

## **Luis FERNANDEZ – My interviews with Kirsty COVENTRY**

### **TRANSCRIPT OF THE VIDEO n°9:**

#### **Honouring the past**

KIRSTY, being proud of one's roots, honoring one's past, isn't it an essential condition to envisage and conquer the future serenely?

#### **1. Honoring the Past: do we still need to know it, discover it, love it**

But how do you do it when you don't know it.

Jean DURRY, the historian specialising in Pierre de COUBERTIN, describes him himself as "a famous unknown"

When you listen to the athletes who participate in the Olympics, when you read the interviews even of Olympic champions, you can only notice that their knowledge of the Olympics and Olympism is reduced, for most of them, to its simplest expression.

Of course, they feel that it's more than just world championships!

First of all because of their rarity in the calendar.

First of all, by what those who have experienced them say.

Certainly, they feel the greatness, the universe behind it, but without putting words into it, without explaining it, without understanding it, without knowing that they are the elite of a brotherhood, the elite of sporting chivalry.

And that's regrettable.

Extremely regrettable.

But how can we be surprised?

5 centuries BC, the poet Aesop already said that language is both "the best and the worst of organs."

Indeed, many people, including athletes and leaders of the Olympic and Sports Movement, tend, out of jealousy, to see the dark side of other people.

And, if the latter shine, they do not hesitate to lynch him. This is what is happening to Pierre de Coubertin: While he has created one of the major events on the planet and allows all the players in sport not only to exist but also to shine, including his own detractors.

Take the Paris 2024 Olympics.

Nothing.. Absolutely nothing... when it is His Homeland. If he had been from another country, he would be a national hero. Anyway, let's move on....

For my part, I prefer to see people from their bright side and admire the personal added value they bring or have brought to Humanity.

Do we not recognize a tree by its fruits?

## **1. Honoring the Past: The First Step**

In 1986, to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Pierre de Coubertin, your predecessor Juan Antonio Samaranch wanted the I.O.C. to devote a large-scale publication to him on the dual theme of sport and Olympism.

Here is what he says about it in the foreword:

*"Coubertin, like many universal minds of his century, expressed himself abundantly, both in his writings and in his speeches, on multiple aspects of human activity, passing blithely from philosophy to history, visiting sociology, politics, medicine and education in the process.*

*His entire work was a succession of bold bridges that he constantly built between these domains that were usually so compartmentalized. He even affirmed that Olympism took on all its human value in the source of harmony and the factor of fulfillment that it brought to its followers.*

*The CARL DIEM Institute in Cologne was responsible for cataloguing all the texts and unassailable personalities tackled the arduous and immense task of identifying, sorting, classifying the sources, the documents and above all the protean thought of this French aristocrat, whose inflexible will was to lead to a universal destiny. »*

Among all these unassailable personalities, we can mention:

1. For the family of Coubertin Geoffroy de NAVACELLE,
2. For the Carl-Diem-Institut: Professors LISELOTT, Franck LOTZ, Norbert MULLER
3. For the International Pierre de Coubertin Committee: Georges RIOUX
4. For the German NOC: Dr Hermann LOTTER, Prof. August KIRSCH
5. For the I.O.C.: Mr Alexandru PIPERCO, Raymond GAFNER

Under the direction of Georges RIOUX as pedagogical advisor, they compiled all of Pierre de Coubertin's work – more than 10,000 pages – and made it accessible to all.

THANK YOU to them for this extraordinary work

The WEIDMANN house in Zurich published the 3 volumes that form a whole.

And Juan Antonio SAMARANCH concludes his foreword (volume 1, page XIII):

*"Even if this edition, for the moment at least, is only published in French, I am convinced that it constitutes a unique contribution to the knowledge and dissemination of a thought and*

*action that have profoundly marked the history of the twentieth century. May the flame they have lit in the heart of man enlighten our world in search of its destiny! »*  
September 1986 Lausanne J A S President of the I.O.C.

### **Honoring the Past: Acting Out**

Kirsty, what's the point of going further in this argument of Honoring the Past? I believe that, spontaneously, for everyone, the mission of the global Olympic and Sports Movement is obvious:

1. That the I.O.C. translate it into all the official languages of the Olympic Movement
2. That each NOC translate it into the official language or languages of its country. Thanks to AI, it should be easy...
3. To make all this work freely accessible to all, via digital technology,

If some grumpy minds retort:

"What will it be used for?"

"Is it really useful to translate everything?"

Here is my answer:

For now, let them macerate in their mediocrity juice.

The next and final interview "Enlightening the Future" will obviously convince even the most refractory.

And I weigh my words.

See you soon