁴⁷ In the end, however, nearly 200 signed, among them the 800 m Olympic champion from 1912, James E. “Ted” Meredith, who had fought as a pilot in the Great War from 1917 and commanded the first US Aero Squadron in France.

After his demobilisation, Meredith worked in the investment sector. In April 1920, he received inquiries from several New York newspapers as to whether he could report on the Antwerp Games for them. The 27-year-old decided that the best way to get to Belgium would be a comeback. Despite a three-year hiatus from training, his efforts were successful. In the final try-outs, he finished second in the 400 m, an event which he had posted the world record time of 47.4 seconds in 1916.

Now he gave first-hand reports about the troubles on the *Matoika* to the press. Meredith’s wired reports to New York include accounts of athletes fleeing the



The Pershing Games in 1919: The Czechoslovakian team won the football tournament, made up of soldiers who had served in the forces of the Entente as well as in the Imperial and Royal Army of Austria-Hungary.

Photo: Bibliothèque nationale de France

smelly rat-infested cargo hold to sleep on the hard and sometimes rainy deck at night.⁴⁸

The athletes' hope of finding comfortable accommodation, at least upon their arrival in Antwerp, was disappointed. While the navy members in the harbour continued to live on the *SS Frederick* and the army in Coblenz took care of their shooters and riders, the rest of the team had to move into a school on Rue Oudaen with classrooms fitting 10 to 30 people.⁴⁹ However, the criticism was not directed against the Belgian organisers, who were doing their best, but against the inadequate management by the AOC, who, as a result, were forced to reorganise the following year.

This adventurous journey went down in history as the "Mutiny of the Matoika", as related in a 1936 book by sports writer John Kieran.⁵⁰ It certainly was not a mutiny in the true sense of the word but, without doubt, it was a revolt initiated by responsible athletes.

Prague football with Scottish support

The Pershing Games expanded the geography of sport. And yet, Prague had been a football metropolis long before Czechoslovakia was founded. The newly elected Foreign Minister, Edvard Beneš, once played as an inside right forward with SK Slavia until his career was ended by a leg fracture in 1904.

That did not end his passion for football, and so Beneš enthusiastically accepted the invitation to send an army team to Paris in June 1919, especially since many Czechs had served in autonomous units on the French side during the war. France was also subsequently regarded as the most important ally.⁵¹

Training support, on the other hand, was provided by two Scots. Scottish international footballer John "Jake" Madden travelled to Prague with his club Celtic in 1904 and decided to remain in the country. From 1905 onwards he coached Slavia, winning the Charity Cup for the first time in 1908 and then from 1910 to 1912.

Madden's compatriot John Dick started with the German Football Club (DFC) in Prague and after the war he took the helm of its local rival Sparta, with whom he won the Czech championship from 1919 to 1921. When the country-wide championship was held for the first time in 1922, Sparta also won.

Madden travelled to Paris with a squad of 18. Ten came from Sparta and five from Slavia, all of them Czechs and all from Prague. According to goalkeeper Rudolf Klapka and defender Karel Steiner, some of them had served as volunteers in the Austro-Hungarian Infantry Regiment No. 28 during the war, and had together gone on to participate briefly in the game business in 1919.

In Paris, the Czechs began the preliminary round with a 4-1 triumph over Belgium, followed by an 8-2 victory over the USA, before beating Canada 3-2. In the final they took on the French, winning 3-2 in front of 30,000 spectators.

For the Czechs, this was not a one-off success: at the same time, a second Czech national team, which included five players from Viktoria Žižkov, was being hailed in Italy. When the two sides played against each other a month later, the "Parisians" defeated the "Romans" 5-0.

This meant that, by the time of the Antwerp Olympics, Madden had a sufficiently large pool of talent drawn from both teams to put together a powerful side for Antwerp. Fifteen players were nominated, ten of whom were already in Paris. Eleven players came from Sparta, two from Slavia, and two from Viktoria.⁵² The captain of the team was Dr. Karel Pešek, known as "Káda". He already had an Olympic bronze medal, which he had won that April with the Czechoslovak ice hockey team during the Olympic Winter Sport Week.

As 15 football teams had registered, Belgium received a bye to the quarter-finals. Spain also received a walkover after Switzerland did not arrive. In their first match, Czechoslovakia beat Yugoslavia 7-0. Antonín "Očko" Janda scored three times and then another hat-trick the following day in a 4-0 victory over Norway, an unexpectedly decisive victory, since Norway had previously won 3-1 against Great Britain.

Whilst the beaten teams such as Yugoslavia contested a consolation tournament, Czechoslovakia proceeded to the semi-finals, by which time they had scored 11 and conceded none. They beat France 4-1.

On the same day, the host nation Belgium won a prestigious "Derby" with a 3-0 win against their neighbours from the Netherlands. The Belgians were known as the Rode Duivels (Red Devils) on account of their red jerseys; the nickname was coined in 1906.

A final spoiled by a "nationalistic virus"

The second day of September 1920 might have been the highlight of the Antwerp Olympic Games. That it did not



become so was not down to the Spanish flu, but because of another “virus” that had infected the masses – nationalism.

By early afternoon, the stadium was already overcrowded with spectators who were letting their anticipation run wild. Spain were in action against Italy in the playoffs. Thousands were pushed in front of the gates, and a whole battalion of soldiers had been allowed in. They were camped along the sidelines and behind the goals.

At the same time, security had discovered a tunnel that young people had built under the stadium fence. “The Olympic trench,” wrote FIFA referee Jean Langenus, “had grown into an enormous gate through which thousands poured in ... All around the stadium, fans were hanging like bunches of grapes from the colonnades and from the trees.”⁵³

Estimates put the crowd at between 35,000 and “nearly 50,000”, as recorded by Hugo Meisl.⁵⁴ The legendary Austrian captain of the Federation was struck by the fanaticism of the crowd. He called it chauvinistic, but in his opinion the Czechs were not affected by it. Meisl marvelled at the ruthlessness of the Slavs.

For some time now, criticism had been directed not only at the referees, but also at the linesmen. Each time had the right to appoint their own but this did run the risk that they would favour their fellow countrymen. That was also the reason why the Dutch referee Johannes Mutters suspended Czech linesman Ráca⁵⁵ in the semi-finals.

The jury was prompted to bring on board the renowned English referee John Lewis for the potentially explosive duel between Belgium and the Netherlands. Lewis had taken charge of the 1908 Olympic final but by 1920, he was already 65 years old and was hesitant. He had only been in Antwerp as a spectator. He finally agreed, upon being joined by former Corinthian player Charles Wreford-Brown and by British team captain Arthur Knight.

This Anglo-Saxon trio was entrusted with a final in which two teams of different styles were facing each other. The Belgians trained since 1910 under William Maxwell, another Scot, who preferred the British “open” game, with quick combinations at full speed and using the wingers. Their centre half was the dominating figure of Emile Hanse. During the war he had joined with other internationals to form the Front Wanderers, a team of Belgian soldiers that played charity games for the wounded and refugees in Great Britain and France.

On the other hand, the Czechs preferred the short pass game in accordance with the Scottish practice, with all forwards constantly changing position. Meisl described this as well thought out, while assessing the host’s playing style to be rather amateurish. Despite this, he assessed both teams to be equally strong.



Left: The Czechoslovakian football team in Antwerp. Right: Before the storm. Belgian captain Henri Larnoe and his Czechoslovakian counterpart Dr. Karel Pešek (in striped shirt) toss up, watched by referee John Lewis (in the light jacket)

Photos: Belgian Olympic Committee

A British trio: Centre: 65-year-old referee John Lewis, flanked by his linesmen. Left: Charles Wreford-Brown. Right: Arthur Knight, captain of the British team, which lost to Norway in the preliminary round.

Photo: Erik Bergvall, VII Olympiaden, vol. 3

De Rode Duivels
(the Red Devils)
against blue-and-
white-striped
Czechs – in front of
the Belgian goal
during the match.

Photo: Erik Bergvall,
VII Olympiaden, vol. 3



As expected, the Belgians got off to a strong start, causing problems for the Czech defence. When goalkeeper Klapka was tackled and ended up motionless on the ground, one of the quick Belgian forwards knocked the ball towards the goal, so defender Steiner used his hand to deflect the ball. The Czechs expected the foul on their keeper to be penalised. Instead Lewis, who was used to the tough English league game, ruled the challenge permissible, but penalised the handball. Robert Coppée scored from the penalty spot. As a neutral observer, Meisl felt that this goal would never have happened in Austria, because there, the goalkeeper was considered to be "sacrosanct".⁵⁶

His colleague Emmerich Rath had represented Austria at the 1908 and 1912 Olympic Games. He had been a race walker and a marathoner, but in Antwerp Rath was on assignment for the *Prague Tagblatt*, and asserted that the match had been spoiled from that moment on.⁵⁷ Indeed, the difficulties only increased. There were numerous fouls that, when committed by the Czechs, raised the crowd's mood to a fever pitch, to the extent that the referee's whistle could barely be heard. Meisl wrote:

*Suddenly, as if by command, the entire stadium became hushed. A flautist had just started playing the Belgian national anthem when the home team launched an offensive. Thousands upon thousands joined in song ...*⁵⁸

At that moment, "Rik" Larnoe shot the ball into the net from a range of 20 to 25 metres and the crowd and the audience exploded into elation. The Czechs complained in vain that it had been offside.

Now that they were two goals up, the Belgians began to play with ever more confidence while the Czechs became increasingly dejected. Some let their opponents run on without attempting to challenge them. They stopped contesting the referee's decisions, and there were suggestions that the match should be called off. In the 39th minute came the decisive incident. In an incident off the ball, Steiner deliberately attacked Coppée, who fell to the ground and had to be carried off the pitch. Steiner was sent off. As he walked off the field so did the other members of the team. Two or three hesitated, but they eventually followed the lead of the majority.

There was no stopping the crowd now. The pitch was flooded with people. Adorned with a laurel wreath, team captain Larnoe was carried off the pitch, while the Czechs, who had taken refuge in the dressing room, were faced with threatening and abusive shouts, which inevitably included the slur "*boches*".⁵⁹ The referee tried in vain to persuade them to return. Belgium were declared Olympic champions. A result of 5–0 was entered in the record.⁶⁰

The Czechoslovaks lodged their protest with the jury that same night. Their appeal included three allegations: 1. Contrary to the rules, the Czechs had been denied their own linesman; 2. Most of the referee's decisions were alleged to be incorrect; 3. The Czech team felt provoked and threatened by the large number of Belgian soldiers on the touchlines. There was also an allegation that the crowd had torn down the Czechoslovak flag and defaced it; this later turned out to be incorrect.⁶¹

The appeal was heard two days later, and rejected. The jury gave the Czechoslovak Football Association a period

**Olympic Stadium
“flooded”: An
inglorious end to
the football final
after the Czecho-
slovakian team
prematurely walked
off the pitch in
protest.**

Photos: Belgian Olympic
Committee



of 24 hours to apologise in writing to the Organising Committee, the International Football Association (FIFA), the referee, and the linesmen.⁶² When no reply was received by 4 September, the Czechoslovak team was disqualified retroactively for the entire tournament. This meant they also forfeited the chance to play for the silver medal.⁶³ They had already left Antwerp anyway, the day before.

Half a century later, I met Josef Sedláček, the last living Czech player. Then 81, he told me that it was football president Dr. Otakar Petríck who was the leading protagonist in advising the team to walk off. This was done in order to prevent the nation from being disgraced. Sedláček thought the referee was overwhelmed. He recalled that, because Lewis had been beaten by fans at an earlier game in Prague, he was thought to have been ill disposed towards the Czechoslovak team: “We knew we were going to have to pay for the past.”⁶⁴ His view remained unchallenged.

So, the Games of the VII Olympiad ended in discord, but this was not to diminish the great performance of the Belgian hosts. The 1920 Games, which took place immediately after a terrible war and during a pandemic, were an important milestone and proof of the viability of the Olympic Movement.

The Belgian Professor Roland Renson has compared it to the herbal liqueur *Elixir d’Anvers*, a typical Flemish speciality, which is perfect blend of 32 plants from all corners of the world.⁶⁵ In other words, it is good for stomach aches of all kinds. ■

- 1 George F. Kennan, *The Decline of Bismarck’s European Order: Franco-Russian Relations, 1875–1890* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 3.
- 2 Pierre de Coubertin, *Olympic Memoirs* (IOC: Lausanne, 1997), 167.
- 3 Coubertin, Circular Letter to IOC Members, January 1916, Lausanne, Olympic Studies Centre (OSC).
- 4 *La Stampa*, 15 February 1915.
- 5 Theodore Andrea Cook, *Kaiser, Krupp and Kultur* (London: John Murray, Lyon Public Library, 1915).
- 6 Letter, Theodore A. Cook to Duke of Somerset and Reverend de Courcy Laffan, 15 April 1915, OSC.
- 7 Letter, Cook to Coubertin, 8 July 1915, OSC.
- 8 *Deutsche Turn-Zeitung (DTZ)*, no. 33, 13 August 1914, 628.
- 9 Ibid. Cf. Hugo Rühl, *Ferdinand Goetz. Ein deutsches Turnerleben* (Leipzig: Historia-Verlag, 1921), 151.
- 10 Martin Berner, “Für und gegen die Olympiade 1916. Deutscher Sport und Olympische Spiele”, *Fußball und Leichtathletik*, vol. 16, no. 10, 1915, 77.
- 11 *Fremden-Blatt*, Vienna, 18 June 1915, 4.
- 12 *Stadion-Kalender für das Deutsche Reich*, vol. 3–5, no. 1, 20 January 1917, 3–4.
- 13 *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, 10 May 1916.
- 14 Coubertin, *Olympic Memoirs*, 167.
- 15 Exposition internationale urbaine, from 1 May to 1 November 1914.
- 16 Édouard Dimitri, Marquis d’Assche, Comte van der Noot (1860–1928) was the former Master of Ceremonies of King Leopold II and the Head of Delegation of Antwerp to the 1914 Olympic Congress in Paris.
- 17 *Rapport Officiel des Jeux de la VII^{ème} Olympiade, Anvers 1920*, 9. Manuscript (published in 1958 and 1964, only in French). It was never printed for cost reasons. Here after referred to as *Official Report, Anvers 1920*.
- 18 Ibid., 10.
- 19 King Albert I, who rode a grey so that the masses could easily distinguish him from the riders on the dark horses, was the first monarch to recognise the importance of constantly being accompanied by the press and film. Cf. Exhibition *Brussels, November 1918*, BELvue Museum, Brussels, 26 September 2018–6 January 2019.
- 20 Treaty of Versailles, Articles 231–247, Compensation (28 June 1919), in: *documentArchiv.de* (ed.). During the Nazi dictatorship, reparations were completely discontinued. They were resumed in 1953 with the London Debt Agreement. The last instalment of 200 million euros was transferred to Belgium in 2010.
- 21 *ABC*, Madrid, 22 May 1918, 24.

Belgium are the Olympic champions, but were also considered world champions by the International Football Federation (FIFA). A separate World Cup was not introduced until 1930.

Photos: Belgian Olympic Committee



- 22 *Official Report, Anvers 1920*, 10.
- 23 *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, no. 63, 5 March 1919.
- 24 *Official Report, Anvers 1920*, 15. The sum amounted to approximately 4,62,500 USD, according to today's purchase value approximately 7.2 million USD. The actual cost was 4,638,085.01 F (1920 approx. 580,000 USD). With revenues of just over four million, the deficit was 626,022.50 F.
- 25 *Neues Wiener Abendblatt*, 26 March 1919, 6.
- 26 Comité International Olympique, *Annuaire [1908], Règlement, OSC*, 7.
- 27 Comité International Olympique, *Statuts, Règlements relatifs à la célébration des olympiades*, 9. What was meant specifically can only be learned from the 1924 version, which states: "The Olympic Games must take place during the first year of the Olympiad which they are to celebrate (thus in 1924 for the VIIIth, 1928 for the IXth, 1932 for the Xth, etc.). Under no pretext whatsoever can they be adjourned to another year. Their non-celebration during the year chosen is equal to the non-celebration of the Olympiad and involves the annulment of the rights of the town chosen and the country to which this town belongs." This wording was omitted when the 1991 Charter was revised. The rule in force until 2004 stated: "The Olympiad begins with the opening of one edition of the Games of the Olympiad and ends with the opening of the following edition." According to the currently valid Charter, rule 6, bye-law 2, the XXXII Olympiad began on 1 January 2020 and will end on 31 December 2023.
- 28 Minutes, 18th IOC Session, Lausanne, 5 April 1919, OSC, 3–4. Present were Pierre de Coubertin, Godefroy de Blonay, Count de Baillet-Latour, Reverend de Courcy Laffan (UK), General Carlo Montu (Italy), Jean-Maurice Pescatore (Luxembourg), Raul de Rio Branco (Brazilian minister based in Bern and representing his country in the League of Nations from 1920), and Count José de Penha Garcia, representing Portugal at the Paris Peace Conference 1919–1920. In addition, present as a guest was Baron Sven Hermelin of Sweden, who had transported to Lausanne those Challenge Prizes that had been returned to the Swedish NOC after the war.
- 29 Coubertin, *Olympic Memoirs*, 177.
- 30 *Ibid.*, 178.
- 31 Alongside Baron von Venningen, who fell in October 1914 at the head of his squadron in France, his compatriots Count Adalbert von Sierstorpff and Count Adolf von Arnim-Muskau, the Austrians Count Rudolf von Colloredo-Mannsfeld and Prince Otto von Windisch-Graetz, the Hungarians Count Géza Andrassy and Jules de Musza, the Bulgarian Dimitri Stancioff and the Turkish Selim Sirri Bey Tarcan were removed. With the exception of the Germans and Austrians, however, they were tacitly listed as members again from 1922.
- 32 Minutes, 18th IOC Session, 1919, 1–4. The seats of Argentina, Chile, New Zealand, and South Africa were considered "vacant", but two of them were occupied during the session (Chile and New Zealand). At the time of the Olympics, the IOC had 41 members. The seats of Argentina and Poland remained vacant.
- 33 Roland Renson, "Fernand de Montigny (1885–1974): Multiple Olympic Champion and Architect", *Journal of Olympic History*, vol. 26, no. 2, 2018, 41–49.
- 34 *Sporttagblatt*, Vienna, 4 November 1919, 5. In speech given by Diem, he announced the German Combat Games for 1921. However, they did not in fact take place until 1922 in Garmisch-Partenkirchen (winter) and Berlin (summer). Like the Olympic Games, they were held every four years until 1934. The idea of a "national Olympia" in response to Coubertin's international Olympics dates back to 1894.
- 35 Cf. Luke J. Harris, *Britain and the Olympic Games, 1908–1920* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).
- 36 *The Times*, 28 May 1919. Strobe-Jackson (1891–1972), originally Jackson, had given himself a double name in 1919. At the time, he was the youngest Brigadier-General in the British Army and a member of the British delegation to the Paris Peace Conference. Baker (1889–1982) also bore a double name from 1921: Noel-Baker. He was a Member of the Parliament of the Labour Party (1936–1970) and a minister in the Attlee government (1946–1951). He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1959 for his contribution to disarmament.
- 37 Roland Renson, *The Games Reborn. The VIIth Olympiad Antwerp 1920* (Antwerp: Pandora, Snoeck-Ducaju & Zoon, 1996), 28–29.
- 38 In the middle of the second wave of the pandemic, 1.5 million men were demobilised in February 1919. The last combat unit officially left France on 1 September 1919. However, since the US troops also participated in the so-called Polar Bear Expedition against the Red Army in Northern Russia, the final withdrawal lasted until April 1920.
- 39 *The Inter-Allied Games 1919*, published by the Games Committee, 17–18. Elwood S. Brown (1883–1924), who had become Physical Director of the YMCA in Manila in 1910, founded and organised the first Far Eastern Games. After being transferred to Paris in 1918, he became Director General of the Inter-Allied Games. He died on 24 March 1924, three weeks before his 41st birthday.
- 40 Coubertin, *Olympic Memoirs*, 179.
- 41 Dorothy Ann Pettit, *A Cruel Wind: America Experiences Pandemic Influenza, 1918–1920, A Social History*, doctoral dissertation (University of New Hampshire: 1977), 127. The *Vaterland*, commissioned in 1913, was considered to be the largest passenger ship in the world at the time. Surprised by the start of the war in Hoboken in July 1914, it was anchored there for three years until it was seized by the US

Shipping Board in June 1917 and renamed *Leviathan* by President Wilson on 6 September 1917.

42 The former high-speed, Norddeutscher Lloyd mail steamer was launched in 1900 under the name *Princess Alice*. With its operation in Kiautschou (leased by China in 1897), the ship was given the name of the German colony. In 1914, the *Kiautschou* was docked in the neutral port of Manila, where it was confiscated after the United States entered the war and renamed *Matoika*.

43 *Report of the American Olympic Committee, Seventh Olympic Games Antwerp, Belgium 1920* (Greenwich: The Condé Nast Press, 1921), 42–43. Since the figure skaters and the ice hockey team had already travelled to Antwerp in April and the sports shooters in June/July, only 254 people from the sports of athletics, boxing, wrestling, swimming, cycling, fencing, and tug-of-war travelled on the *Matoika*. On the same day the cruiser *Frederick* departed with the navy athletes (athletics, boxing, wrestling, fencing, rowing, and swimming). On 5 August, the *Sherman* transporter followed with the gymnasts and the rugby team. A special role was played by the equestrian team of army officers, which arrived in Antwerp on 6 July 1920 and was transported to Coblenz on the same day, where the headquarters of the American Army of Occupation were located until January 1923. Only on 1 September did the riders return to Antwerp, where their competitions took place from 6 to 12 September.

44 *AOC Report*, 29.

45 *Ibid.*, 207.

46 *New York Times*, 8 August 1920, 23.

47 Allen Guttmann, *The Olympics: A History of the Modern Games* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 39.

48 James E. Meredith, "Olympic Committee gets Blame for Arrangements which peevd Athletes", *San Antonio Express*, 9 August 1920. Meredith (1892–1957), who like his uncle Edwin was only known as "Ted", graduated from Mercersburg Academy in 1912 and the University of Pennsylvania in 1916, where Lawson Robertson was his coach. From 1932 to 1935 he worked as his assistant. He then coached the Czechoslovakian athletics team for the 1936 Olympics and the Cuban team for the Central American Games in 1938. He finished fourth in the semi-finals over 400 m at the 1920 Olympics and he was a member of the American 4x400 m relay team, which took fourth place. Meredith also was a sports writer for many periodicals and had a syndicated column in the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*. Letter from James E. Meredith, Jr, 9 November 1977.

49 *AOC Report*, 31–33. The female swimmers had it good, having been accommodated in the Hostess House of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA).

50 John Kieran, *The Story of the Olympic Games 776 B.C. to 1936 A.D.* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1936), 123–128.

51 *The Inter-Allied Games 1919*, letter from the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Eduard Beneš, Jr, 16 January 1919, 53. The Czechoslovak army, which was led by French generals from 1919 to 1938, was built by order of Marshal Ferdinand Foch, who had been appointed Commander-in-Chief of the entire Western Front in 1918. Subsequent to the Great War, the Czechoslovak legion, which had a force of up to 90,000 men, played a special role in the struggle against the Bolsheviks in Siberia until 1920.

52 The following were nominated: goal: Rudolf Klapka (Viktoria), František Peyr; defence: Antonín Hojer (Sparta), Miroslav Pospíšil (Sparta), Karel Steiner (Viktoria); midfield: František Kolenatý (Sparta), Karel Pešek-Káda (Sparta), Antonín Perner (Sparta), Emil Seifert (Slavia); offence: Josef Sedláček (Sparta), Antonín Janda-Očko (Sparta), Václav (Wenzel) Pilát (Sparta), Jan Vaník (Slavia), Otakar Mazal (Sparta), Jan Pláčat (Sparta). Of those, the following players were present in Paris: Klapka, Peyr, Hojer, Pospíšil, Steiner, Pešek-Káda, Sedláček, Janda-Očko, Pilát, and Vaník.

53 Jean Langenus, *Voetbal van hier en overal* (Gent: Snoeck-Ducanju, 1943), 51; Renson, *The Games Reborn*, 62.

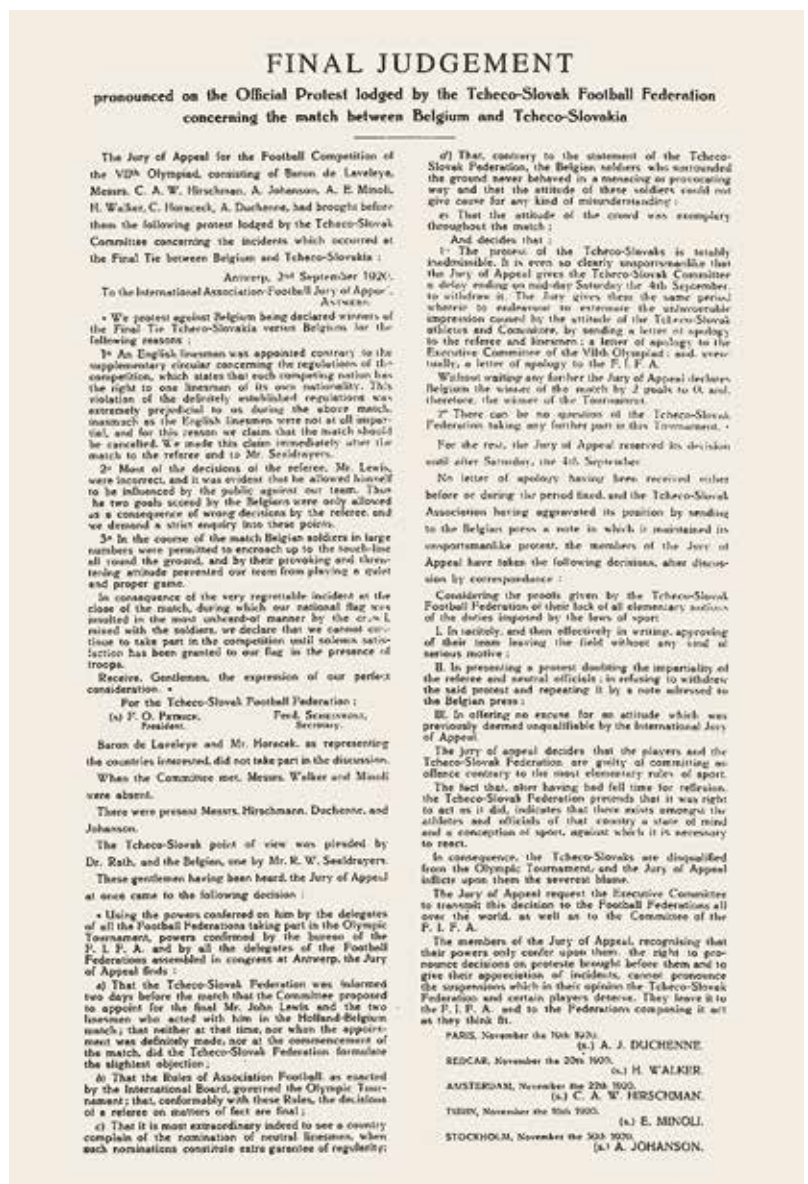
54 *Sport-Tagblatt*, Vienna, 14 September 1920, 2.

55 Jürgen Buschman, Karl Lennartz, *Die Olympischen Fußballturniere. Band 3. Der Skandal beim Finale. Antwerpen 1920* (Kassel: AGON Sportverlag, 2002), 56. It was probably the Slavia player Antonín Ratzensberger, known as Ráca.

56 *Sport-Tagblatt*, Vienna.

57 *Prager Tagblatt*, 9 September 1920, 4. Emmerich Rath (1883–1962) was at home in several summer and winter sports. He became popular in 1905 due to his victory in the 50 km rucksack march, which he published a book on.

58 *Sport-Tagblatt*, Vienna.



The final judgment by the jury of the football tournament: Czechoslovakia's protests are rejected, Belgium is the Olympic champion, Czechoslovakia disqualified. Photo: OlympicStudies Centre, Lausanne

59 A pejorative term for the Germans, which arose after the Franco-German War of 1870/71.

60 *Official Report*, 152.

61 The Belgian Football Association made it clear that the flags of both countries were collected after the match. The Czechoslovak flag was handed over to the Head of Delegation, OSC.

62 *Ibid.* Final Judgement pronounced on the Official Protest lodged by the Czechoslovak Football Federation concerning the match between Belgium and Czechoslovakia, OSC.

63 At the 1914 Olympic Congress, the so-called Bergvall System was adopted for all team matches, according to which the remaining medal winners were determined in a second tournament round following the final game for the gold medal. The loser of the final had to compete against the team that had lost in the semi-final against the later Olympic champion. In addition, two other teams that had previously competed against the gold medallist were eligible to participate. The bronze medal was awarded in a third round, to which were admitted the loser of the final for the silver medal and those teams that had been eliminated in the course of the tournament against the loser of the first final.

64 Interview Josef Sedláček, Prague, June 1975.

65 Renson, *The Games Reborn*, 93.