

## THE OLYMPIC GAMES (2)

### What is a boycott?

What is the historical origin of the word boycott and what is its meaning? Did you know that “boycott” was the last name of Captain Charles Boycott of England, a land agent who collected taxes and rents for Lord Erne of England on properties in Ireland from Irish tenants? Yes, the Irish resented this man! In an attempt to stop the Captain, the Irish banded together by refusing to work on Lord Erne farms and by not paying taxes. In early days, labor union workers would boycott unfair industry employers. In 1947, the United States passed a law making “secondary” boycotts illegal. In a secondary boycott, workers try to stop other companies from doing business with their employer who they are also boycotting.



Can and should the original definition of a boycott be applied to an athletic venue such as the Olympic Games? Why do Olympic Games protesters usually wait until four years after the IOC final site selection process was decided to then commit disruptive public acts of protest while calling for a boycott of the host city and country? Extensive monies and resources have already been committed and spent by that city and country to construct the facilities and venues necessary to take on the monumental task of hosting an Olympic Games? In 1936 the United States and other nations did not vote to boycott the Olympic Games in Berlin when the Third Reich came to power after the Weimer Republic fell from political power in Germany. Germany procured the 1936 Olympic Games bid from the IOC prior to the Nazi’s coming to power. No boycott of the Berlin Olympics took place in spite of reported and published knowledge of the Third Reich’s treatment of Jews in Germany prior to the beginning of the Games. If the US and other countries had boycotted Berlin, Americans today would probably not even know the name of Jesse Owens!

### Baron Pierre de Coubertin, Founder of the Modern Olympic Games

What did Baron Pierre de Coubertin have in mind when he conceived the idea of resurrecting the Modern Olympic Games at the end of nineteenth century? Pierre’s father, an artist, had planned a military school education for Pierre at the prestigious St. Cry military school. Born in Paris on January 1<sup>st</sup>. of 1862 and small in stature, Pierre de Coubertin withdrew from his military school education, and instead, studied political science. In time Coubertin had observed schools, colleges and universities in France, England and the United States. He felt athletics and education might go well hand in hand. He envisioned that international sports rivalry would promote international amity in broader fields. He publicly introduced his idea of the revival of the Olympic Games during an athletic conference in France attended by thirty-four countries in 1894. More than fifteen hundred years before in 776BC, the ancient Olympic Games had been conducted every four years over a span of more than one thousand years at the Mount Olympia site in Greece. Coubertin was now recommending a modern Olympic Games be revived beginning in the year 1900. The nations attending the athletic conference liked the Coubertin concept so much that the Olympic Games revival was approved by vote and scheduled for the year

1896, four years earlier than originally planned. The site of the competition was to be in Athens, Greece. Coubertin felt that the modern Olympic Games should be conducted every four years and that the Games should always be held regardless of any political situations and even when nations were at war. Coubertin found that this was not going to be so easy!

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