



Was Pierre de Coubertin a Pacifist?

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Abstract: *Olympism often presents itself as “a philosophy of life” aiming to promote “a peaceful society.” Pierre de Coubertin (1863-1937), the founder of the modern Olympics Games, is often seen as a great humanist in the history of modern sport. Indeed, scholars often state that Coubertin has worked all his life to promote social and international peace by the means of sports. In this respect, the “Olympic Truce” would stand as a symbol of the pacifists aims of Olympism. However, as my paper aims to show, those common depictions of Olympism rest on a misunderstanding of Pierre de Coubertin's conceptions of peace, conflict, and sport. First, Coubertin does not understand peace as a condition which excludes human conflicts. Second, he defined sports as a means for social control. Third, in Coubertin, sports are not directly a means to promote pacifists ideals. Rather, peace appears as means to promote the values and ideas embodied by the sportsman. My study delves into this ambivalent relation between peace and sport in Coubertin.*

Keywords: *Pierre de Coubertin; Norbert Elias; Karl Marx; Alexis de Tocqueville; Olympism; War; Olympic Truce; Peace; Sports.*



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Introduction

Olympism commonly endows sports with very ambitious principles and aims. For instance, we can find in the “Olympic Charter” of the IOC (International Olympic Committee) the following statement:

Olympism is a philosophy of life, exalting and combining in a balanced whole the qualities of body, will and mind. Blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy of effort, the educational value of good example, social responsibility and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles. The goal of Olympism is to place sport at the service of the harmonious development of humankind, with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity¹

Nowadays, the definition of sport as a model which promotes “a peaceful society” is deeply rooted in our minds. However, we shall not take this new commonplace for granted. For does sport actually fulfil the IOC’s ambitious objectives? Olympism main assumption that the path of social peace would be the same as the path leading to stadiums must be subjected to critical scrutiny.

¹ International Olympic Committee, “Olympic Charter” (August 2, 2015), https://stillmed.olympic.org/Documents/olympic_charter_en.pdf (accessed October 7, 2018).

Pierre de Coubertin (1863–1937), the founder of the modern Olympic Games, is the most emblematic character of modern Olympism. To this day, he is still the one who embodies the Olympian philosophy in its purest form.² It is well-known that Pierre de Coubertin expressed the Olympic ideals through the motto “Citius, Altius, Fortius” (“Faster, Higher, Stronger”) and the creed “The most important thing is not to win but to take part.” However, it is worth noting that Pierre de Coubertin neither coined the motto (he borrowed it from the Dominican priest Henri Didon³) nor the creed (which was pronounced by the bishop of Pennsylvania during the Olympic Games of London in 1908⁴). Most importantly, neither the motto, nor the creed actually summarize Coubertin’s philosophy of sport. Coubertin wrote thousands of pages about sport, Olympism and other topics such as history, politics, and pedagogy. As it will become clear from an attentive reading of Coubertin’s writings, the founding father of the modern Olympic Games had a rather ambiguous conception regarding the relations between sport and peace.

I. Pierre de Coubertin’s Conception of Peace

In some of his writings, Pierre de Coubertin clearly advocated the idea of sport as a peacemaker. An interesting example is his “Ode to Sport” that he wrote for the art contest of the Olympic Games of Stockholm in 1912:

O Sport, you are Peace! You promote happy relations between peoples, bringing them together in their shared devotion to a strength which is controlled, organized and self-disciplined. From you, the young worldwide learn self-respect, and thus the diversity of national qualities becomes the source of a generous and friendly rivalry.⁵

Thus, it is through a “shared devotion to a controlled, organized and self-disciplined strength” that sport should support social and international peace. In stadiums, people learn how to use their physical force and power but always in accordance with the important restraint of control. They must obey rules and their actions cannot go arbitrarily against other peoples’ will. Far from being unbounded, aggression is contained by the limitations set by the game. The commonalities between Coubertin’s statements and Norbert Elias’ thoughts on sport are particularly striking here. In his studies on sport and the civilizing process, Elias aims to show, like Coubertin, that sport keeps instinct of aggression alive but, at the same time, channels them towards good and useful social causes.⁶

In addition, sportsmen (not yet sportswomen, as Coubertin disagrees with women’s participation in sport) will learn to respect their opponents by following the rules of the

² Pierre de Coubertin & Geoffroy de Navacelle, *Olympic Memoirs*, 5th ed. (The International Olympic Committee, 1997).

³ See Henri Didon, *Influence morale des sports athlétiques : discours prononcé au congrès olympique du Havre, le 29 juillet 1897* (Paris : J. Mersch, 1897).

⁴ John J. MacAloon, *This Great Symbol: Pierre de Coubertin and the Origins of the Modern Olympic Games* (London: Routledge, 2007).

⁵ “O Sport, tu es la Paix ! Tu établis des rapports heureux entre les peuples en les rapprochant dans le culte de la farce contrôlée, organisée et maîtresse d’elle-même. Par toi la jeunesse universelle apprend à se respecter et ainsi la diversité des qualités nationales devient la source d’une généreuse et pacifique émulation.” Pierre de Coubertin, “Ode au Sport,” *Revue Olympique* 84 (December 1912): 179-81. If not otherwise stated, translations from French to English are mine.

⁶ See Norbert Elias & Eric Dunning, *Quest for Excitement: Sport and Leisure in the Civilizing Process* (New York: Blackwell Publishers, 1986).

game. The sportsman must compete with other contestants, but he is not allowed to do so by all means or at his entire convenience. Like individual's fundamental rights, the rules of sport ensure the opponents' mutual protection. Therefore, "rivalry" in sports occurs under the banner of reciprocal respect. Moreover, as illustrated by defeated rugby teams which form a Guard of Honour for the winners, rivalry in sport can even become amicable. In the end, Pierre de Coubertin does not understand peace as a negation of any kind of human conflicts. Quite on the contrary, human conflicts are unavoidable and even necessary for maintaining social peace. Only by reorienting human conflicts towards harmless and socially tolerated practices, will sport be able to stand as a peacemaker. We may therefore say that, according to Coubertin, peace and conflict are not radically opposed concepts. Rather, peace (and, thereby, sport) is defined as what contains human conflicts; it includes human conflicts and, at the same time, limits their scope and prevent their most disastrous effects. Pierre de Coubertin introduces the ambivalent idea of what we may call a "conflictual peace."

II. The "Conflictual Peace" of the Religion of Sport

On the one hand, Pierre de Coubertin celebrates in sport a lot of values that we would nowadays regard as emancipatory. Stadiums are for Coubertin like "a kind of prep school for democracy"⁷ where individuals learn for themselves the most precious values for social life by participating at the game. According to him, this is especially the case for "the rugby team, this grouping which, once developed, likely constitutes the most perfect prototype of human cooperation; [it is] a voluntary cooperation, without any sanction, grounded on selflessness—and yet solid and skilfully 'articulated' [with the grouping] in each of its parts."

⁸ Sports constantly teach one how to combine mutual aid and rivalry, personal interests and common interests, freedom and discipline, individualism and altruism. As stated by Coubertin:

What is admirable in rugby is the perpetual mixture of individualism and discipline. There is at the same time the necessity for each man to reason, to calculate, to decide for himself, and the necessity to subordinate one's reasoning, calculations and decisions to the captain of the team. The rugby player always puts into practice his patience and strength of character, even still when the referee's whistle stops him for a "foul" which has been made by a comrade and which he did not notice. Rugby, understood in this way, is the illustration of life par excellence. It is a lesson about things [players have] experienced, a first-rate pedagogical tool.⁹

But on the other hand, we also find in Coubertin the idea of sports as an instrument of social alienation. Admittedly, sport is useful for society, since it allows individuals to express their talents, aggressivity and creativity. However, sports also favour the possibility to control individuals. In this respect, Coubertin's writings introduce the ambition to turn sport into a new religion which would far more efficiently educate and control individuals than current and institutionalized religions.¹⁰ As he states in his Olympic Memoirs, "For me, sport was a religion with churches, dogmas, worship... but above all, sport is a religious feeling."¹¹ The idea of sports as a new form of religion is clearly illustrated by the very name

⁷ Pierre de Coubertin, *Pédagogie sportive [1919]* (Paris : Vrin, 1972), 140.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 140.

⁹ Pierre de Coubertin, "Notes sur le foot-ball," *La Nature, revue des sciences et de leurs applications aux arts et à l'industrie* (May 8, 1897) : § 6.

¹⁰ See Jean-Marie Brohm, *Pierre de Coubertin, le Seigneur des Anneaux* (Paris : Homnisphères, 2008), 30-32.

¹¹ Pierre de Coubertin & Geoffroy de Navacelle, *Olympic Memoirs*.

of the “Olympic Games” which, needless to say, refers to the contests in the antique Olympia, Zeus’ sanctuary.¹² From an institutional point of view, the structural organization of sports bears strong resemblances to that of the Catholic Church. The IOC is based in Lausanne and has a specific legal status, in-between national and international rights, which is granted by Switzerland.¹³ Therefore, the IOC is almost a supranational institution. IOC’s status is, in many respects, similar to that of the Vatican (which was severely criticized by Machiavelli in his time¹⁴). The IOC has a geopolitical influence and can establish diplomatic relationships. Despite its lack of military power, the IOC is, like the Vatican, similar to a State and, like the Vatican, the power of the IOC is mostly moral and spiritual. In the same way as every Catholic Church was affiliated with the Vatican, which enabled the latter to remotely interfere in national and international politics, every international sport federation is subordinated to the IOC, which enables the latter to interfere in national and international politics of sports. In some of their statements, IOC officials use words and expressions from religious semantics. As noticed by Jean-Pierre Augustin et Pascal Gillon, “the [IOC] president Brundage, in the same vein [as Coubertin] did not hesitate to regard the members of the IOC as the ‘apostles’ of this [new] religion of the 19th Century.”¹⁵

III. The Ambiguous Relationship Between Sport and Social Violence

According to Coubertin sports bring forth a social peacemaker feature that Tocqueville detected in religion¹⁶ and that Marx denounced as the “opium of the people.”¹⁷ According to Marx, religion makes the masses accept social inequalities by means of an imaginary projection in a symbolic universe. The hope of a happy post-mortem life aids people to endure poverty and inequity, encourages them to obey the laws and to tolerate the social status quo. At almost the same time as Marx, Tocqueville stated that religion is a necessary component of Republics and Democracies, as it helps citizens to refrain from their most harmful desires and to use their freedom wisely. Without religion, men would not be able to set boundaries to their own desires and the political order would therefore become tyrannical. Both for Marx and Tocqueville, religion guarantees and reinforces social order.

In a similar vein, Coubertin states that sport has “this distinctive pacifying characteristic that we already noticed several times. [...] Sport [...] relaxes the springs stretched by anger.”¹⁸ To what kind of anger does Coubertin refer to? As he observes:

The spreading of angers against injustices, bad luck, misunderstandings... Also, the angers against oneself, made of confessions and regrets. [...] Nowadays, anger is everywhere in the world; it disturbs both the family and the social institutions; it compromises both the individual’s rest and public peace. Yet, sport is the greatest “peacemaker” [“*apaiseur*”] that could exist.¹⁹

¹² See Robin Waterfield, *Olympia: The Story of the Ancient Olympic Games* (S.l.: Head of Zeus, 2018).

¹³ Patrick Clastres, *Jeux Olympiques. Un siècle de passions* (Paris : Les Quatre Chemins, 2008), 98.

¹⁴ Niccolò Machiavelli, *Discourses on the First Decade of Titus Livius* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2012).

¹⁵ Jean-Pierre Augustin & Pascal Gillon, *L’Olympisme. Bilan et enjeux géopolitiques* (Paris : Armand Colin, 2004), 9.

¹⁶ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Ancien Régime and the Revolution*, trans. Gerald Bevan (London; New York: Penguin Classics, 2008).

¹⁷ See Karl Marx, *Critique of Hegel’s “Philosophy Of Right”* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

¹⁸ Pierre de Coubertin, *Pédagogie sportive [1919]*, 145.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 134.

However, sport does not only maintain the social order through its cathartic effects.²⁰ Although sports can be taken as a means to social peace, they also appear as a first kind of training for prospective soldiers on the battlefield. Sport prepares at the same time for peace and war. This is vividly illustrated by Coubertin's essay "Sport and Warfare" (1912):

Sports have brought forth all the qualities which are useful for war: recklessness, cheerfulness, habituation to the unexpected, exact knowledge of how to do the requested efforts without wasting useless energy... Obviously, the young sportsman feels himself readier to 'go off' to war than were his elders. And when we feel ready for something, we do it more willingly.²¹

When Pierre de Coubertin invented the modern pentathlon as a new sport, he clearly had in mind to organise a contest that would reward athletes demonstrating the most excellent warlike virtues. Already in Ancient Greece, pentathlon was supposed to reveal who were the best warriors among the contestants.²² In this respect, Coubertin's main intent was to update pentathlon for the era of modern warfare. The events contested during the Ancient Olympic pentathlon were long jump, javelin throwing, discus throwing, stadium race, and wrestling. Those events were perfectly relevant to teach and illustrate the skills required by Ancient Greek warfare but will be outmoded by the techniques of 20th century warfare. Therefore, Pierre de Coubertin aimed to replace the events contested in Ancient pentathlon by competitions in rowing (instead of the nowadays standard shooting competition), swimming, fencing, equestrianism, and cross country running.²³ These contests would reward all the virtues of the modern soldier. In 1912, Coubertin's model is based on his knowledge of the Franco-Prussian War which he observed and discovered, at age seven, through newspaper articles and family conversations.²⁴ In this historical context, soldiers had to be able to ride a horse, run behind the enemy lines, fight with their swords or bayonets, swim across rivers and lakes, shoot with their firearms, row in small boats (incidentally, it took a long time for Coubertin to decide whether shooting or rowing was the most adapted to modern pentathlon). According to Coubertin, pentathlon is pivotal and at the top of the hierarchy of sport disciplines. In Coubertin, it sometimes seems that all sports activities are aimed at the ideal model of the modern warrior.

In addition, Pierre de Coubertin—who considered himself a 'fanatic colonialist'²⁵—believed that 'sport can play...a clever and efficient part'²⁶ in colonization. At the time of Coubertin, westerners were generally not conformable at the idea of allowing natives to practice sports and of encouraging mixed-race (colonist vs. colonized) or segregationist (colonist vs. colonist; colonized vs. colonized) sport contests in settlements. According to Coubertin, western fears regarding the practice of sports in settlements rest on the erroneous idea that

²⁰ See Pierre de Coubertin, "La crise évitable," *Revue Olympique* 63 (March 1911) : 43. See also Pierre de Coubertin, *Essais de psychologie sportive [1913]* (Grenoble : Jérôme Million, 1992), 150.

²¹ Pierre de Coubertin, *Essais de psychologie sportive [1913]*, 196 ; Pierre de Coubertin, "Le sport et la guerre," *Revue Olympique* 76 (April 1912).

²² See Robin Waterfield, *Olympia: The Story of the Ancient Olympic Games*.

²³ Pierre de Coubertin, "À propos du pentathlon," *Revue Olympique* 26 (February 1902). See also Pierre de Coubertin, "Le Pentathlon moderne," *Revue Olympique* 71 (February 1911).

²⁴ Pierre de Coubertin, *Mémoires de jeunesse [posthume]* (Paris: Nouveau Monde Éditions, 2008).

²⁵ Jean-Marie Brohm, *Pierre de Coubertin, le Seigneur des Anneaux*, 33.

²⁶ Pierre de Coubertin, "Les sports et la colonisation," *Revue Olympique* 73 (January 1912) : 8. Pierre de Coubertin, *Essais de psychologie sportive [1913]*, 176.

a victory—even if it is just for fun, for the sake of the game—of the dominated race over the dominant race would have a dangerous significance and could be exploited by local opinion as an encouragement to rebellion.²⁷

Westerners’ main fear was that, in case natives win over colonists, then the former would become aware of the strengths and weaknesses of those who exploit them. By the same token, natives may better comprehend their strength and strategic assets in order to revolt against the settlers. In this respect, Frantz Fanon later stressed the role of sport regarding postcolonial fights. Fanon aimed to conceive a different kind of sport which, far from being a mere “distraction for the bourgeoisie of the towns”, would “uplift the people; (...) develop their brains, fill them with ideas, change them and make them into human beings.”²⁸

However, according to Coubertin, the fears of his contemporaries regarding the supposedly dangerous consequences of the practice of sport in colonies are exaggerated. He notices that the example of the British Empire in India shows that “When a [n] indigenous polo team wins a match”, then “its burden appears much more bearable and lighter. The indigenous is doubly proud: firstly, of his personal success, then of the trust that is granted to him.”²⁹

As we saw above, Coubertin showed how sport, by dint of its cathartic effects, may help to prevent social disorders. The same logic now applies to colonial matters. Indeed, Coubertin contends that sport helps to distract natives from their desire to rebel. Through sport, settlers can gain control over the behaviour of natives. As stated by Coubertin:

In sum, sports are a powerful instrument of discipline. They generate all kinds of good social qualities such as hygiene, cleanness, order, and self-control. Would it not be better for indigenous to be in possession of such qualities? This way, would they not be more obedient than by any other means?³⁰

Nonetheless, Coubertin observes that not all sports are adapted to provide discipline and pacification for natives. Regarding colonies, he recommends avoiding “sports of war or exercises which include a direct preparation to the armed or unarmed fight.” Thus, in the Far East, “the propagation of jiu-jitsu is not desirable from the point of view of the European domination.”³¹ A second condition Coubertin gives is to avoid “official shows”: “national flags, presence of authorities, grandstands, harangues, uniforms... would grant to the native’s victory a significance whose influence could diminish the authority of the rulers.”³² In order to be harmless, sport events must be held behind closed doors...

Conclusion: The Ambivalence of the Olympic Truce

Pierre de Coubertin’s ambiguous conceptions of war and peace are even more distinctly illustrated by his very own idea of the Olympic Truce. As shown by his essay “Sport and Warfare” (1912), Coubertin was not a pacifist in the common sense of the word. Although the atrocities of World War I tempered his bellicism, he shared with many of his

²⁷ Pierre de Coubertin, “Les sports et la colonisation ” : 8. Pierre de Coubertin, *Essais de psychologie sportive [1913]*, 177.

²⁸ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2005), 196.

²⁹ Pierre de Coubertin, “Les sports et la colonisation ” : 9. Pierre de Coubertin, *Essais de psychologie sportive [1913]*, 177.

³⁰ Pierre de Coubertin, “Les sports et la colonisation ”.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

contemporaries a romantic view of war. However, did World War I prompt Coubertin's idea of an Olympic Truce?

In 1916, Olympic Games were planned to be held in Berlin, but were eventually cancelled due to the war. As he explains in his *Olympic Memoirs*³³, Coubertin was afraid that the cancellation of the Olympic Games might dramatically impact on the regular rhythm of sportive international events and even, in the long run, put an end to the Olympic Games *per se*. It is in this specific context that he introduced the idea of the Olympic Truce. For Coubertin, the bottom-line of Olympic Truce was to firmly state that even during war time, we shall still celebrate the Games and not break with our shared rituals and traditions. Behind Olympism's professed humanism, one can identify Coubertin's more strategic aims³⁴, namely, to maintain the celebration of the Games at a periodic rhythm. Rather than protecting men from war, the primary aim of the Olympic Truce was to safeguard the Games.

In 1936 (that is, twenty years after the cancelled Olympic Games of Berlin), the history seemed to repeat itself. Once again, Olympic Games were scheduled to take place in Berlin, this time in Hitler's Germany. Coubertin was worried by the fact that many countries were about to boycott the Games. Moreover, he was no longer a member of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), as he had been forced to quit his position in 1925. Nonetheless, his moral authority upon the Olympic Committee remained strong. In his famous radio address "The Fundamentals of the Philosophy of the Modern Olympics"³⁵ in 1935 in Berlin, Coubertin advocated against a possible cancellation of the Games. He thereby reaffirmed the same arguments in favour of the truce as he had years before. First of all, and as I already mentioned, the Olympic Games must take place for the sake of "*rhythm*"; Coubertin insisted on scheduling the Games every four years without exceptions. Secondly, Coubertin argued against the cancellation of the Olympic Games in the name of his peculiar idea of the "conflictual peace". Indeed, as he observed "nationalistic sentiments [...] must be as it were 'temporarily dismissed'."³⁶ By "temporarily dismissed," Coubertin certainly does not mean permanently erased. He neither sympathises with the idea of an entirely peaceful society, nor with the ideals of an entirely pacified world. For him, a certain degree of conflict is always needed in order to positively emulate social and international relations. In the end, it is rather peace which serves to promote sports, than sports which serve to promote peace.

This ambiguous position of Pierre de Coubertin in 1936 led to compromises between the Olympic movement and Nazism. At this period, Coubertin was no longer at the head of the IOC, and, about one year before his death (1937) his influence was declining. In this context, Hitler offered Coubertin a helping hand. The former head of the International Olympic Committee was quickly seduced by the assistance and proposals of the Fuhrer. Hitler aided Coubertin to participate in two radio talk shows. In addition, Hitler built an Olympic Institute devoted to Coubertin's unpublished writings, and recommended Coubertin's name for the Nobel Peace Prize. Eventually, the Fuhrer introduced some new ideas such as the Olympic flame of which even Coubertin had not thought about.³⁷ In Nazi

³³ Pierre de Coubertin & Geoffroy de Navacelle, *Olympic Memoirs*.

³⁴ See Jean-Marie Brohm, *Pierre de Coubertin, le Seigneur des Anneaux*.

³⁵ Pierre de Coubertin, "Les assises philosophiques de l'Olympisme moderne (message radiodiffusé à Berlin le 4 août 1935)," *Bulletin du Comité International Olympique* 13 (January 15, 1949).

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ See Oliver Hilmes, *Berlin 1936: Sixteen Days in August*, trans. Jefferson Chase (New York: Other Press, 2018); Fabrice Abgrall & François Thomazeau, *1936: La France à l'épreuve des jeux Olympiques de Berlin* (Paris: Alvik éditions, 2006); Jean-Marie Brohm, *1936: Les Jeux olympiques à Berlin* (Bruxelles: André Versaille éditeur, 2008).

Germany, the 1936 Olympic Games will be broadcasted on television for the first time in history. As shown by Leni Riefenstahl's movie *Olympia*, the 1936 Games also implemented a strategic alliance between sports, art and propaganda. Coubertin unequivocally praised the 1936 Olympic Games which he saw as the most successful international sporting event to that date.

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Sport and Warfare (1912)¹

Pierre de Coubertin

Abstract: *Pierre de Coubertin's ambiguous ideas regarding sports, conflict, violence, and war are clearly illustrated in his article "Sport and Warfare" that he wrote for the Revue Olympique in 1912. In this short essay, the founding father of the modern Olympic Games contends that there is no direct causal relation between sport and war. Rather, sports can be conceived as a social instrument which shapes the bodies and minds of its participants. While, on the one hand, sports may help men to feel ready and prepared for war. However, Coubertin believes that sport and its philosophy may teach future soldiers to behave more virtuously and less violently. His hope is that, through encouraging future soldiers to display specific skills and sportsmanship on the battlefield, sport may help in humanizing and rationalizing modern warfare.*

Keywords: *Pierre de Coubertin; Conflict; Sport; Violence; Warfare.*

War in olden days, often had a somewhat of a sporty characteristic. In particular times, one could see mass mobilizations [*levées en masse*], as in the period when Napoleon fought to achieve his wild ambitions and when Europe defended its independence and its threatened freedom against him. However, other wars, like the Crimean War or French African Campaigns in 19th Century, did not have this nationalistic feature. While the most important part of the youth was kept busy with their peaceful activities, only the most active were enlisting; men enamoured with adventure, sportsmen who were satisfied with nothing but war and muscular instincts.

Then, Western civilization evolved; "armed nations" replaced professional armies and everybody said that the era of conquest and aggression had ended, that taking arms would only have the goal of defending the land and the essential rights of the country. However, we saw, as soon as the dawn of 19th Century, a succession of wars which showed this outstanding characteristic that none of them was undertaken for defending the land and the essential rights of the country—except if we understand by "essential rights" the annexation of neighbourhood land. Only naive humanitarianism or those ignorant of history were astonished by these contradictions which, on the contrary, have been subject to the mischief that the old philosophers enjoy when they notice the eternal contradictions between human actions and intentions.

These recent wars were not wars of volunteers; in most of the countries, except England, enlistment was not used to support them. However, they triggered enthusiasm at a

¹ For the original French version of this paper see Pierre de Coubertin, "Le sport et la guerre," *Revue Olympique* 76 (April 1912). This paper can be accessed via: <https://digital.la84.org/digital/collection/p17103coll1/id/13206/rec/1142> (accessed November 25, 2018). The paper was re-published in Coubertin's *Essais de psychologie sportive* which is available on Wikisource, under the CC0 copyright: https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Essais_de_psychologie_sportive/Chapitre_XXXII (accessed November 25, 2018).