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| At the close of the nineteenth century, French aristocrat Pierre de Coubertin (1863–1937) sought to revive the Olympics in an attempt to foster cultural diversity and alleviate rising international tensions. In 1894 Coubertin helped found the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and served as its second president until 1925. The first modern Olympic Games were held symbolically in Athens in 1896. It was not until the Stockholm Games of 1912 that Coubertin’s vision of celebrating human achievement athletically as well as artistically was realized, and medals were awarded in five artistic disciplines until 1952. Coubertin himself was awarded the gold medal in literature at the Stockholm Games for his ‘Ode to Sports’, which expressed his philosophy of peace: ‘O Sport, You are Peace!/ You forge happy bonds between the peoples/ by drawing them together in reverence for strength/ which is controlled, organised and self-disciplined’. Unfortunately, World War I led to the cancellation of the 1916 Berlin Games. When the Games reconvened in Antwerp in 1920, Germany was not invited. In 1936 the Games returned to Berlin, but the rise of National Socialism led some countries to boycott. Spain’s Popular Front organized a protest event called the People’s Olympiad, but the Spanish Civil War erupted days before the games. |
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| Further reading:  (de Coubertin)  (Guttmann)  (Large)  (Muller) |