

SHALLOW WERE THE GIANTS



by
JOHN CHEFFERS

Brown & Benchmark
College Division
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Dubuque, Iowa 52001
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For me
You remember the '80 bag cost
only \$2 well. But you see
the your contributions; Thank you.

Jeff
Boston
December 1992

SHALLOW WERE THE GIANTS

by

JOHN CHEFFERS

PROFESSOR OF EDUCATION

BOSTON UNIVERSITY

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THE AUTHOR

John Cheffers coached the Rhodesian Track and Field Olympic team in 1968. He lived through a time in Olympic history when boycotts were primary weapons. He has written a number of texts and articles arguing that boycott and exclusion is an impoverished method of correcting common ills. This text details the story of the 1980 Olympic boycott and includes commentary on subsequent boycotts. He pulls no punches, which is his style.

PREFACE

When the sporting world goes, in the popular vernacular, "Belly up," it usually signifies conflicts more universal than specific. The Olympic Games provide such a stage that even the meanest of Human beings is tempted to take advantage. The author suffered through global lunacy during the intense politicizing of sport in 1968 and rejected its directions as superficial and misguided.

Twelve years after, in Boston, USA, Chris Larson was appointed Field Hockey Coach of Boston University's Club Team. She began a diary detailing her valiant efforts to gain inclusion in the inaugural US Field Hockey Olympic Team. I have rewritten her notes in Chapter Two. Chris was present as each word of this chapter was dictated, often with moist eyes. The book is dedicated to her and every amateur athlete who has chosen ultimacy, who has given uncommon effort, especially those who have been denied the final expression of their talents.

My sincere thanks to Margaret, Betsy, Sonia, Susan, "Jini", Shemetra, Julie and son Paul for their help in preparing the manuscript.

John Cheffers
Boston
1992

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Author	i
Preface	ii
Table of Contents	iii

CHAPTERS

Pages

INTRODUCTION	1
THE INTERVENING YEARS	1
CHAPTER ONE	
THE CHRIS LARSON STORY - A SHATTERED DREAM ..	6
The Perspective	6
Summer 1977	6
Christmas 1978	8
Romance	9
Mid January 1980	13
Early February	14
Selection	16
FOUR YEARS ON	18
CHAPTER TWO	
POLITICS AND THE MODERN OLYMPIC GAMES	20
References	26
CHAPTER THREE	
1980 - A "LOUSY" BEGINNING	27
References	45

Table of Contents (Cont'd)

<u>CHAPTERS</u>	<u>Pages</u>
CHAPTER FOUR	
"1980 - THE POSITIONS HARDEN"	47
The Team that came up golden	55
References	57
CHAPTER FIVE	
"1980 - THE WEST DIVIDES"	59
References	76
CHAPTER SIX	
ETERNAL OLYMPISM - "1980 - THE GAMES	
SURVIVE	79
References	88
IN RETROSPECT	89

INTRODUCTION

THE INTERVENING YEARS

It was 12 years since I had left Rhodesia. The trip from Salisbury to Mexico City as the sole Rhodesian representative to the 1968 Olympic Games was inordinately painful. For 10 months I had prepared the Rhodesian team for the Mexican Olympics. We were ready and eager, but the threat of third world Boycott forced the Games Authorities into voiding Rhodesian entry permits. The official travel documents never arrived. Two young black distance runners were prevented from participating in what amounted to flagrant violation of the Olympic Charter. At first hand I witnessed the paralyzing effect of boycott on innocent victims and on innocent games. But that's another story.*

I made a forecast at that time. The Germans in 1972 would never permit politics to interfere with the good conduct of the quadrennial Olympic Games. Here was a nation with a strength of purpose to carry out the intent of the rule in the Olympic Charter, which, paraphrased, states "The Olympic Games are held every four years. They assemble amateurs of all nations in fair and equal competition. No discrimination is allowed against any country or person on grounds of race, religion, or political affiliation."

Unfortunately, I had underestimated the powerful influence of those committed to national ambition and social intrigue. Little Rhodesia sent her team of eleven athletes to the Munich Olympics in 1972 only to have them returned, ignominiously, and with little ceremony. The IOC had voted 37-31 to exclude Rhodesia in order to stave off another threatened boycott by the African nations. Distance runner, Bernard Dzoma, had now been denied Olympic participation in 1968 and 1972. I watched the '72 Olympics beside an American television set buried in the final pages of a dissertation at Temple

* See A Wilderness of Spite: Rhodesia Denied - John Cheffers (available from author)

University in Philadelphia. The spite of Munich was muted only by distance and preoccupation.

Focus to my life resulted from the year I'd spent as Track and Field coach in Rhodesia, and a subsequent seven-month stint in Papua New Guinea. These rich experiences enabled a break from a permanent position with the Education Department of Victoria. I loved teaching but found the restrictions of the state-wide education bureaucracy stifling.

From the bitter disappointment of Mexico City, I returned to Melbourne, Australia, without job or immediate future. I was determined to be unemployed and unemployable until the Rhodesian story was written, and labored at this task from mid-November to mid-January. There was so much misunderstanding about events in South Africa. A blanket condemnation was laid upon all residents; friend and foe were lumped together and branded racist. My position as Track and Field Coach gave me a valid and accepted vantage point from which to view the situation first-hand.

The opportunity to help the Papua New Guineans develop a strong South Pacific Games Track and Field team for August, 1969, provided welcome relief from the torment of the previous year. It was highly unlikely, I reasoned, that the Olympic movement would ban Papua New Guinea. In seven months a team of fifty-five qualified athletes had to be selected and there was some doubt if there was enough talent in the country to achieve this Herculean objective.

Savings from the previous year had evaporated by the end of January, 1969, so it was time to go back to work. The new undeveloped country tried its best to keep me solvent - making me Chief Physical Education Officer for the territory, Executive Secretary of the National Fitness Council, and Chief Games Coach for the Track and Field team. Only the first task provided the daily bread. I sometimes wondered during the months that followed as I raced from village to village whether the hurt of Rhodesia was driving me to an ultimate fulfillment. I was like a madman, setting up meets, measuring performances, leading whole villages in physical exercises. And then, having discovered the talent, it was necessary to bargain with publicans for the privilege of providing the airfare for Games candidates to attend the final trials in June. In their defense, and to their great credit, not one of them turned me down.

Many friends, old and new, supported the venture. A few criticized, and some completely misunderstood the enormity of the task. Only three athletes had reached the qualifying standards in January of 1969. We had 55 spots to fill in the seven months that remained. By the time the final selection trials were completed in late June, the team numbered 53 qualified participants. Most New Guineans were ecstatic. Most were

surprised and a few disclaimed the impatient methods used to develop the team. At the previous South Pacific Games held in Noumea in 1966, Papua New Guinea managed one gold medal. During those eventful August Games of '69 we finished with six gold and many minor medals as well. Many wonderful stories comprised this effort illustrating how important athlete success is to developing countries. Kito Kaida, who was discovered in a mosquito-infested swamp named Daru, recovered miraculously from a near fatal bout of malaria one week before winning two gold medals and a silver. The team hardly failed to place in each event, but more importantly an enthusiastic spirit arose from within. It was deeply gratifying - much of the pain of '68 was erased.

A scholarship for graduate study at Temple University in Philadelphia was received in April of 1969. Thrilled at the opportunity to study in the United States, I happily accepted and journeyed there at the conclusion of the 1969 South Pacific Games. The weather radically changed, but the consuming need to achieve remained white hot. I tackled the terminal degree at Temple like a man possessed and on August 3rd, 1972, was awarded a doctorate in Education. Three months before this, a New York Firm had published the Rhodesian story. I couldn't get Australian publishers interested. The market was limited and the subject taboo in many Commonwealth countries at that time. The resources of the United States, however, were not exhausted by such road blocks, and for this I remain intensely grateful. It was particularly good to tell the Rhodesian story to a wide audience. Very few people after reading A Wilderness of Spite: Rhodesia Denied have failed to express their disdain at the ruinous political desecration of the Olympic spirit and hundreds of students, from 1972-92, have read and reacted to the story.

My interests spanned Track and Field, and a fascinating area of educational research known as Interaction Analysis. I learned much from the Americans on both sources, and managed to create original instrumentation as well. During these years, and again in 1976, I helped the American Women's Olympic Development Committee in their quest to raise Women's track standards to Olympic levels. It was a gratifying task, especially as one young high jumper, Karen Moller of Philadelphia, managed to bring honors to herself and her country. I particularly enjoyed working with the young inner city Blacks and Hispanics whose talents were enormous and who relied so heavily for opportunities upon a few dedicated people. We, in the academe, came to respect deeply the efforts of a handful of devotees who were responsible in those early days for later dramatic improvement in U.S. Women's Track and Field.

It was obvious by this time that serious problems had arisen in the sport: drug use, steroid abuse, blood doping, excessive nationalism, desensitizing professionalism,

terrorism, and fiscal exorbitance were just a few. By 1976, the issue of Rhodesian participation had subsided, but the use of the boycott had intensified. The African nations, intent upon dealing a death blow to South Africa sport, threatened to boycott Montreal if the New Zealand team was permitted to take part. This was a risky business as New Zealand could in no way be compared with South Africa on the question of institutionalized racism. The African countries did not understand that the insistence of the New Zealand All Black Rugby Team on playing the South African Springboks was a decision far removed from New Zealand's politicians and the issue of race.

In many of the older established Western countries, sport functioned free of, and independent from political contamination. The New Zealand Government had implored the All Blacks not to engage their South Africans counterparts for the sake of preserving world peace. But the highly independent rugby enthusiasts exercised a right to ignore such political influence. The net result was a belated and ineffective walk-out only hours before the opening ceremony by 26 African countries. Their boycott threat had failed in its objective, causing them to publicly abandon this tactic for the 1980 Olympics.

The IOC president, Lord Killanin, who had for many years championed Olympism, battled to hold this decision until the final morning thus averting the serious consequences an earlier walk-out would have occasioned.

I breathed freely at the African announcement, hoping that the use of boycott and exclusion in the Olympic movement would end, or at least be temporarily abandoned. It is such a cruel, ineffective, and dangerous way to achieve even desirable objectives. I agreed with a prominent Nigerian politician when he stated that the Africans had outgrown this primitive tactic.

Ominous noises were emanating from some well-meaning British and American backbenchers advocating the use of boycott at Moscow in protest of Russia's insensitivity towards the human rights issue, but these were isolated expressions of disgruntled, if substantial, gall. Some of us believed that the staging of the 22nd Olympiad in Moscow would do much to lessen world tension. Plummeting U.S. international stocks were of concern as was the tenuous situation in Iran, but some good things had happened, too. China was ready to rejoin the Olympic movement and Israel and Egypt were talking to each another. The stalwart nations of the world seemed to be anticipating an era of increased international accord and cooperation. Many people anticipated the decade of the 80's with hope and joy. One of my personal dreams involved a cleaning up of the Olympic movement. I could see the stage was now set for human beings to quest for excellence in peaceful resolution of individual ambition and drive.

Then it happened. Iran illegally abducted 68 American hostages placing the U.S. in the untenable position of losing national pride or plunging the world into the catastrophes of World War III. The resultant weakened prestige and the unrest in the Moslem world emboldened the U.S.S.R. to secure its fragile position in Afghanistan. Responding on the spurious claim that the legitimate government of Afghanistan needed help to rid itself of political terrorism, the U.S.S.R. poured 100,000 troops into that beleaguered country. The world reeled from the blow, especially the U.S.A. President Carter jumped quickly, very quickly, too quickly. It has now been learned that little expert advice supported his position, yet he publicly announced retaliatory measures the most eye catching of which was Olympic boycott. A frustrated and angry America clutched at this promising straw. Erstwhile, respectable journalists clambered their support, producing a Washington media "hype" that sent shock waves around the world. Pleased with the favorable response, the President's heart hardened and an Olympic boycott solidified into frontline policy. I, for one, was horrified. This seemed like pouring propane onto menacing flames that were already engulfing the house. It was short-sighted, ill-advised, precipitous, even stupid. No real good could come of this action, except revenge and that is the weakest of man's emotional reactions. Even if the boycott had succeeded and the Games were wrecked, what then? Was the Russian bear likely to roll over, kick its legs in the air, play humble, and seek help to expiate its sins? Under no circumstances could I see lasting good arising from an Olympic boycott. I was angry, and wrote to Jimmy Carter expressing my position and I will share these feelings with all who care to read this story.

It is a sorry story with shame all around. The victims were those who strived to develop the quality of humanity, and the predators were those found wanting in the continuing process of civilizing human endeavour.

CHAPTER ONE

THE CHRIS LARSON STORY - A SHATTERED DREAM

The Perspective

Old men and women in stodgy rooms meting out their judgments frequently forget about the participants, those that make the action. The first part of this book deals not with the political emoluments of the 1980 boycott or of its subsequent counteractions, rather it begins in the summer of 1976. A beautiful, eager, 20 year old field hockey player from Penn State University is the central figure. Chris Larson loved to play and believed that if she played hard and well the rewards would automatically follow.

The genesis of Olympic idealism began in Chris with a 1976 visit to Greece, home of the ancient Olympic Games and host in 1896 to their first modern counterpart. Her ambition was stirred by the history with its focus on denial and challenge. As she moved from each ancient site, nestled amongst the crumbling hills of a now overshadowed land, her flame kindled. An eager determination developed.

The United States was determined to field a team in the 1980 Olympic Games. Only six teams would play off in Moscow. As host, Russia was assured one spot. The U.S. had placed 11th in the world championships of 1975. A formidable task lay ahead for the enthusiasts of this young sport in this country. Not only must Chris survive the continuous paring of the team's shape during the next three years, but the team itself would need to jump six places in the world ranking. She knew, too, that her preparation until this time had been patchy. She was inadequate in the skills and tactics of the game. Let's take up her story.

Summer 1977

My friend Charlene and I suffered together. Our bodies were unprepared for an Olympic training day when camp reduced us to mere blobs of protoplasm. Drills, running, exercises, games and the pain of exclusion challenged us from the outset. A small number of 32 would be chosen to form the initial U. S. selection squad. By

Christmas that year fourteen girls would be picked to tour England and another fourteen would tour the West Indies. I worked hard at the Christmas camp. The dreaded envelope gave us our first message and, thank heavens, the names of Larson and Morrett were on the English list. I felt limp all over, could have jumped over the moon and celebrated that night with a steak, some beer and lots of conversation. But I knew I wasn't ready, I had to work harder.

During January and February I busted my ass. In March we played at Wemberly Stadium against a British team before 68,000 people. The family arrived: parents, sister, aunt, and Rob - more about him later. I played the second half, and played well. We tied the game achieving the unexpected, which was a good result for us. Unlike comedian Rodney Dangerfield, we got respect that day. My greatest fear, however, was peer respect, I wanted to be a central part of this team. New skills, better adaptations, stronger confidence, and more aggression were needed. It takes time for a greenhorn to mature. I desperately wanted my peers to say, "we need you."

Coach Vonnice Gros' Olympic development program was in line. You sped or sputtered, grew or groped and, each time you played, it had to be as good as you could play. Leisure time made way for total preparation. I had to be stronger, faster, more skilled and, of course, financially dependent on parents and friends.

By the summer of 1978, hockey was paramount. A friend of mine interviewed with me for a full-time job at the Hammermill Co.. In no time, she was earning \$30,000. per year but don't get me wrong, money didn't matter. The spirit of Olympism consumed me and in the summer of '78, my confidence was strong and my goals focused directly.

It's one thing to have ambition and another to have health. A severe set-back nearly terminated my career. A broken foot, from a Lacrosse tournament in '78, tested me to the full. I won only one argument that time and that was to keep my ailing extremity out of plaster. I was able to exercise the rest of the body and, within four weeks, take gentle pressure on the offending limb. Of all the pain, though, the psychological feeling was unbearable.

By June I was a mess, felt fat and worthless and desperately afraid of being eliminated from the team. Yes, everyone was sympathetic. All wished me well. But the bottom line was what counted, somebody else was in my place in the team. Someone else's fingers were carrying my stick and someone else's play was under the selector's scrutiny. The loneliness was unbearable.

I survived, along with 45 others, and by August was playing again in the team. We were starting to understand the reasons for winning sports teams. One time we played

in Pueblo, Colorado, on astroturf in temperatures estimated at 140 degrees. Players were dropping like flies. Why did we play at all? Because it was possible that the Olympics would encounter the same conditions. We learned quickly that you play the game as often and as hard as you can and let others worry about detracting conditions.

Training camps have their own medicines. Each morning you just know you can't get up, but by lunchtime, you're mobile. You start to enjoy the austerity. It is sometimes called the "steeling process" where you do more than tolerate opposition; you thrive on it. A collective mentality develops with even the unlovely drills assuming more importance. Individual brilliance is placed in group perspective. We came to summer camp in '78 scared of our coaches, we left hoping the coaches were tough enough to prepare us for Olympic selection.

Christmas 1978

The hockey authorities flew 52 players into an indoor field at Virginia Tech the day after Christmas, 1978. A week later, the squad was reduced to 30, and, finally, in April, a 16 member touring team was selected for Scotland, Wales, Ireland, and Holland. I survived these cuts, fortunately.

Twice a week we were flown in to practice. Life was busy. To survive, I was trying to waitress full time, teach five sections of racquetball at Boston University, and train and study for a graduate degree. I needed to practice relaxation techniques. Not infrequently I would lay on the floor, close my eyes, blank out the day's thoughts and concentrate on Bermuda in the sun. The tension would ease from my lower back, neck, chin, wrists, hands, and facial muscles. I developed control over the stress needed and the relaxation demanded for recovery. Eventually, the waitressing job drained me of wit and will so the financial problems returned to curse this summary weakness of mine--to let fatigue interfere with my preparation.

Stress does things to me, especially after listening for one's name as the selection list is being called out. It is the most stressful thing I know. I was tempted to rationalize in case my name wasn't called and, after it was called, the announcement time demanded a protocol of low-keyed acceptance. Sitting amongst us were those who didn't make it; angry veterans with shattered dreams. I felt for them and so muffled my excitement and repressed my glee.

We came home winners from the five nation tournament in Holland and knew now that we had a chance to qualify for Moscow, but we still felt insecure. Like all rookies, I lacked the field wisdom to know where my opponent and teammates were and execute perfectly.

By July of '79, the selectors had eliminated five people from last year's successful tour. Oh dear, but I still survived. We prepared for the Vancouver World Championships scheduled for August at Colorado Springs amid occasional thunderstorms, oppressive dry heat and the heat of team exclusion. After-game showers were cherished. Occasionally, we drank light beer packed in tubs of ice. Charlene played the tambourine at "Diamond Jim's" one night. Her emboldenment stretched to sharing this daring feat with her father by telephone. His comment was typical of all hockey fathers, "Charlene, for God's sake, can the tambourine stuff. Did you make the team?" "Affirmative Dad, and so did Chris as well." The tears flowed.

More practice, more testing, but through it all we improved. The Men's Team Handball and the Woman's Field Hockey combined to train hard and socialize together which bolstered our spirits through the sharing of tribulations and successes. Tornadoes in Colorado and earthquakes in California steeled us for the Vancouver World Championships. Our coaches battled to keep us "real". "Eat properly. Rest up. Play it over in your mind. Think success, you're in the top five, you've got to believe." We beat New Zealand (third ranked) 3-0 and stepped in front of England to make the top four. The West Germans beat us in the semifinals in a double overtime, sudden-death playoff. They deserved their victory. Now we had to play those "rotten" Aussies, to determine the third position. This time we prevailed in double overtime with the only goal in the game. Third in the world, imagine that. We were so excited, we knew we wouldn't need the plane to fly home and we dwelt for just a short time in celebration.

Confirmation of the Olympic selection had still to be finalized, but we knew deep down that the U. S. would be going to Moscow. That issue was never really in doubt. The question of who would play in that team, however, was still the prevailing issue. So back to Boston in September for a Master's degree and coaching the field hockey team I trundled, knowing I had a good chance of achieving this objective. I saw this team's needs through different eyes in the Fall of '79. Cycling, tennis and weights comprised my winter program. I had a taste of failure, too. My Boston University team was 1 and 4 by October first reversing our position of the previous year, and my life was complex, too: rent, phone bills, and debts made me feel more like the sacrificial lamb than I ever cared to imagine.

Romance

Every person needs love and I was no exception. The time spent directly or indirectly on hockey did not prevent me from making friends of both sexes. In many ways my love life had been perfectly normal. Certainly I had no time to flirt and didn't

care for superficial dating. Shallow conversations have always frustrated me, and the failure to engage, especially a boyfriend, in serious exchange always disappointed. But I had my romantic attachments. There was pro-ball playing Rich who lit up my junior year, and there was Barry, too, for a lesser time. In fact, Rich kept re-appearing over the next few years, and I'm glad, for we had many interesting conversations and good experiences about our similar but divergent careers. I was serious about Rob, the basketball player. Indeed, this attachment lasted almost a year, spanned at least two continents, and invited overtones of marriage. It wasn't sport that brought the relationship to heel, although I'm sure our adventures in athletics gave us both clearer insights. There were the frivolous times too, like when Cam went out the back door as Rich came in the front. I still quake when I think of that delightful moment. Innocent yes, but traumatic too, and touching, especially when Cam phoned later to disavow his action, and promised never to repeat. That episode still brings smiles all around.

I found myself wanting to spend time with loved ones, broken foot and all. The summer of '78 was spent with Rich and other friends in relaxation on that gorgeous Penn State campus, and helped to counterbalance the anxieties and vagaries of training and team selection. It's a pity we drifted apart, but neither of us have regrets today. I think I would have to answer yes to a question directed to the deleterious effect the drive for Olympic selection had on my romantic attachments. I have dated only intermittently since that time. But it would be wrong to vilify Olympic ambition, everything has its place and romantic attachments take time. One needs time to be with people. My personality mitigates against superficial dating and I'm at the stage in life where I feel guilty if I've expended time and energy on companionship mindlessly. That's not to say that spontaneous fun is a stranger, either.

Rico, the team handball player, was great to be around in Colorado especially when respite from training rigor was needed.

It's strange how romances begin. I value conversation, especially with friends. Peter would stop in at my office and talk and talk and talk. We were coaches together at Boston University and, in spite of being busy, I found my talks with him like a Freudian catharsis. There was a real depth to our conversation. At first, it was platonic, but eventually it led to romantic attachment, the key ingredient of which was mutual respect and friendship. With Peter, I was amazed at how conversation stretched the hours. Sometimes we would sit down at 8:00 pm and still be in animated conversation at 2:00 am. Our sports experiences provided an important meta-language of communication whether it be politics or philosophy, business, or recruiting. We talked of two on two situations, one on three situations, or a give and go; peculiar language of coaches

universally. I remember one particularly heavy conversation relating to the purpose of life, itself. Why do people commit suicide? Is there a similarity of feeling, hopeless and despairing, as a one on three situation in the rink, or on the field? Is it akin to a feeling of worthlessness when the opposition scores and the draining of confidence in you as your teammates look the other way? We were a positive pair, though, as Peter summarized, "If only people could understand that sport can teach you to reverse the despair - many a player has overcome the handicap of the one on three situation, and triumphed. Sport can teach you that."

I would have to admit, too, that my love is very much tied up with Eric Fromm's concept of the meaning of love. Without care, respect, responsibility, and meaningful knowledge, I distrust love. Steamy, erotic exchange is meaningless. I guess growing up in a sports environment has taught me that, too.

Some people are cynical about these things. They put down sport as a teacher of values and this may be true in some cases, but not with me. Whatever the outcome, most of life's understandings have come to me either in sport or as a result of programming myself to play sport. I'm grateful that I've had the good fortune and the opportunity to be an athlete.

My young Boston University athletes tried hard and vastly improved their performance, finishing the season on a high note. My own preparation in the Spring of 1980 was ultimately demanding. Pursuing ultimacy in sports hurts because one never quite achieves perfection. Too many mistakes. I wanted to erase today's memories before the game had even finished.

"Burning out", was a term we used for poor play. "You stupid thing, how could you miss that shot?" My own censure was much greater than any coach's could be. I would castigate myself, impatiently. But then I would do something well, really well, and it was as though the clouds rolled away. Success breeds success and the Olympic dream was now within reach. The whole business started to play with me; a number plate at a tailgate labelled "Virginia 16". This was freaky: Virginia was the tryouts location and 16 was my lucky number. In college it was my preferred number and Bobby Clark, my ice hockey hero, sported that number also. These rituals melded with the bread and butter conditions of my game. Ball-control, passing, conditioning, playing penalty corners, field awareness and mental alertness. At night I'd lay milling over the formula: play-dream-listen-rationalize-dream-play. This was my ritual, I knew it would work.

Christmas that year was fragile. Thank God my parents let me be just me: twenty-three years of just being me. The Olympic dream seemed to meld with

everything: the spirit of Christmas, the spirit and the ideals of the Olympics. I loved Christmas, so I loved the Olympics, too.

One traumatic moment must be recorded: an engagement to speak before hundreds of people at the Fall sports dinner at Boston University. Although I could recall similar speaking situations in my past -- situations which I prefer to forget -- it went well and I even remembered to thank everybody. I am relieved to report that only minor imperfections arose. I get so nervous. In the past, I've fainted, not once, but three times! . . . and it's so embarrassing. I even tried, once, to run away but my legs would not carry me. Yet, as my Hockey achievements grew, the number of public-speaking engagements grew. I wanted to do them - really - but I get apoplectic just before beginning, every time. It has been a cross to bear. At Penn State, perceptive professors made me take a special speech course to improve my struggling technique but the overall psychological effort was problematic - one marked by determination to succeed, yet full of trauma. I know that those listening kids are full of dreams and fantasies, just as I know I was, and that touches the nerve through public speaking. I know I have to do it and basically want to, but it doesn't ease the pain much. There is one redeeming reinforcement which convinces me that I will meet the challenge. Even though I can't eat the banquet dinner and spend the days prior to the speech in intermittent knee trembling, once I begin and engage the eyes of those young people in the audience, I feast on the task at hand. I have a missionary zeal. You reason you're looking at somebody who has achieved senior levels in sport and "each one of you has a challenge level that you can aspire to, and I wanna see you achieve it."

Our intrepid coach trained us into the ground that yuletide break. Athletes on the cutting edge will respond to such little things. I instance the effort of a pep talk I gave in the van on the way to the game. It started off as a typical, benign bitch session mimicking coach admonitions. "Chris, if you don't stay on that sideline, I'm going to hook you up to a trolley cable to keep you wide." But it developed momentum and ended up a pep talk. If I remember the dialogue, it went this way -- hardly a classic submission for English 101, but timely, and rallying for this Olympic field hockey Frosh. I called it the BS speech. Our coaches had been ragging us each of the night games, so we decided to do some cutting up of our own.

Me: Well, she can't rag on us tonight because we're gonna kick ass.

Crowd: Yeah, yeah!

Me: And if she does, we'll say "Bullshit!"

Crowd: Yeah, yeah!

Me: And she can't not like the way we play tonight, she can't give up on us, she doesn't have a choice, she has to be on our side, we're playing Canada.

Crowd: Yeah!

Me: Just remember girls, if she gives ya any lip, just turn to her and respectfully say, "Bullshit!"

Crowd: Yeah, yeah, yeah!

The critical spring of 1980 was introduced by an invitation to the final tryouts on January 3rd. I was ecstatic and growing in confidence, but the grind continued unabated. Crazy things were happening to my psyche. I felt like dating, every night. I felt I could bend time somehow, or at least, make time elastic. I think it was Einstein who said I could do that, at least theoretically. Unfortunately, he didn't tell me how. Field hockey in my mid 20's was the embodiment of my ambition. Everything I dreamed of and more. Yet like Satan in the Garden of Gethsemane, distractions tempted me to abandon my dream. So I didn't date as often as I wanted to, giving rise to an accusation of insensitivity and unresponsiveness from a small group of would-be suitors.

Mid January 1980

Training was serious and good. I yearned for the team to play in Moscow, with me included. I could taste it! From the shadows, however, a stranger appeared. A dank fellow who had been lurking unobtrusively with sinister intent and it came upon me suddenly. An "off-the-wall" comment by the President of the United States in obvious retaliation for the Russian incursion into Afghanistan cast a shadow over the entire preparation scene. Boy, it bummed me out. He suggested we boycott the 1980 Olympic Games. Many Americans reacted favorably to his idea because they were all angry with the Russians, and I, too, thought about bombs and war and world conflagration. That's serious business. But talk of that time seemed more like irritating, peripheral, political bullshit flying around from lip to lip and newspaper to newspaper. It was loose, inflated scare talk. All this training down the drain for loose talk! Although I still had not confirmed final selection, I was confident. I could smell success, and wanted it badly. Here was ambition realized, right before my eyes, ready to grasp. It seemed like somebody who didn't even belong had stepped into the wings of the opera and was trying to snatch my role away. The whole team was so psychologically ready, ready to sacrifice everything in the battle with other nations in this first Olympic Women's Field Hockey competition. To be so close and yet to be denied. Each time I thought of this boycott business, it was like a bursting pimple. It reeked! So I put it out of my mind,

certain that sanity would be restored on the political front. Other sporting phenomena intrigued me at this time. Watching the Superbowl was an inspiration. I really had not seen this game played before -- the intensity, concentration, success, failure -- I saw bubbling energy and busted dreams. The tragedy, the ecstasy, the human drama, the complex, instantaneous decision-making. I watched with hungry eyes and wanted so much to reach out and gather the spirit of adventure and pull it into my being. I dreamed a parallel dream. The dream of the Superbowl was the drama of my selection drive and every complex behavior on that field was matched by similar daring on the Hockey Fields of my mind. I'm sure others watched the Superbowl that day and dreamed their own dreams. To me it was like the Olympic competition we were striving towards.

All of the marbles were at stake, and each player was geared in the hope of being a hero, not a goat, yet at this level little separated these two extremes. The bounce of the ball, a fumble, a blocked punt, a missed tackle, a wrong assignment would surely swing the initiative away to the other side, and I marvelled at the strength of the warriors on the field. I wanted that same strength in our team as it wound its way through the preliminary Olympic rounds.

"Put it out of your mind," we were told. "Politics and sport don't mix". A blister had appeared on my psyche, this boycott stuff. There was not a single member of our squad who favored the boycott, including the coaches. One of them had been denied playing for Holland in 1956, when that country boycotted over the Soviet invasion of Hungary, and he echoed our views. "The boycott achieved nothing in 1956 and will achieve nothing in 1980." He was in danger of having two sets of scars, 24 years apart.

The media continued to splash around the boycott story. It was juicy, but apart from a cursory mention of the victims to be, the press made hay of this tragedy. They sold their papers on the positions of both sides.

Early February

February 4th - 10th was a period of mounting tension, so I got myself a massage on Newbury Street, a relaxing hour which cost me \$18 and left me without fight or gall.

We trained in Philadelphia each weekend. My parents housed three team members for the next eight weekends. Amateur sports, and impoverished professional sports, too, survive on commitment like my parents'. They opened their doors to the Olympic hockey family. It was a selfless model contributing to my gratitude, fueling my zeal for Olympic selection. The U.S. team was now listed third so our chances of confirming participation were very strong. By this time, however, the fatigue of

preparation was fused with the anguish of an impending boycott. A look of deep hurt developed in each pair of eyes as the subject was broached, then painfully avoided. Our coaches projected an optimistic and encouraging image, "Let's work hard and leave Afghanistan to the politicians". A mailgram for the U.S. Field Hockey Association confirmed our selection in the Summer Olympics and supported the coach's position (Page).

I developed the habit of keeping a personal diary on all training matters as part of an independent study during my master's degree. Important impressions and statistical information were stored under two simple categories: physical (health, nutrition, sleep, muscle awareness, working--out sensations and the capacity to complete each day without crippling fatigue); and mental, whose aspects numbered more (attitude, relaxation, sleep, studies, and how men affected me) were just two of these categories. Sophisticated psychologists would smile at my subdivisions but they were real to me, and systematic. Indeed, the content of this first chapter is derived from these daily observations.

My muscles were sore but I was genuinely glad for I wanted the grind of training to be routine in my day. Momentary regrets aside, training for the Olympics did not appear to me to be a pleasant pastime. Our coaches lightened the rigor with some basketball, racquetball, cross-country skiing, even Ping Pong, as long as the quantities were small. Also, in the back of my mind, the spirits would muster anger. I wanted to call out, "Russians get the hell out of Afghanistan!" "Mr. Carter find another field on which to punish these thickheaded Russians!" My friend Leslie and I took turns to spring for lunch. We varied the location from Harvard and Kenmore Squares to Quincy market, even the Hyatt Regency. We bubbled and talked eagerly. I use the word *yearning* for it described how much both of us reached out towards our Olympic goal. Our weekly dinners fed this yearning.

Some nice things happened, too. Peter finally asked me for a real date and the winter Olympics started pinning my eager eyes to the television screen. I rejoiced and agonized, celebrated and cried at the efforts of these fine men and women from more than thirty countries. I wanted to reach out and touch the hands of the competitors; they seemed so close. As this wonderful period closed I caught my first really chilly draft of the political intrigue. The emptiness bit at the base of my stomach as February 18th - 24th was a lousy week. The political situation seemed out of hand and I felt a flu coming on. Salvation was quick at hand, though, thanks to Peter and Leslie who blessed my weekend with some cheer, a little beer, and a Hockey game to watch. My classes went well, too. The Men's Hockey Team in 1980 lifted me as it did the entire nation.

"Great job boys" - I knew some of them as four of them came from Boston U., including the inspiring Captain, Mike Eruzione. This enormous festival, the Olympic Games, held me in awe with the prospect of participation so near and yet so far.

February 25th to March the 2nd found me guilty about skipping a class on Thursday, just to rest. I crammed and worried as the sands of time slipped rapidly away. The truth of the old Amish proverb was underscored, "the hurrier I go, the behinder I get". Peter stopped over to talk and the practices in Philadelphia were excellent but the growing boycott nemesis kept rearing its ugly head. I wrote in my diary in black heavy letters, "POLITICS SUCKS!!! BULLSHIT, BULLSHIT!! LET US PLAY!!!"

One day scrimmage was marred by sheets of paper covering my part of the field. I fell and slipped, groping helplessly and missing simple passes. Coach Gros saw this and pulled me over for a very simple message, "You've been playing well. Concentrate!! Winners in this game keep a cool head. You are important to us." My respect for this woman grew deeper with each contact, especially during mid-March when we basked in sunshine for the first time in months.

Selection

I combined a 15 mile bike ride with a three mile run. It was good to be alone, especially now. The next Sunday would see the final 16 players for the U. S. women's Olympic Hockey team announced. The coaches eliminated a manager (they were required to name only 15 players) so they could name a sixteenth player showing clearly how important team depth was in this pristine tournament. During the final five days I buried myself with every conceivable administrivia I could find, and, of course, I rationalized, "It's been worth it... given it a good shot... somebody has to miss out... nobody expects perfection... anyway, my dog loves me... and there's always 1984." Bah, no it won't do, excuses. This selection was for all the marbles, I'd given up too much time. Sunday became the most important day of my adult life. During the week old friends called and a new hovered. I frequently drifted into "zombieland" to pass the time. The action weekend started with a fizzle when the plane broke down on the way to the City of Brotherly Love. In retrospect, I think God planned it that way. The delay became an asset, as sleep was easily induced. A grueling training weekend led finally to the most heart-stopping moment of all. A list containing the final sixteen members was attached to an obliging locker room wall. It was in alphabetical order; my eyes shot straight towards the letter " L" and there it was, "Larson." Ohhhh!!! I checked the list again and again, picking up Charlene's and Leslie's names as well. Two members from the world championship team had been passed over; we felt for them, watching their

desolation as they dragged themselves off to the showers. "It's been worth it," I said and Leslie added, "What time shall we practice tomorrow?"

We celebrated the next week. I changed jobs, a trifle reluctantly, switching Williams College for Boston University and eventually settling down to view this vocational switch as important and successful.

One week later we traveled to Holland to play a four-nation tournament. Every game was close; no one was cocky. The wounds of physical contact were fresh as Holland and Russia tied and the English managed to beat the Dutch and squeeze by us 4 to 3. We beat Russia, but fell short of Holland in a tight 1-love game.

As the plane touched down at the end of this lightening Holland tour, the only shadow on our horizon was President Carter's threatened boycott. "Not now," I said semi-audibly as the wheels touched, "not in 1980, not in April, not to these 19 people who have worked so long and so hard for U.S. hockey." Some press were talking glibly about sacrifice, but we felt like the kid who had saved all her life to enter a special college only to be told that a stranger had closed it down.

For the rest of the week we waited as 2,400 people gathered at Colorado Springs. The President had picked this issue on which to press his claim for censorship over Afghanistan. Hope was still our main ally. Perhaps the President would withdraw his objection. Perhaps the Russians would withdraw from Afghanistan, perhaps the USOC would vote to go. Perhaps this was all a horrible dream.

I spent the Saturday training and studying. Around dinner time, Joanne called, "Hi, how are you?"

"Oh, fine, how are you?" She was silent. Her behavior was unlike Joanne. I repeated my opening interaction, "WELL, how are you?" She said, "Good." It was still strange, so I initiated a conversation, "What are you doing tonight?" "Oh, nothing really - I thought I'd stop over if you're not doing anything." "I'll see you later," I replied.

As I climbed up the stairs to return to study, the phone rang again, this time it was Peter. "Hi, how are you?" "Fine, how are you?" He was silent.

"Well, I trained hard today and I'm studying for a change."

"You didn't hear, did you?" It was like being hit in the stomach. I knew exactly what he was saying, I felt faint.

And then I said, "Oh no, don't tell me."

"It's Bad???"

"It's the Pits!!"

FOUR YEARS ON

The United States Olympic Field hockey team went on to Holland in mid-June and from there it went to West Germany which was the original pre-Olympic plan for 1980. It did not go to Moscow but returned to the USA in mid-July. Four years later Chris Larson won her medal, a bronze, in Los Angeles. But the feelings anticipated were not the same. This time Russia was not there. The political leaders of that country had returned the compliment and Russian counterparts to Chris Larson were recording similar sentiments in their training diaries.

It is ironic that the U. S. beat Australia under legal, but unfortunate, circumstances in a "flick-off" at the end of the competition. The Australians had just been beaten 2-0 by the Dutch leaving the U. S. and Australia dead even on everything - points scored, goals scored, - and the differential of overall goals for and against. Five girls from each team received two "flicks" each at the goal from the penalty strike line. The respective goalies were expected to stop everything but the Americans won easily ten goals to four. At times like this it is tempting to ponder on the results of 1980 and how each of the world's leading teams would have fared. Team sports are not like individual sports, the results are more difficult to predict. Chris Larson was fortunate. She at least had the chance to redeem a portion of her career, an opportunity denied so many other great athletes in these two unfortunate Olympiads.

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CHAPTER TWO

POLITICS AND THE MODERN OLYMPIC GAMES

In the middle 1880's Baron Pierre de Coubertin rallied support for a revival of the ancient Olympic games with a plethora of idealistic themes:

- Rivalry in sport would promote international amity in broader fields.
- It is not the winning that is important, but the struggle.
- Sport is a true international language.
- People should wage war by throwing discuses for distance rather than at one another.

Baron de Coubertin's dream must have had some strength for it became reality in 1896; the world joined him in reviving the most prestigious of ancient festivals, similarly consumed with the idealism. Greece was the logical place to stage the revival, and a virtual century of peace had pushed mankind to new levels of nationalism which insured competitive ire. The King of Greece invited all 250 competitors for breakfast. Backs were slapped, promises were made to insure continuation at Paris four years later (1900 AD) and every Olympiad, or four years, thereafter. The initial games, however, remained a side show to the featured events - World Expositions. At Paris, and again in St. Louis in 1904, the Olympic Games remained a novelty. Some important developments permanently changed the direction of the Olympics during those formative years. In 1900, the universities were still the prime movers. By 1904 large municipal clubs with diverse populations had taken over. This heralded the beginnings of the titanic struggle between university and community demonstrated through the two warring institutions of the day, the NCAA and the USOC. The struggle did not remain between the New York Athletic Club and the Chicago Athletic Club in the post college era either. Although New York won the initial battle it was not long before other municipalities joined the institutional melee. By 1904, world unrest began to escalate. The Russo-Japanese War and the struggles within the colonies established by European rivals began to affect all peaceful countries. The Olympics in London in 1908 reflected this growing acrimony. Indeed, they were known as "The Battle of Shepherd's Bush". Deluges of rain, protest,

and petty strife dampened the Olympic spirit to a point where the first cry to abandon was heard in the history of the modern Olympics. Individual countries endured humiliation. Russia insisted, for instance, that the Finns carry a Russian flag. An unhappy Ireland had to compete for Great Britain. Most countries objected to the introduction of the college scholarship system in the United States. Internally, too, there were genuine protests against the British officials coaching their athletes during events. "The Battle of Shepherd's Bush" resulted in control for all regulations in the various sports being placed in the hands of the various international bodies governing those sports. The seeds of doubt had been sown, the trumpets were beginning to sound. They seemed to play messages to this effect: "the Olympics were meant to bring mankind together in peace and goodwill, but instead they seemed to be yet another battleground for international discord and disharmony." The Swedes in 1912 invited 25 countries to their Games in Stockholm and managed to change attitudes considerably.

The quaint idealism of de Coubertin returned, evidenced in its sincere attempts to recapture Greek idealism and purity. No longer, for instance, could a Shot Putter win a gold medal by heaving the implement with a single arm. The Swedes instituted a competition for throwing with both hands, and with either hand.

The Stockholm Games did much to return the Olympics to their original ideal, and it appears that the organizers were successful in purging the evil spirits of the Olympics. But even in this highly favorable climate the mistake of believing that it was professionalism that ruined the original Olympic Games was perpetuated. Professionalism was only one cause for the demise of the ancient spiritual Games. The inordinate emphasis on winning, and of the extreme psychosocial and political capital which individuals and nations invest in this drama of all dramas on this attention-captivating stage were more pervasive reasons. The International Olympic Committee spoiled the Stockholm Olympics by divesting a simple Indian, Jim Thorpe, of his Olympic medals through accusation of what, by today's standards, amounted to trivial professionalism. This bogus action has since been reversed.

The desert into which Europe reduced itself after the 1914-18 conflagration guaranteed poor conditions for the 1920 Games. A reluctant Belgium chose Antwerp as the site. The entire physical plant was substandard by even contemporary conditions. It was during these Games that the Olympics received two body blows from which they have never recovered. One, the rise of the unofficial point score to that of permanent fixture, and, two, the fact that contemporary Europeans in their spite, or zest for vengeance, refused to permit Germany and Austria to take part. This unfortunate use of the Olympic peace festival as a political tool for the power structure of the time

preshadowed the current travesties where member nations have been excluded from participation on grounds of political discrimination or for political gain. Rhodesia, and to a lesser extent, South Africa, are two examples in the '60s and New Zealand suffered similar attention in the '70s.

It appears in 1924, when the games were held in Paris, that the idealists had again assumed control. The operative adjective for these games was "clean."

In 1928, in Amsterdam, the United States Olympic house suffered its first real set-back when women physical educators turned their backs on the Olympic movement. Philosophically the women argued against the inordinate accent on winning, and the hypocrisy that was now evident in the subterfugous professionalism and "win at any cost" adventurism.

In 1932, the Games were scheduled for Los Angeles amid the gloom of the Great Depression. When the city floated a bond issue of 1.5 million dollars, a cry went out, "What are we doing playing games during times of great human stress and tragedy?" But the Americans not only used this loan wisely, they made one million dollars profit on the Games. Only twice in the History of the Games have profits been made - Los Angeles 1932 and 1984.

The advent of the Nazi party in Germany in 1933 marked the first time that arrogant national preference was paraded openly. In defense of the International Olympic Committee, it must be stated that the Games were awarded to Berlin prior to Hitler's arrival, and that the Germans were not the only people responsible for world tension at that time. Japan was immersed in conquering Manchuria, Italy in demolishing Ethiopia, and rival political parties from Brazil sent two teams - so both teams were forced to withdraw.

At the outset of the 1936 Olympics, civil war erupted in Spain, causing the Spanish athletes to exit hurriedly. Hitler referred to the Negroes as black auxiliaries, unwanted and inferior, and to the Jews as "leeches" preying on the social classes. Indeed, the United States nearly didn't go to Berlin, and finally went only after they were assured of impartiality. Perhaps it is true to say that the 1936 Games were nationalistic and racist more than political.

Japan relinquished the 1940 Olympics to Helsinki, Finland, because of its war with China, but in 1939 Russia began its rape of Finland, causing the Games to be abandoned. The 1939-45 war in Europe and Asia chilled the world to the prospect of international competition, and it was only through the efforts of Lord Burghley of Great Britain, Lord Killanin of Ireland, and Avery Brundage of the United States that the Games were revived in 1948. London provided an appropriate venue for the re-establishment

of the Games, yet they were not without incident as the State of Israel was excluded from membership to avert a walk-out by the Arab states.

In 1952, Helsinki staged a relatively apolitical festival with the Russians, although living in a separate camp, attending for the first time since 1908.

Melbourne, in 1956, survived three major crises. First, Russia unceremoniously moved into Hungary and crushed an uprising there; second, Britain and France injudiciously moved into the Canal Zone causing Egypt, Lebanon, and Iraq to withdraw; and, third, Spain and the Netherlands withdrew from the Games in protest over the Russian action as did Switzerland, too, until she changed her mind.

The idealists won this battle, yet in Avery Brundage's words, "In ancient days nations stopped wars to compete in the Games - nowadays we stop the Olympics to continue our wars." Those who witnessed the Water Polo final between Hungary and Russia in 1956 would query the accuracy of Brundage's statement.

Whereas in 1952 Nationalist China was in and Red China was out, by 1960, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) ruled that the Republic of China had to parade as Formosa, which they agreed to do under protest.

The abortive Wildcat Games of the new emerging forces (Indonesia and North Korea) attempted to wrest control from the IOC, but their actions rebounded when they were forced to withdraw from the 1964 Olympic Games in Tokyo. Up to this time, however, the Olympic Charter had stood up.

In 1968, the original Olympic Charter reeled from a series of direct blows. The IOC banned South Africa and Rhodesia, having earlier stands reversed by the threat of boycott from the Afro-Asian bloc. The Czechoslovakians followed the hapless Hungarians of twelve years earlier into a futile if courageous revolt against Russia. The resultant primitive Russian reaction angered the world. The Russians suffered at the judgement table of Diving and Gymnastics particularly. Unfair judging directed against them may have pleased the average citizenry at the time, but poor officiating in Mexico City set a standard of subjectivity which impoverished the status of the Games.

The IOC was now forced to admit that it was no longer master of its own fate, and this unfortunate reality was further substantiated during the Munich Games in 1972 with the expulsion of South Africa from the IOC, the 37 to 31 reversal vote against Rhodesian participation, and the callous murder of 11 Jewish athletes.

During 1972 it was very clear that the Olympics were out of control. The pettiness (disqualification of the Austrian skier Franz Klammer), the vindictive exclusivity (Rhodesia), the ineffective officiating (the U.S.-Russian basketball shemmozzle), the interpersonal bitterness (disallowance of Bob Seagram's pole vault

pole), and the presence of a large number of security guards were lurid examples of the reduced effectiveness of the Games.

Few people believed the Games would be abandoned, but most recognized they would never quite be the same. Certainly the Canadian nation has few, if any, natural enemies, so most anticipated the Montreal Olympics with relief. Lord Killanin, the Irish peer, was now head of the IOC, and it was in Montreal that he revealed political astuteness equal to the occasion. Mainland China, flexing its muscles and rejoining the Olympic movement for the first time since the early fifties, objected to Taiwan using the name China in its official title. This was the season for stripping privileges from Taiwan as the U.S. and China became friends again and especially as the Canadians depended upon a large annual wheat sale to China. This squabble preoccupied the pre-Olympic IOC meetings during the week before the Games. The watching world wondered why this squabble was permitted to continue through until the morning of the opening ceremonies. Knowledgeable Olympic veterans attributed this to Lord Killanin's political skill. Second on the agenda was the threatened African boycott of the Olympics should New Zealand be permitted to participate. IOC exclusion of New Zealand threatened the potential participation of all the major western nations. This drama loomed as a catastrophe. The African action was a follow up of its successful campaign against South Africa and Rhodesia and was designed to force South African apartheid to its knees. It was a mistaken, dangerous move because the insistence of the New Zealand rugby team to continue playing against the South Africans had nothing to do with the New Zealand government or the New Zealand Olympic Federation.

New Zealand at that time was a country where sport functioned free of political or official governmental interference. Each sporting body had its own conscience. Indeed New Zealand was one of the few remaining countries where political contamination of sporting activities was virtually non-existent. Unfortunately, she fell from grace in 1980, and further in 1984, when the naive Prime Minister, Mr. Lange, grasped the national political helm.

By the time the New Zealand issue was promoted to prime place on the agenda in Montreal, the opening ceremony was upon the delegates and communication with many of the home countries was impossible. The threatened boycott proved ineffective. Some nations marched in blind ignorance of their home political wishes, and others were not sure what to do. Great athletes were denied participation (Henry Rono of Kenya, for one), but the Games proceeded nicely, with few problems.

Understandably, the Taiwanese refused to take part, but few virulent, deleterious effects resulted. The closing ceremony brought with it the nostalgia of a miracle event

passing, and the usual well wishing toward the next host of this remarkable fixture - Moscow, USSR. Some people were uneasy but most were intrigued. Would the Russians observe Olympic traditions? Could they handle the informality which inevitably surrounded the Olympic Games? Would the rest of the world give them a sporting chance to prove that they had the best interests of the Olympic spirit at heart?

At Montreal, in the twilight of those superb games, Lord Killanin properly called upon the youth of the world to assemble in four years' time in the next Olympic city.

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CHAPTER THREE

1980 - A "LOUSY" BEGINNING

The twenty-second Olympic Games were to be held for the first time behind the iron curtain. People debated the wisdom of the IOC's decision but most, including me, believed that only good could come of this appointment. Certainly the Russians appeared to be scrupulously observing the letter of the IOC directive. Subsequent events have enriched our descriptive powers of 1980 and the twenty-second Olympiad, hence the highly negative adjective described in the chapter title.

The decade of the 1970's finished not with a bang but with a whimper. Declining faith in the political leadership of the West and aging patriarchal guidance in the Communist countries produced what some people called "detente," others referred to it as "geriatric indecisiveness" and decay. Whatever, the return to feudalism in Iran and the decision of the Russian hierarchy to secure its southern borders through armed intervention in Afghanistan angered the watching world. The United States, mired in frustrating debate over the effectiveness of its political leadership, reacted with the sting of a wounded animal.

President Carter, without specific or informed advice, suggested a boycott of the Olympic Games scheduled for Moscow in July. Buoyed by an exuberant and self-substantiating press reaction in Washington, he repeated this suggestion the next day. It has been reported that a suggestion by Mr. Robert Kaiser of the Washington Post was the catalyst in the decision. (1) Tremendous emphasis was accorded this political action. The indignant praised Carter for his initiative. Lord Killanin reacted, "The athletes must come first." (2) The IOC would go ahead with original plans whatever the political pressures. The head of the British Olympic movement, Sir Dennis Follows, said that the Olympics are always being used as a chopping block by politicians, Britain will compete in the Olympics as it has always done." (3)

The U.S. press was divided. In a well-written editorial, the Boston Globe, while deploring the Russian's barbarous action, questioned the value of symbolic gestures. The New York Times withheld an article by veteran journalist, Red Smith, presumably because it was vociferously pro-boycott.

France responded to the U.S. initiative negatively. She was against this form of retaliation and the Russian reaction was predictable. In a front page article, Tass, accused the West of a "frenzied propaganda outcry" and Carter of "bellicose and wicked" statements." (4) By January 5th Carter had ordered cut-backs in the sale of grain to the Soviet Union. The watching world by this time had grasped the volatile nature of the impending drama. Saudi Arabia announced that it was boycotting the Games. This action, although newsworthy, was not well received by knowledgeable patrons of the Olympics. They had announced already their intention of not going three months before, and had a long record of refusing to attend the Olympics. Nations debated the issue with candor and with life. Malaysia considered withdrawing. The Australian and New Zealand governments threw in their lot with President Carter; Margaret Thatcher of Great Britain strongly supported Carter, and the Dutch Government withdrew support for its Games team. The Canadian and Japanese governments acted with the United States, but mounting opposition from various world Olympic committees, particularly the athletes themselves, forced the United States into a compromise action. The Games should be changed to another city, then they would not be held in the country of an invading nation - even the Russians could be invited to participate. Canada, West Germany, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand joined Britain in calling upon the IOC to withdraw its twenty-second Olympics from Moscow. Well intended though this move was, most saw the venue change as a direct, punitive action against the marauding Russians.

On January 16th, the boycott threat was revealed to the Russian people for the first time. The explanation was not of the nature, however, that President Carter had envisaged. It was explained that the United States did not have a very powerful team in 1980 and was considering withdrawing to save face. World standings in Track and Field competition substantiated this fanciful excuse, hence the Russian attempt to diffuse United States' political objectives. In all these maneuverings, the Carter administration failed to adequately consult the Olympic people. Indeed, when it became obvious that many of the athletes and officials were upset about the boycott, he employed special counsel, Lloyd Cutler, especially to enforce the restrictive action. Couched in nationalistic terminology and under the rubric of an important envoy of peace, Mr. Lloyd Cutler continued to be active in the intimidation of Olympic officials until final decisions were made. (5) Not all Olympic federations reacted with passivity. Richard Palmer, British Olympic Federation General Secretary, was quoted: "The invitation does not come to Mrs. Thatcher, it comes to us. . . there are no plans to withdraw." (6) Exchanges took place at all levels of gall and some with sarcasm. Mr. Bergland, American Secretary of Agriculture, suggested that visitors to the Games should bring their own lunch due to the meat shortage. In response, Tass "suggested Bergland bring a feeding bottle to taste natural milk, Georgian wines and Armenian brandy - unless he preferred Pepsi-Cola." (7)

The President of the USOC was quoted calling the boycott "gauche and inappropriate." (8) Mr. Derek Johnson, Secretary of the International Athletes Club, a silver medalist in 1956, was emphatic, "All the athletes he knew were determined to take part in the Olympics. Demands for boycott were a 'phony cover-up' to disguise the lack of a cohesive foreign policy among the western governments." (9)

The London Times editorial, outlining reasons for supporting the boycott, opted for a shift in venue. (10) The debate was well under way by this time in the United States. Many sports enthusiasts, now replete with more careful consideration, were beginning to question their President's action.

A new television series from Channel Five in Washington, D.C., called "Town Hall America," devoted its inaugural national program to this issue. Sparing little cost, agonists, antagonists and Olympic experts were flown in from around the country. Olympic officials, current athletes, former athletes, coaches, senators, congressmen, media specialists, press and members of the academe assembled for a one-hour contribution. Unfortunately, the commercial station featured only past violence in its introduction to the feature and centered much of its emphasis on the negative aspects of modern Olympic history, but both sides debated forcefully. The tension in the studio lingered well into the evening, long after the show finished. I was a participant representing the Academe. I had taken the trouble to place my thoughts on paper before the national broadcast and spoke with conviction:

January 21, 1980

Cheffers Statement Against Olympic Boycott

I urge President Carter and the American people not to boycott the Olympic Games in Moscow this year. The Soviet action in Afghanistan is reprehensible, but some areas of contact like medicine, arts, and sports should be left open. Boycott will destroy the Olympic movement as we know it, especially for Lake Placid. The real effect will be felt by the individual athletes around the world and governments do not own individuals. I went to Rhodesia in 1968 to prepare a multiracial team for the Mexican Olympics. Their exclusion, just weeks before the Games, was traumatic. Boycotts hurt all people and are weak. Some athletes will not compete and we shall respect their decision, but others will not see the Olga Korbut of this world as cannon in Afghanistan. They are supreme athletes executing their craft with grace and skill. If we destroy the Olympics, we destroy an international language. Let us not be hasty, at least at this time. (11)

Dr. John Cheffers, Boston University
Consultant,
U.S. Track and Field Committee

Two gymnastic coaches from Washington favored the boycott on nationalistic grounds, but most athletes interviewed were worried by the President's actions. Renaldo Nehemiah, world record holder at the 110 meter hurdles, sat next to me during the show. He was devastated, "This is my chance - I really want to go." His opinion was void of political vitriol. The brilliant young athlete

just spoke from his heart. 1976 silver medalist swimmer Melissa Belotte was volatile and antiboycott. She made a strong point, "The Olympic Games are to be held every four years in an Olympic city - it happens to be in Moscow in 1980 - I want to swim at the Olympic Games. This is my life and my ambition." Her impassioned appeal for boycott restraint influenced all present, even the local press, who to a man were against "sitting down at the table with murderers." One Senator and three congressman were predictably pro-boycott. A vice president of the USOC spoke against the boycott as did several experts interviewed over live telephone during the show. Double-gold-medal-winning Decathlete, Bob Mathias, was emphatic. The show compere asked: "You are for the boycott then?" Mathias; "Heavens no, I'm for going over there to Moscow and whipping their tails. That's the best answer for us to give."

I spent three hours that night with United States Olympic officials and two rowers from Maryland. Both oarsmen had been members of previous United States teams. One had "hocked" his house to buy the equipment necessary to train for the Games - the other was penniless, he had not worked the previous 18 months because he needed the preparation time. All were bitter about the government which until this time had provided no assistance to its athletes, yet expected, even demanded, the ultimate sacrifice. Much of the discussion surrounded the topic: Can sport ever function separate from political influence? It was a "hot" question. Cynics quickly leap to the defense of politically inspired actions claiming that life is politics and sport is life. My two oarsmen conceded this point, but agreed when I defined politics under two headings: (1) Inevitable Political Pressures, and (2) Terminal Political Intervention. The difference is critical to the entire discussion of politics and sport. Few would argue that there is an inevitable political influence on all of life's major happenings. Indeed, if sport is a microcosm of society, then politics and sport are bedfellows. But this influence concerns attitudes, daily preferences, infighting and certainly commercial and personal statuses. Politics illuminate without eliminating. Politics are part of the robustness of daily living and will always belong to the social system. Terminal political intervention, however, is when sport is used as a pawn to engage political advantage to a point where the advantage alters the nature of the sport. Where sport is used as the central feature of policy enactment. Where the essential nature of the sport (the play, the game, the challenge, the sacrifice, the give and take) is subordinated to extraneous objectives. In short, Terminal political intervention cares not about sport and its well being - rather its immediate effectiveness as a weapon. When the United States decided to use boycott of the Olympic Games in Moscow as its tool to punish the Russians for the Afghanistan incursion, it used the Games in a terminal way. Nobody doubted the sincerity of the United States' concern over the Afghanistan issue, but many questioned the wisdom of the decision to jeopardize the modern Olympic system over this one issue. To justify his action, James Earl Carter painted a lurid picture of the world's security balance. A fully hyped press in Washington echoed this reading with wild talk of World War III.

Indeed, a wave of speculation swept the United States predicting the likelihood of world conflagration. An edict calling for draft registration fueled these flames which threatened for a while to engulf the nation and the world.

Russia contended that its presence in Afghanistan was as liberating big brother, purely to stabilize the legitimate government and save the Afghans from themselves. In a strictly legal sense this was true, but few observers were deceived by this story. The "legitimate" government of Afghanistan was little more than a puppet of Moscow and many loyal and tough local partisans rejected Moscow's influence to the point of terminal involvement. The tribesmen of this mountainous terrain continued historic traditions by restricting all attempts to enslave them. We, in the West, were guilty of lionizing their quest for freedom, too. Mary McGory summed up the situation well when she remarked that the West, in its quest to reduce the Russian incursion's validity, had made heroic freedom fighters out of warring, often unprincipled and barbarous tribesmen. (12)

The Russians summonsed the Comecon (Communist block of trading nations) together to assess the commercial effect of the boycott, and found that most of Olympic trading contracts were paid up with capital in hand. The giant United States television company was one such enterprise which survived this setback through the good graces of a prudent board and the Lloyd's of London Insurance Company. An unusually favorable pro-United States vote was recorded in the United Nations at this time condemning the Russian action in Afghanistan, but the United States failed to push the world body into effective action, permitting the motion to pass as a bad mark rather than a catastrophic blunder.

Reaction from Olympic veterans was beginning to appear in the world press. Chris Chataway (13), English distance runner and Conservative MP, supported the boycott; Herb Elliot, the great Australian miler, also a candidate for parliament in a blue-ribbon West Australian seat, supported the boycott. It seemed that most support came from those who had chosen or were about to select professional politics as a career. Equally eminent ex-Olympians were adamant in their opposition. David Hemery, gold medal winning intermediate hurdler from Great Britain, was one. The great Lord Burleigh (now Lord Exeter) was determined: "We are bitterly opposed to political pressure and do not intend to renege on our commitment to Moscow." (14) Triple gold medalist in women's swimming, Dawn Fraser, made her suburban pub available for fund raising, so keen was she to defeat President Carter's boycott. Canadian Prime Minister, Joe Clark, was a keen Carter supporter, but his position was shaky and, and when the Conservative government fell and Mr. Trudeau looked like making a remarkable comeback, I wrote to the Montreal Star commending his expression of personal opposition to the proposed boycott.

A popular solution to problems caused by misbehaviors of host countries is to establish a permanent home for the Olympic Games. Renowned sport historian, John Lucas, has long

advocated such an action. Mr. Karamanlis, Prime Minister of Greece, reiterated at this time his long standing offer of Athens as the permanent site. Historians would favor such an action, but current organizers doubt the political solidarity of this country to host such a volatile and permanent international festival. Sweden and Switzerland have been suggested, but the International Olympic Committee seems to be convinced that a rotating system is still possible and desirable. On January 21st, Lord Killanin reported to the world press that there would be no venue change for the twenty-second Olympiad.

Either directly or through usual channels, I have been in touch with all the international federations and national committees and there is universal condemnation of the attempts being made to use the Games as a political football.
(15)

He referred the press to Rule 24C of the Olympic Charter.

National Olympic Committees must be autonomous and must resist all pressures of any kind whatsoever, whether of a political, religious or economic nature.

He concluded by calling Carter's boycott decision "hasty."

Jimmy Carter continued his perilous ride by delivering an ultimatum to the Russians: Unless the Soviets withdraw within one month from Afghanistan, the Games should be withdrawn or halted and no United States teams would attend.

Those of us who were desperately trying to stem the tide of escalating pride were horrified at this ultimatum. We knew then that Jimmy Carter had already made up his mind. No one could expect the Russians to give into this kind of directive. Carter was out on a limb, about as far as one can go. The Olympic Games were to be the stage on which the new cold war was to be fought.

I wrote the following two letters to Carter, more out of desperation than hope for effect. Each was responded to, the last in personal vein, as is shown on Pages 37 and 38.

John Cheffers, Ed.D.
School of Education
Boston University
704 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, MA 02215
January 10th, 1980.

Jimmy Carter
President of the United States
White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Jimmy,

You have decided to take a strong stand against the Soviets on the latest of a long line of inexcusable acts of aggression. I commend you. However, the type of action you take will determine not only its immediate success, but also the chain of repercussions presidential actions inevitably invoke.

Recent international diplomacy has used the boycott as a political tool against mostly innocent victims, and very ineffectively. Although the Soviet action in Afghanistan is reprehensible and its continued depreciation of human rights is disheartening, there are a small number of areas of contact between great nations which can not be violated. Diplomatic immunity is one, and others using international language such as medicine, arts, and sports complete the agenda.

Your threat to use boycott of the 1980 Summer Moscow Olympics as punishment for the Soviet arrogance is understandable, but unwise. Boycott in the Olympic movement has rarely succeeded. Indeed it has tended to punish the boycotters more than those who are the object of the disdain. The welling eyes of Kipchoge Keino, as he sadly retraced his steps from the training track on the morning of the opening ceremony in Montreal, exemplifies my position.

The Olympic Games, for all their faults, stand for international goodwill and peace. Rule One of the Olympic Charter reads as follows:

The Olympic Games are held every four years. They assemble amateurs of all nations in fair and equal competition. No discrimination is allowed against any country or person on the grounds of race, religion, or political affiliation.

The exclusion of any bona fide citizen of any member country is in violation of this rule.

You argue that boycott is a sociological mechanism designed to protect human suffering and you are not alone in this position. I argue that boycott, as a tool for bringing about political change, has been effective only in the case of small and relatively defenseless countries. To date, the mechanism has been used by Third World countries seeking to make space for themselves at the top, and has enjoyed only minor success. Soviet retaliation (at Lake Placid for instance), will destroy the Olympic movement and with it, an international Language of Peace without corresponding gain.

I believe, troubled as they are, the Olympics still give great promise of promoting international harmony and good will. Surely they will not alone produce peace, as was the early practice during the ancient Olympics, but they do give the worlds divergent cultures and political persuasions an opportunity to compete peaceably on friendly neutral grounds, and have given untold pleasure and understanding to all the cultures of the world.

The American public embraced the efforts of Olga Korbut and Nadia Comaneci, not as Communists, not as propaganderists, not as representatives of a "superior" culture, but as supreme athletes, executing their craft with grace and skill, enriching civilization, and lifting us for a short time out of our mundanity. These are international peaceful data. The language is truly cross-cultural and the intent elevates rather than deprecates mankind.

Let me advance the following reasons why boycott is a poor weapon and in so doing urge you not to recourse to it.

1. The purpose of the modern Olympic Games is to bring individuals together in a quest for competitive excellence. The basic human movements of running, jumping, hurdling, vaulting, and throwing, along with gymnastics, aquatics, and combative activities, constitute a sound base for human enterprise, provided the endeavor is fundamentally equal in recognition, opportunity, and consequence. The original Greek city-states understood this principle and declared a sacred truce for the period of the Games.

The fact that individuals represent nations is of secondary importance. Every individual has a right to try for representation at the international festival. No individual should be excluded on grounds of race, religion, or political affiliation. This festival was intended to be apolitical. Organization into nations has been found convenient for administrative and financial reasons, and an unfortunate limitation has been placed upon entries, but the essence of individual competing against individual, or team against team, is still the reality of the Olympic Games.

Whether one believes that the modern Olympic Games are worth continuing or not, boycotting by modern countries contravenes the principle and the spirit of the Olympic movement. It is cynical to assume that problems, large or small, alter this essence.

2. The use of boycott by politicians (be they inspired from national or local sources), directed against the participation of other countries, denies the existence of individual variance and individual rights within those countries. It is an assertion that governments own individual performances. It is an admission that national policy is superior to individual conviction in Olympic participation.

We in this wonderful country have always prided ourselves on the importance of individual conscience and judgement. There will undoubtedly be a segment of the United States team that will not wish to compete and of course we shall respect their rights. But there are many others who do not see their Russian competitors as representing cannon in Afghanistan, and so will not object to peaceful competitive involvement.

3. The use of political influence such as boycott to bring about social change is subject to such abuse that the institutions themselves are often rendered impotent. The Olympic Games today are so profuse that they are unwieldy and unbalanced. Cancellation, postponement, even collapse are all possible within the next decade. Boycotts or exclusions aim directly at the heart of the Olympic Games and could well be a major cause of their demise. It is of little use to the boycotters if the stage on which they seek to demonstrate, disappears.
4. Protests are usually more effective when they are situation specific. Boycotting the Olympic Games, which is a festival modelling world goodwill and peace, is better restricted to abuses concerning the Olympic Games themselves. When South Africa, for instance, refused to hold multinational trials for Olympic selection in 1964, the world was correct in questioning the representative fairness of its team.

It is probably better to deal with aggression in Afghanistan by direct means consonant with that action. The bolstering of defenses in Pakistan, the provision of economic and military aid to the Afghans if requested, and the preparedness of this country to act if nearby peaceful countries are threatened, is probably a better tactic. Economic boycotts which deal directly with Soviet military technology are also situation specific and thoroughly called for, but impending United States action, boycotting the Olympics for military intervention, is like the school teacher who punishes the recalcitrant school boy by depriving him of sport because he misbehaved in a math class. There is no doubt that your action is well meaning and you have been disagreeably surprised by Soviet treachery in their personal dealings with you, but you've been in politics long

enough to know that this is always a political reality and throwing the baby out with the bath water does little in the long run to harmonize the family.

5. Although it is acknowledged that power resides in political dominance and that few international endeavors exist with an equal distribution of power, the use of the Olympic Games as a tool for political convenience is an act of unbridled cynicism. Political intervention assumes that people do not care about their rights or are easily subdued. And each time cynical disparagement of individual human rights takes place, violence is all too often generated by the resultant forces. Munich stands as immutable evidence of this fact.
6. The use of boycott or exclusion rarely achieves the desired effect. Counter forces often combine to bring the original objective to heel. Apartheid continues to thrive in South Africa and the Rhodesian situation was probably exacerbated by that country's rejection from the international sporting community. Stubborn nations rarely concede unless overpowered by superior might, and trivial acts of retribution can work against the human race instead of for it.

Personal involvement in the African situation in 1968 has led me to conclude that political intervention in the Olympic Games, for reasons good or impoverished, is counterproductive, ineffective, and destructive of an institution which still has great promise of promoting international harmony and goodwill. Even though I agree with the denouncers of apartheid in South Africa, and renounce the aggression of the Soviets in Afghanistan, I do not believe the Olympic arena is the place at which to demonstrate these concerns. As far as I am concerned every nation on the earth has a right to membership, and every citizen of these nations has a right to try out for representation in the Olympic Games.

The Olympic Charter rings out "loud and clear" the principles of human justice and goodwill. It is better to expend our energies reducing the gap between what the Charter decrees and what is actually taking place at each Olympic assembly rather than indulging in vindictive and misguided acts of aggression through boycott.

Please do not invoke boycott of the 1980 Olympic Games by political intervention.

Sincerely,

John T. F. Cheffers
Associate Professor of Education
Boston University

cc: The Editor, Boston Globe
Paul Warren, Dean of the School of Education
Boston University

Mr. Lloyd Cutler
Counsel to the President
White House
Washington D.C., 20500

March 14, 1980

Dear Sir,

Please consider further consultations on Olympic boycott issue. Indications are that the President is very poorly advised on our proposed withdrawal. To witness: He has written to the South African government requesting that they support an Olympic boycott, (information from Nigerian Press) yet South Africa has been excluded from Olympic participation since 1964. The boycott issue is vilifying a nation, which has always been the strongest of supporters of the Olympic movement.

I have enclosed an article which expresses my viewpoint and am ready at any time to advise. Many fellow sport theorists in the academe have also indicated their willingness to help also.

Sincerely,

John T. F. Cheffers
Olympic Advisor - Track and Field
Associate Professor of Education
School of Education
Boston University
704 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, MA 02215

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

February 4, 1980

Dear Mr. Cheffers:

Thank you for your message to President Carter concerning the Olympic Games scheduled for this summer in Moscow.

As you know, the President has taken a number of steps designed to curb Soviet aggression in Southwest Asia. If unchallenged, such aggression could undermine the principles of the civilized world. In addition to other measures, withdrawal of United States participation in the 1980 Summer Olympics or rescheduling competitions elsewhere is under consideration.

On January 20, the President sent a letter to the United States Olympic Committee asking the Committee to work with other national Olympic committees to seek the transfer or cancellation of the 1980 Summer Olympics unless the Soviet Union withdraws its troops from Afghanistan by February 20.

If the Soviets do not withdraw and the Games are not transferred or cancelled, the President has asked that the USOC not participate in the Games in Moscow, but, instead, work to organize alternative games. He has also suggested that all the nations of the world join in financing a permanent site in Greece for the Summer Olympics.

In that same letter, the President reaffirmed his commitment to the Olympic movement and invited athletes from the entire world to participate in the 1980 Winter Games in Lake Placid, New York.

With appreciation for your understanding of the necessity for immediate and decisive response to the Soviet aggression, and with best wishes,

Sincerely,



Daniel M. Chew
Director of
Presidential Correspondence

Mr. John Cheffers
School of Education
Boston University
704 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, MA 02215

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

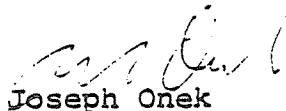
March 4, 1980

Dear Mr. Cheffers:

Thank you for your thoughtful letter.

We think the current situation is different from the situations you describe. I am enclosing a copy of Secretary Vance's remarks before the International Olympic Committee which sets forth the Administration's views.

Sincerely,



Joseph O'neil
Deputy Counsel to the President

John T. F. Cheffers
Associate Professor of Education
Boston University
704 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, MA 02215

By this time I was so incensed that I agreed fully with Senator Kennedy's unkind but not inaccurate accusations: Mr. Carter had lurched from crises to crises without a "clear, predictable and certain foreign policy." (16)

Francis M. Claude Colland, President of the French National Sports Committee, spoke with conviction, "Our Minister of Sport has made France's attitude clear, France will be at Moscow. There is no question of us suffering any boycott. The Games are for the competitors, not for the politicians." (17)

In Greece, the reaction was similar - a political boycott "would threaten an age old institution." (18)

An issue in America centered around the definitive French decision not to support the boycott. France's indifference, even whimsicalness had aroused the wrath of loyal United States nationalities on a number of occasions in the recent past. The feeling was that French support for Western action against Russian atrocities was expected. At best, it represented minimal gratitude for the United States liberating intervention in 1918 and again in 1945, and, not worst, it was a strong support for the NATO Alliance.

The fatal error in this logic is that no western country, particularly the United States, expects its allies to blindly follow the lead of the mother, especially when that leader is stumbling. The decision of Mr. Carter to make the Olympics front-line policy for punishing the Soviets over the Afghanistan issue angered its friends as well as its enemies. In issues substantially less than life, death and survival, western allies are permitted freedom of decision making, and France saw this as that kind of issue at that time. There is an understandable tendency for Americans to see the French and the eventual British action as disloyal and ungrateful. Nothing could be further from the truth. I visited both France and Great Britain in June and July, 1980, just before the Games were due to begin and can report the often stated conviction of the vast majority of people with whom I spoke. They believed that Carter had used the boycott as a political issue in an election year, and used it badly. More than one respondent referred to United States' intervention in Vietnam a decade earlier as too similar in comparison for comfort. Very few felt inclined to support their great Transatlantic ally on this issue..Mrs. Thatcher continued her battle well into the night, but sensibly decided against vindictive action when it was clear the battle had been lost. The same cannot be said of Mr. Malcolm Fraser, the Australian Prime Minister, who badgered and bullied (a term used by labor leader Mr. Bill Hayden) the Australian Olympic Federation long after their decision had been reached. (19) A London Times editorial castigated the purist position of defending non-intervention of politics into sport as "illusory." (20) The Olympics will survive, it reported, and concerned action against the Russians was necessary at this time to preserve world peace. I disagreed. First, the statement that no matter what we do the Olympics will survive is questionable, if not inaccurate. The ancient Olympics eventually ground to a halt, the same could

happen today, especially over such a central issue as exclusion and boycott. Further, the use of sport as a political football places it at the mercy of every politician with the vote to muster local support. Idealistic or not, the principle of apolitical physical challenge and exchange, of peaceful competition and mutual perspiration without spite or acrimony is immensely appealing, if not ultimately valid.

Those who hold that no matter what we do today, no matter how badly we behave, everyone will be back tomorrow and business will be as usual are playing on the world's good nature. They are casting out the branch of responsibility placed in their hands for the upkeep of the health of the tree. When enough branches are ruined, the tree will die, and with it the environment is permanently changed. Those who say we can always plant a new seed or a new tree forget how long it takes to build a healthy oak, or maple, or pine. And then, one is tempted to ask the obvious question: Do you intend to be responsible for the health and growth of the new tree, or do you intend it to be cut down, or diseased like the original? I suppose the tree will eventually die, hopefully of old age, but that time is surely not yet ripe. Surely we can enjoy its shade, its presence and its fruits for a few more years.

Second, when used as a weapon the Olympics cease to be a constructive international language. Bias is always present, especially when national philosophies are at stake, but appreciation is also universal. It cuts across the ethnic, racial, and political ties. The popularity of gymnastics in the United States today is a direct result of the efforts of two young ladies, one from Russia and the other from Romania - and both of these lythesome, elfin figures are loyal communists.

On the 22nd of January, the London Times featured the Russian response (Mr. Nicholas Lumkov - Ambassador) to the Carter boycott as "Ridiculous!" Newsweek reported a three-to-one margin of support for a change of site and 56 percent for cancellation if that were impossible. The Washington Star reported that 86 percent of its readers favored the boycott. (21) Tass accused the United States of holding its athletes hostage for Mr. Carter's political ambitions. They were very unkind, "Carter erected rather than cleared hurdles - the type who scores a goal into his own net." (22) There was criticism from fellow Americans, too. One exasperated fencer assured me that Mr. Carter was a "lion among the lambs and a 'no show' when the lions got together." His kick was that he was being firm and decisive with defenseless athletes who are not politically oriented while at the same time caving into 3,000 Russian troops in Cuba, being refused the granting of aid to Pakistan, and inert with a handful of rebels in Iran, not to speak of his ineptitude at getting the Capitol Hill jockies to ride his horses.

Whether coincidental or not, the real Moscow response to Western symbolic reaction came on January 23rd. Famed dissident, Dr. Andrei Sakharov, the Nobel Laureate for peace, was to be deported to the closed city of Gorki. Few failed to recognize this snub to the West. Stung into

retaliation, Mrs. Thatcher offered alternative locations for the Games: Rowing at Nottingham, Canoeing in Wales, Equestrian and Fencing at the Crystal Palace, Football at Wembley Stadium, Basketball, Boxing, Gymnastics, Wrestling, Judo and Volleyball at Birmingham, Wembley indoor, Royal Albert Hall, and the Olympic Stadium. London facilities were considered tight but operable. Track and field was the least well catered for. (23) Mayor Kevin White of Boston assembled a blue ribbon committee to stage alternative Olympics in his United States' popular city. University dormitories and facilities comprised the backbone of his offering. The lack of air conditioning and the absence of a large stadium with eight lanes for track and field were not considered insurmountable obstacles, but the local press did not agree. Other United States cities followed suit as did Melbourne, host city for the highly successful 1956 Olympic Games in Australia. These well-meaning efforts to provide competition for the already deprived boycotting athletes for the survival of the Olympics sputtered to a stop on the altar of athletic pride. No one wanted to take part in a junior varsity competition. The politicians of this world experienced the immense gap between first- and second- class teams, between varsity and intramural, between the "real" Olympics and a "shadow." They realized, many for the first time, how powerful this segment of the community can be. And as the conservative politicians in the House of Commons ridiculed those who defended Olympic idealism, Soviet action against their dissidents intensified. A Mrs. Tatanya Schepkova was given three years imprisonment for cuffing a police officer who was twisting her arm after breaking into a seminar without a warrant. (24)

The athletes again spoke on January 24th when Alan Pascoe, former gold medalist and Captain of the British Commonwealth Games team, asserted, "Sport should not be the grounds of human rights, we should have done it six years before when the Games were awarded to Moscow, not now when the athletes and teams are hard in preparation for the greatest of sporting competitions."

Those who supported Carter's boycott constantly pointed to the need of the West to rally around a unified banner designed to rid Afghanistan of her intruders, and restore power to Western opinion and influence. Herein lay the problem - the Western politicians had chosen an unpopular stage on which to gather unfailing support. Many Carter supporters expressed doubts about the wisdom of such a course, and mostly the right wing, anticommunist section of the community remained convinced that such simplistic, highly symbolic action would affect convincing Western response to Russian imperialism. I listened to an "Access" television opinion statement advocating support for the Olympic boycott by one such individual. His argument was: "We have to get tough with the Russians. We have to show them who is boss. Let us boycott their Olympic Games."

I failed to see what was tough about this action. Indeed it looked like taking the easy path to me. Mr. Carter stated concerns about playing in a city whose fellow countrymen were beating on

a smaller neighbor constituted much more valid argument than meaningless epithets about being "tough" or "mean" or "nasty." Destroying the tradition of this great Olympic movement, devastating the worthy ambition of thousands of dedicated sports people, and risking retaliation in known and unknown ways was a little too serious a deed to be treated in locker room, oversimplified and dogmatic vein.

The boycott was having some effect. Mr. Dennis Howell, shadow British Minister of Sport, suggested the West go to the Games, but avoid the pomp and ceremonial features like the opening and closing ceremonies. (26) The tiny European state of Luxemburg proposed that nations send not their best, but second-rate athletes instead, in protest. Letters to the leading United States and British newspapers, or at least those that were printed, were mostly in support of Carter's action. The press, from time to time, would run a sympathy article in support of the athletes, but most headlines were designed to convince Western readers that to take part in the Games would make the performers disloyal and selfish. The major newspapers of Britain and the U.S. did publish opposing opinions. The London Times printed a letter from a Mr. Spartak Beglov of the Russian Press Bureau in Moscow. (27) He said in effect that Mr. Carter's boycott does nothing to Russia, rather it strikes at the Olympic movement. Washington's action is a denial of human rights in this sphere. "The world Olympic movement is a common asset of all nations. It is another example of Washington disregard for the international community." Steeped in the Western viewpoint as we are, it is interesting to read Eastern propaganda for a change.

On January 25th, the United States House of Representatives voted overwhelmingly to support the boycott 386 - 12. Mr. William Broomfield was quoted as saying that this vote was "a message of contempt for their barbaric action." (28) Not everyone agreed with Mr. Broomfield. A young athlete sitting next to me in a crowded cafeteria read these words over my shoulder and made his position clear, "Contempt for whom? Me, or them?" When politicians rally to the flag so readily, they quickly forget the many players in the complex game of life. Tyrrell Burgess of Surrey, England, moved a novel motion in his letter to the editor to the London Times. "Clearly the Olympic Games should be moved to Gorki." (29)

The entire Western world entered the growing debate. Bonn decided to play a waiting game. Legendary existential philosopher, Jean Paul Sartre, called for support of the Olympic boycott. (30) Mrs. Thatcher intimated that she might use her prerogatives to deprive British athletes of their travel documents should they defy her directive. This triggered the Labor opposition to begin using such words as "outrageous," and "totalitarian," and "UnBritish," which was the most convincing of all. (31) The academe was silent. Seemingly as spectators, although the familiar intonation of cynical scholasticism was echoed in occasional letters to the newspapers. P.J. Wainwright, of the University of Manchester, issued a rhetorical question, "Does Lord Killanin seriously believe that Moscow will honour rule 24C of the Olympic Charter?" (32)

By January 28th, the USOC had officially requested a change of venue for the twenty-second Olympiad. This was to be decided upon during the winter Olympics scheduled ironically for Lake Placid, New York, in mid February. British Olympic Chairman, Sir Dennis Follows, charged that "Media hype" made objective thinking extremely difficult, "patriotic fervor has been emotionally aroused in the United States which makes it difficult for them to look at things rationally." (33) Pearce Wright, a scientific journalist, advocated a shift in Western action away from symbolic gesturing towards more damaging areas. "The ending of a large number of agreements covering the transfer of scientific and technical skills to Russia would be part of a Western trade boycott that would bite hardest." (34) Former 400-meter Gold Medalist hurdler, David Hemery--now the highly successful coach of Boston University Track Team--spoke eloquently against the boycott. "The damage to sport far outweighs the doubtful gains in the political arena. We risk being double losers at present. To try to stop participation in something which is intrinsically positive in order to make comment on something negative, makes for two wrongs." (35)

Not all politicians favored the Boycott. Mr. Edward Heath, ex-British Prime Minister and influential member of Mrs. Thatcher's Conservative party, considered that politics should be kept out of sport. Having captained two international teams, he felt that an Olympics ban was unlikely to stop Soviet aggression. He doubted that his action would educate the ordinary citizens of the USSR, due to, first, the presence of Tass and, second, the closed nature of Soviet society. He advocated positive action like succeeding in their midst. (36)

By the end of January, the lines were much clearer. The British athletes voted 58 - 38% to go. (37) Australian track and field athletes were even more emphatic: only three athletes were against going and two of these were about to withdraw from the team because of persisting injuries. Little Cyprus announced that she was sending a team to Moscow although Norway voted to boycott. In spite of an overwhelming United States Senate vote favoring President Carter's boycott, United States Olympic officials were dragging their feet. Correspondence to Olympic aspirants still held out hope that the world situation would ease and President Carter would change his mind. These letters urged that whatever the political situation the athletes must stay in rigorous training. The greatest concern to the USOC was the rapidly dwindling Olympic donation Fund, so vital to the quadrennial effort. The American people simply stopped giving, and to this end the media campaign was working. People were convinced that the Olympics were finished for 1980, perhaps for all time. By this time, too, the debate had reached vitriolic proportions in the various committees of the countries involved.

Lord Exeter: "The Games do not belong to the host committee, they belong to the IOC." (38)

Soviet Olympic Committee: "It is obvious that the issue was preplanned and contained hostile action directed against mutual understanding and friendship among nations, against

peace and progress.” (39) (It is a pity the senior Soviet politicians did not consider understanding and friendship when they invaded Afghanistan.)

James Earl Carter: No country can trample on the life and liberty of another and expect to conduct business and sports as usual with the rest of the world.” (40) (It is a pity that he quickly resumed wheat sales with the Soviet Union and that Congress later voted to lift the embargo altogether.)

Representatives of 11 European Olympic Committees in Bonn: “We will make the decisions, not the politicians. Under no circumstances will participation imply recognition of a given political situation or event.” (41)

Mr. Vitali Smirnov: (Vice President of Moscow Organizing Committee) The Summer Games “are unthinkable” without the presence of the United States of America. (42)

Three more nations announced their intentions to boycott the Games: China, Japan and Zaire. Mr. Carter sent the former heavy-weight boxer, Muhammed Ali, on a tour of several African nations to rally their support for the boycott. They were offended at his buffoonery, the mission failed. (43) Local politics intruded also. Mr. Edward Kennedy, mindful of the upcoming U.S. elections, accused the Carter government of generating war hysteria over Soviet moves toward the Gulf region, (44) and Mrs. Thatcher, mindful of sacred traditions in the Britain’s House of Commons, assured her nation that no “oppressive methods” would be used to prevent athletes from going to Moscow. (45)

By February 6th, 1980, a ground swell of political pro-boycott opinion seemed to be spreading in Europe and the Americas and the Russians were bracing themselves for any eventually. There was talk of letting Greece take back the Games, and of wholesale reform after Moscow. The facts remained unassailably evident above all the clamor and maneuvering: the athletes of the world wanted to keep their Olympic competition alive, and one hundred thousand Russian troops were still in Afghanistan.

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CHAPTER FOUR

"1980 - THE POSITIONS HARDEN"

The cartoonists quickly joined the fray as only they can.(1) Misha, the bear, was discovered with hidden machine guns (such a pity as the 1980 Olympic mascot was delightful in design and intention), and many times the five interlocking circles were discovered fragmented, or incomplete, or misshapen. Both sides were quick to take advantage of this popular medium. Bernard Levin, controversial British journalist, contended the IOC had helped to tear up its own charter. They should have staged alternative games, he maintained, and called those who eschew politics and sport naive and foolish. His article typified a common media message at that time: "As politics cannot be kept out of sport, one must win the political battle in sport.(2) His initial conclusion was the point of difference with the idealist who believes that terminal political intervention can and should be kept out of sport: One must not throw the baby out with the bath water. The immortal Jesse Owens, in an editorial in the Rocky Mountain News, illustrated this argument:

The Soviet Union is wrong, dangerously so, in doing what it is doing in Afghanistan . Our athletes should boycott the perpetrators of such acts, not by staying away, but by being with the individuals from other countries, thereby proving that they are not bigoted, that there is such a thing as peaceful competition.

He went on to explain that the United States government may disavow official United States governmental presence at Moscow, but should allow "its athletes to participate in the Games as the free individuals they are." Owens abhorred the use of free citizens as weapons of reprisal. "These are not new beliefs of mine. They have been ingrained in me since 1936, when Adolf Hitler hosted the Games in Berlin." He illustrated the value of brotherhood of sport regardless of color, recounting the time-honored story of how a "blonde, blue-eyed Arian" competitor named Luz Long, helped Jesse Owens to defeat him in the long jump through advice on an errant run-up. The final of the long jump in 1936 is remembered in Olympic history as one of the most dramatic and outstanding

competitions staged in the modern era. Owens finally defeated Long by an inch in a competition which went down as a thrilling and competitive contest to the last jump.

The instant my record-breaking win was announced, Luz was there, throwing his arm around me and raising my other arm to the sky. 'Jazza Owens' he yelled, loud as he could, 'Jazza Owens!'

More than 100,000 Germans in the stadium joined in. 'Jazza Owens!' Jazza Owens! Jazza Owens!

"Hitler was there, too, but he was not chanting. He had lost that day."(3)

The US had seriously considered boycotting the 1936 Olympic Games in protest of Nazi racist propaganda and inhuman brutality in their policy dealings with the world. Advocates of the boycott in 1980 likened the Moscow situation to that of Berlin in 1936. The lesson that Jesse Owens gives is pronounced and direct. His presence in Berlin during those Games upheld peace and goodwill and struck a telling blow against forces of darkness which continue unfortunately to plague the world today. It would be nice to report that Owens' presence in Berlin restored peace and goodwill to a troubled world -- but, of course, it didn't. The fact that we are still talking about his courage five decades later is testimony to the effectiveness of his modeling. It is equally certain that a magnificent 400-metre hurdle win in Moscow by Edwin Moses would have given the same message in our day.

In the past, Western politicians have shown the good sense of letting athletes determine their own fate. When the 1980 politicians chose the Olympic Games as their battle ground, they devalued sport as a language of peace and goodwill throughout the world.

Bernard Levin contended that the Soviet Union tolerated the Olympics only for the sake of legitimizing Soviet Communism. He correctly predicted that dissonants would not be allowed to compete, and asserted that Soviet Organizing was not eligible or capable to run the Games under the Games rules. His arguments, while meriting discussion, were moot as the Games had already been assigned to the Soviet Union six years earlier. To reverse the direction at this stage on evidence not associated with the Olympic movement itself, was seen as a breach of good faith on both sides of the Iron Curtain.

Levin's article implied that Exeter, Killanin and Follows were complicit in the crimes of the Soviet state through their naivete or idealism. It was an unfortunate article, lacking good judgment and cynical through over-simplification of a complex problem.

Red Smith, the highly respected New York Times feature writer, attacked the Olympic spirit in an article published about this time. He quoted Classics Professor, Stephen G. Miller, an archaeologist, who had excavated for seven years at the sight of Olympic Games. In a series of questions about myth-and-fact statements, he laid bare Ancient Games' shortcomings. His thesis rejected the image of purity which he says surround our discussions of the Ancient Olympic Games. He attacked the argument that politics has no place in the Olympics with examples of contamination from Olympia, Delphi, Nemea and Isthmia. He gave examples of violations of the sacred truce which declared that wars were to be suspended during the Olympic competitions. He exemplified boycott, postponement and hucksterism in liberal portions.(4) What Red Smith failed to do, however, was to recognize that his examples of violations like those of today were the exceptions that proved the rule. Indeed, the article might have legitimized the eternal spirit of the Olympics. Many a journalist has made the same mistake when setting out to expose the Modern Olympic spirit. Examples of corruption, cheating and foul play can be found in any world-wide institution. There are many violations of Olympic principles -- indeed, but miniscule in comparison with the shadowy deals which journalists delight in revealing.

The Soviet dissidents urged boycott for understandable reasons. Mikhail Chemyakin was prominent in this call.(5) The sports editor of the London Times headlined an article: "British Must Not Go To Moscow." It offered, he reasoned, too good a chance for Soviet propaganda.(6) Unfortunately the proposed boycott gave the Soviets the initiative. They used the US action to score a propaganda triumph over the West - "We hope you will come to Moscow," they reported, "but whatever your decision, we will be in Los Angeles in 1984." Four years later the Soviets fell into their own trap. The lure of vengeance superseded the strength of their previous logic.

A February 7 poll in Great Britain showed that 58 percent of people interviewed wanted the athletes to attend the Games, even if they were held in Moscow. In the same poll, only 16% agreed that the government should make the decision.(7) The next day the IOC met, prior to the winter Olympics in Lake Placid. The Taiwan issue arose quickly, and Mr. Karamanlis repeated his offer of Greece as a permanent site for the Olympics. Algeria accepted its invitation to the summer Olympics, whilst the British Equestrian Federation opted for boycott. Mr. Carl Frithbifsson, Director of Swedish Sports Federation, came right to the point, Sweden would take part: "When the US maintained military force in Vietnam, and rained down bombs to an extent never seen before, sports exchanges continued unabated."(8)

The President of the United States Olympic Federation, Mr. Robert Kane, called for the removal of the Games from Moscow because the Afghanistan invasion was considered an act of war.(9) The US Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, addressed the opening of the eighty-second session of IOC at Lake Placid, New York, on February 9, 1980.(10) His remarks were not characterized by a deep knowledge of the history of the Olympic Games. But he did state the US position clearly:

The US deeply values the Olympic Games and the principles on which they rest... we did not want to see the Olympic movement damaged... let me make my government's position clear: We will oppose the participation of an American team in any Olympic Games in the capital of an invading nation.

These remarks were not received well by the Olympic body. Traditionally, the host nation detaches itself from partisan politics during symbolic ceremonies. Mr. Vance had the podium, not as a politician but as a host welcoming visitors to the Olympic city. Representatives felt that he abused his privileges and took advantage of the pedestal to project political opinion. The position was discussed fully in the press with widely diverging views, but there was no variance in the IOC decision.

Bill Rogers and the Bill Kardon, both outstanding marathon runners, were vocal in their opposition to the proposed US boycott.(11) Peter Kormann, the first US gymnastic medalist since 1932, wanted desperately to compete. Olympic officials at Colorado Springs were strongly against the boycott. Mr. Dennis Keegan explained that the US Olympic Federation was not an extension of the government, that it was the sole legitimate body representing USA athletes, and that "without exception, the athletes we have heard from have encouraged us to continue to resist the infusion of politics into the Games."(12) He warned an American boycott would end the Olympics! The summer Olympics would not be moved from Moscow. It is interesting to note that the US had two representatives at the IOC meeting and that the vote to continue with Moscow was unanimous.

Athletes within the US expressed a wide range of opinions on the boycott. Thirty-two members of Muhammad Ali Sports Club favoured the boycott, as did Ed Donofrio, a fencer from Maryland and a former marine, who said, "I am 100 percent in favor of boycotting," if the President asked him to.(13) The White House reported 84 percent of the phone calls were in favor of the boycott.(14) Other athletes were adamant about their position.

"For eighty years the Olympics has existed in the feeling of goodwill and amity. What treaty has lasted that long?"(15) Indeed the US Committee distributed a long

letter, dated February 29, to all Olympic aspirants clearly indicating its hope that a team would be sent to Moscow:

Since we've returned to our headquarters in Colorado Springs...and even prior to leaving Lake Placid... we have noticed a trend toward shifting public opinion. The calls and letters we are receiving are much stronger in support of our sending a team to Moscow. We have also been noticing more favorable editorial comment in the nation's press. We have received feedback from representatives of several of our national governing bodies that they are also experiencing a shift in public opinion in their geographic areas. Time has helped, we feel, in easing the emotional impact of the issue that existed at the outset and in providing the vehicles and the opportunities to better inform the public. The assistance of so many athletes like yourself who have worked through their local media to tell the Olympic story has helped immeasurably.(16)
(signed F. Don Miller, Executive Secretary of USOC)

Attached to this memorandum was a letter addressed to Jimmy Carter from the 1980 Winter Olympic Team, dated February 24, 1980, and signed by 61 athletes, in which the following paragraph appears:

Mr. President, we urge you to use your most prestigious office to assure that our fellow athletes who have trained diligently for the Olympic Summer Games are provided the same opportunity which we have just experienced by participation in the Winter Games. We can all assure you that there is no substitution for participation in the Olympic Games. We all agree that the Olympic Games represent the highlight of our athletic careers.

Bert Nelson, editor of the renowned Track and Field News, presumed the sentiments in a classic antiboycott editorial printed on February 11, 1980: (18)

We are opposed to a US boycott of the Olympic Games. Strongly opposed. President Carter's Boycott is wrong, it is ill conceived and we feel will turn out to be singularly ineffective. [It] will be punishment for a crime already committed. [It] will not deter Soviet adventures... the price paid by Americans will be far too high.

He was bitter.

The worrisome feature is the distinct possibility that the Olympic Games will be destroyed... If Carter twists enough arms - and he is proving to be pretty good at the art - and succeeds in having our friends also sacrifice their Olympic dreams, there is every likelihood the Russians will retaliate in 1984 ... and there goes the Olympics.

Nelson deplored the President's call for patriotism as being synonymous with his Boycott and described governmental pressure placed on the USOC and the athletes as abhorrent. "It's a dirty pool and we don't like it!" Nelson echoed statements from all over Europe when he reiterated Carter's re-election needs:

His political fortunes have flipflopped remarkably, from loser to winner, because of Iran and Afghanistan and he is taking full advantage of the situation. He knows the American people are mad and are looking for some way to strike back at foreign enemies. He offers the Olympics as a sacrifice weapon and the public grabs it. After all, few of them have anything to lose. But that's not good enough for us. Until the real benefits of a boycott can be proved, we will continue, unlike the majority of our countrymen, to oppose the boycott vigorously and adamantly and with great sadness.

As Winter Olympics fever mounted, two important actions originated out of West Germany. Chancellor Helmut Schmidt appealed directly to Mr. Brezhnev and Foreign Minister Herr Hans Dietrich Genscher explained the real motives behind the West German support for Mr. Carter. "We expect solidarity from the US on Berlin and we will not refuse solidarity in the Olympic question."(10)

An interesting aside appeared in the British press revealing the average person's distrust of the deprivation action. Professor Blount, a former Soviet spy, who was stripped of his knighthood by the Queen, was not stripped of his emeritus professorial status at London University. Graduates met in convocation in Bloomsbury and voted 244 to 147 in favor of Professor Blount. The reason advanced was that his work as director of the Courtauld Institute and Professor of Art History was an academic accolade and should not be confused with his political activities.(20)

On February 13, 1980, the IOC vote to continue with the Games in Moscow was recorded 73-0. While sympathetic to the US delegates' position, Lord Killanin ruled as follows: "The IOC cannot solve the political problems of the world, but calls upon all governments of all countries, particularly the major powers, to come together to resolve their differences."(21) The same day the IOC was upheld as the sole authority of adjudging participatory rights in Olympic competition by the appellate division of the New York State Supreme Court.(22)

US Winter Olympic hosts welcomed everybody on the opening day of the Olympic Games without political reference. Indeed, political chicanery was put aside the moment the athletes entered the arena. In the words of John Hennessey:

As late as yesterday it hardly seemed possible that the Soviet team would receive other than a hostile reception. In fact... they were given if not a rapturous welcome, certainly a friendly one... The Russians, for their part, smiled and waved back enthusiastically.(23)

I had witnessed the same reaction from the Mexican crowds in 1968. Although the Mexican people were angry with the Soviet rape of Czechoslovakia and received that beleaguered team exuberantly, their welcome to the Russian squad as it entered the

arena was respectful, polite, and hospitable. The common people, whether they live in Mexico City, Lake Placid, New York or Moscow, seem to distinguish well between scheming politicians and dedicated artists, a capacity apparently denied much of the world press and many of the politicians, themselves.

The European Economic Community countries (EEC) debated the issue of boycott without resolution. Kenya decided for boycott, while Dawie Devillaris wondered why the athletes of South Africa had to bear the burden of boycott twenty years earlier for the IOC, and the Soviets were welcomed in the Winter Games of 1980.(24)

The London Times' leading article, in reaction to the IOC position to continue the Moscow Olympics, concluded that the world Olympic body had now condoned Soviet aggression.(25) Mrs. Thatcher advanced her rationale for the Olympic boycott -- the athletes are citizens and must accept the call to sacrifice even though it would be painful.(26) Singularly absent from her reasoning was the possibility that the original government decisions might have been in error, and that the cornerstone of a free world exists in reasoned non-conformity during peace-time conditions. At times her reasoning caused mists to descend on that part of the English geography normally reserved for the greatest names of the democratic cause - the front benches of the House of Commons. The Labor opposition agreed.

In Canada, the newly elected Pierre Trudeau expressed initial doubts about the wisdom of the boycott. Unbearable measures were, unfortunately, soon to embattle his stand.(27) The Politicians of the EEC announced, February 16, 1980, that they were in support of Olympic boycott, although the German socialist, Herr Claus Hensch, questioned the decision: "The boycott would not force the recall of the troops, instead it would probably kill the Olympics forever."(28) These fears, in consonance with those expressed by the Track and Field editor, Bert Nelson, would probably have eventuated had it not been for the Olympic committee of every Western European nation, save West Germany, Norway, and Monaco, and their decision to ignore the respective political pressures. Tass accused Mrs. Thatcher of being "blinded by anti-Sovietism." Mrs. Thatcher's opposition to sport had nothing to do with sport they decided.(29) By February 21, 1980, Mr. Carter was praising Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moy for his country's decision to stay home from Moscow. At the same time, West German Chancellor, Helmut Schmidt, refused to authorize a boycott, preferring to wait on the winds. The substance of the Olympic boycott now centered on whether Western governments could force their respective Olympic committees into compliance.(30) Little trouble was expected in the case of Kenya as sport is governmentally financed and controlled in that country. The situation in other Western countries, however, was not

so clear. A confident Mr. Carter described his position as "final and irrevocable,"(31) and he had taken the steps to insure a subordinated response from the USOC. In Britain, Mr. Douglas Hurd defended the British government's position in response to charges that the athletes were being placed under "unfair and fantastic pressure." He said: "All that had happened was that the Prime Minister had written a letter, there are no thumbscrews out..."(32) It was now time for the political beliefs of the athletes to be less naive to assure that the influence of the President and British Prime Minister was consequential. In resisting the increasing pressure, many athletes felt disloyal and were accused of being selfish and unpatriotic. It was obvious, however, by this time the West was no longer united in its determination to boycott the Moscow Olympics. The British Labor Party and the opposing parties in Australia and New Zealand came out in favor of participation.(33)

Mr. Dennis Howell explained, "There is a clear distinction between the association of sport and politics on the one hand, and actually using sport as a political weapon on the other."(34)

Mr. Carter's position was seriously weakened by the performance of the US Hockey Team during the Winter Olympics. This group of exciting young men overcame the Russian giant in "Davidian" fashion to win their first Gold medal in this event since 1960. It was a giant killing performance which restored American pride after a series of embarrassing and frustrating failures in diplomatic circles. Goal-tender James Craig, engulfed in the Stars and Stripes, epitomized the nation's determination to rebound from recent setbacks. Four members of that US Ice Hockey Team were from Boston University. Team Skipper, Mike Eruzione had been my advisee. The same determination to overcome natural ability shortcomings characterized his study application, as it did his hockey skills. He reminded me of former Australian field athlete, Jean Roberts, who at 5 foot 6 inches and 146 lbs should never have been an Olympic Discus finalist. The size of an athlete's heart is the determining criterion and the models these people become are so precious that we must preserve their efforts, certainly we must support them, at least we can let them compete ... Many Americans asked the question at that time, "How can one regain competitive edge and pull off miracle achievements if one is not permitted to participate?" The Boston Globe expressed it this way:

The Team that came up golden

"They did it their way. The United States Olympic hockey players, who started skating as a team only six months ago, won the gold medal in the last half of the last period of the last game at Lake Placid yesterday. Their winning effort was true to form: As in previous games, they fell behind in the early going, then won it, 4-2, by scoring three goals in the last period while fending off the Finns, who played with a man advantage three times in the last 12 minutes. The win over Finland was the golden clincher, yes, but it was the final scene in an improbable drama that was highlighted by Friday night's epic victory over the best-in-the-world Soviet team. The US goaltender, Jim Craig, of North Eastern, Mass., a key operative on a team that is, by its own reckoning, made up of 20 "stars", offered that he liked switching to the gold standard because "the price of the gold keeps going up." It certainly does. Olympian athletes break record after record, pushing the odds against victory higher each time there is a competition. But this year's American hockey team -- 20 bright-faced young men, including four players with ties to Boston University -- had true grit: This was the same bunch that had lost to the Russians several weeks ago at Madison Square Garden by a 10-3 score. The Olympics was a different matter. Time and again, the US pulled it out in hair-raising third-period action. On Friday, it was Capt. Mike Eruzione who scored the winning goal over the Soviet team with ten minutes left in the game. Yesterday, Rob McClanahan scored the tie-breaker, followed by Mark Johnson, who banged the insurance goal through the legs of the subsiding Finland goalie. And David Christian, whose father scored the winning goal against the Soviets in an Olympic match 20 long years ago, was on hand to assist both Eruzione and Johnson.

Even the team's unsmiling coach, Herb Brooks, unbent and grinned while taking his second telephone call of congratulations from of all people, President Carter. It was the perfect ending to a week of superb sportsmanship -- a week that took everyone's minds off presidential politics and world confrontation. There was the incredible Eric Heiden with his five gold medals for speed skating; and his little sister Beth with her bronze, there was Linda Fratianne with her silver medal in figure skating; and the incredibly plucky Phil Mahre, who fought his way down the giant slalom course to a silver medal with four steel pins in his ankle. There were the

bobsled and the luge competition that looked like instant suicide. There was the ski jumping that made every viewer feel he could fly. There were the stories of the one-man teams from faraway places; the girl from Lebanon who came in more than a minute after the winning score in the slalom but finished the course; the boy from Korea who came through minus a ski pole. In all of this there was the proof that guts and training -- endless training and mind-blowing guts -- are what make sports something apart from politics and nationality. Sports is indeed universal, even to the fans in the armchairs."

The entire editorial is a tribute to the benefit of Olympic sport. I direct readers to the last sentence. It is worth reading a second time.

In all of this there was the proof that guts and training --endless training and mind-blowing guts -- are what make sports something apart from politics and nationality. Sports is indeed universal, even to the fans in the armchairs.

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CHAPTER FIVE

"1980 - THE WEST DIVIDES"

A group of forty American athletes competing at Madison Square Garden on March 1 voted unanimously to oppose President Carter's boycott.(1) Ten British Olympic medalists, in an open letter to the world, urged that Britain take part in the Games. Gold medalists like Rod Milburn (US), Lyn Davies and Ann Packer (Great Britain) reasoned that efforts to embarrass the Soviets through boycott were short term. They castigated the politicians for seeing their art as a "harmless recreation," expendable in international affairs. The International Athletes Club (600 members) called on Olympic federations to reject the boycott plea and offered financial support for the team. British members of this club, which included Steve Ovett, Sebastian Coe, Daley Thompson, and Geoff Capes, saw Olympic participation as something quite different from support of Russian political actions.(2) The public attitude in the US was now swinging rapidly toward participation. People accrued sympathy for the deprived athletes. Correspondence from US Olympic Federation leaders was now more optimistic. Besides, the US was one of a handful of countries which had never missed competing in the Modern Olympic Games. But President Carter had set February 20th as his deadline for Soviet troop withdrawal, and the last thing Carter's depleted public image could afford was equivocation on this issue. Carter wrote to USOC president, Robert Kane, and his executive director, F. Don Miller, urging US withdrawal from the 22nd Olympiad. (John Powers has documented this chain of events lucidly.) (3) His "hammer," Lloyd Cutler, haunted the Olympic executives, insisting that the Soviet invasion was "the most serious threat to world peace since World War II." Cutler's deputy, Joseph Onek, was quoted as threatening to "destroy" the IOC and the Olympic movement if it failed to acquiesce and shift the Games from Moscow. This incredible position was explained the next day as a misunderstanding, but the meaning was clear ... Carter was twisting arms and force feeding allies to expand his pro-boycott parade. Kane and Miller reflected the US athletes' dilemma: loyalty to the country on the one hand and personal integrity as an athlete or an official in the other. Indeed, President Carter as the USOC's Honorary

President was given at least absentee landlord status with the Olympic body. Both Kane and Miller doubted the effectiveness of the boycott and approached the International Olympic Committee with their president's demands in trepidation. Their request was denied. Adding to their discomfort, Secretary of State Vance embarrassed them with his highly political ultimatum delivered at the Lake Placid IOC meeting in February. They decided to play a waiting game. They knew the athletes' dilemma of disloyalty to their country, while at the same time hoping they would never have to institute the intent of their promise of cooperation with President Carter. "Of course, the USOC will accept any decision concerning our participation in the Games the President makes in view of his analysis of what is best for the country." The February 20th deadline had backed them into an impossible corner. Technically, they had until May 24th to accept the invitation of the Olympic Organizing Committee to attend the Games. Pressure from the White House forced them to convene the delegates at Colorado Springs in April 12 for the fateful vote. It was the USOC's intention that all members (over 2,400 of them) first debate, then vote in this critical position in as objective a fashion as possible. The stage was set for an historic debate addressing all the issues from all sides. But this was not to be, for at that instant the intimidation began. They were reminded of the 4.2 million dollars appropriated to them by Congress. Ninety-seven athletes were invited (at the USOC's expense) to a fatherly lecture at the White House on the do's and don'ts of international politics, and the need for the athletes to become front-line troops in this battle. Mr. Carter told them, "I can't say at this moment what other nations will not go to the Summer Olympics in Moscow. Ours will not go." And he rejected a 7-point compromise by the dejected athletes the next day. It was difficult for these young aspirants to reconcile Carter's reactions to the Ice Hockey team's gold medal and Eric Heiden's successes at Lake Placid and his determination to deprive them of their chance for glory. The athletes' vote had been decisive, reflecting a troubled atmosphere: forty-four against the boycott, 29 in favour, and 24 abstaining. Women's volleyball team member, Debbie Green, put it this way: "It was so hypocritical ... the winter athletes were described as heroes; we were unpatriotic."

Olympic Village
Lake Placid, New York
February 24, 1980

The Honorable James E. Carter
President of the United States
The White House
Washington D.C.

Dear Mr. President:

The United States 1980 Winter Olympic Games team would like to express our deepest appreciation for your most thoughtful invitation to visit you at The White House.

It has been a most enjoyable gathering for those of us who have been in training. We will look back on this occasion as a truly memorable experience and will associate it with the thrill of participating in the Olympic Games.

Mr. President, we are all extremely proud of having had this opportunity to represent our great country in the Olympic Games.

In the highest Olympic traditions of creating goodwill among the youth of the world we have not only engaged in spirited, high level athletic competition, but we have also had the opportunity to meet, socialize and exchange viewpoints with athletes from 38 other countries, regardless of their ideologies. This valuable exchange, and it was as valuable to them as it was to us, has made each and every one of us better American citizens as well as more understanding of life styles in other countries. In its truest spirit it must always be remembered that the Olympic Games do not belong to a single country but to the world as a whole.

Mr. President, we urge you to use your most prestigious office to assure that our fellow athletes who have trained diligently for the Olympic Summer Games are provided the same opportunity which we have just experienced by participating in the Winter Games. We can all assure you that there is no substitute for participation in the Olympic Games. We all agree that the Olympic Games represent the highlight of our athletic careers.

Again, we say humbly to you -- thank you, and we shall look to your leadership to preserve the spirit of Olympics. We understand it ourselves much better since we have been to Lake Placid.

Respectfully,

1980 WINTER OLYMPIC TEAM

The most serious blunder created by the Carter forces was exposed on the front page of a Nigerian newspaper. He had invited South Africa to join him in boycotting the 1980 Summer Olympics in Moscow. Any knowledgeable sports fan knew that South Africa had been banned from the entire Olympic movement eight years previously for their apartheid policies. When, by the middle of March, administration efforts appeared to be faltering and the alternate games location suggestion had collapsed, the government leaned on big business for support. Sears Roebuck conditioned its pledges as did 12 more giant US companies. Miller labeled this action "sheer blackmail", and, although the administration at first denied having applied pressure, eventually admitted complicity. "We will leave no stone unturned in soliciting support wherever we can find it," said Lloyd Cutler. The administration was helped in its cause by an ebbing flow of voluntary contributions to the Olympic fund. Grass-roots seed monies stopped coming. A heavy public relations campaign in late March and early April descended on the faltering US Committee with deadly accuracy. Carter sent telegrams to the delegates and had a bipartisan team of Congressmen do the same. His theme: "The Americans will not go." On the Thursday prior to the fateful vote, Carter delivered his ultimate weapon which threatened to pull passports or take legal actions should the Committee defy his directive. Vice President Walter Mondale addressed the assembled delegates in Colorado Springs. He referred to the Berlin Olympics, Andre Sakharov, the future security of the civilized world, and heroic Afghan athletes who had turned into freedom fighters. He even managed to quote the Olympic idea in support of the administration's attempt to abort the 1980 Olympic Games. Supported by Mr. William Simon, a well-known Republican, Mr. Mondale represented a united and powerful Washington front. The ballot was taken with little debate. An incredibly large number of Olympic delegates voted 1604-797, with 2 abstentions, not to go to Moscow. It represented one of Mr. Carter's few distinct victories in his four years in office. A copy of the resolution follows:

THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION WAS APPROVED BY THE
ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE AT ITS MEETING ON APRIL 11, 1980:

WHEREAS, the International Olympic Committee ("IOC") awarded the 1980 Summer Olympic Games to Moscow, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics ("Soviet Union"); and

WHEREAS, the President of the United States of America urged the United States Olympic Committee ("USOC") to propose to the IOC that the 1980 Summer Games in Moscow be postponed, transferred or cancelled, and

WHEREAS, the President of the USOC presented the request of the President of the United States to the IOC Executive Board in Lake Placid, New York, which request was denied on February 12, 1980; and

WHEREAS, the President of the United States, by letter dated February 15, 1980, stated "it is my decision that, if the Soviet troops are not fully withdrawn from Afghanistan by February 20, 1980, the United States should not send a team to the Games; and

WHEREAS, the Soviet Union military forces have not withdrawn and have not begun to withdraw from Afghanistan as of this date; and

WHEREAS, the USOC realizes that certain US amateur athletes have already won places on the 1980 Olympic Team and the other athletes have trained vigorously to compete for other places on the 1980 Team, and the USOC desires to fulfill its responsibility to the American people who have contributed to the USOC and to those athletes and by preparing, selecting and entering teams in the Olympic and Pan American Games, and

WHEREAS, the USOC has until May 24, 1980 to enter the 1980 Summer Olympic Games;

NOW, THEREFORE, after full discussion by the House of Delegates of the United States Olympic Committee, assembled on this 12th day of April, 1980, it is hereby

RESOLVED, that since the President of the United States has advised the United States Olympic Committee that in the light of international events the national security of the country is threatened, the USOC has decided not to send a team to the 1980 Summer Games in Moscow, and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that if the President of the United States advises the United States Olympic Committee, on or before May 20, 1980, that international events have become compatible with the national interest and the national security is no longer threatened, the USOC will enter its athletes in the 1980 Summer Games.

His troops were delighted and magnanimous. Liberal federal support was promised to buoy up the sagging Olympic fund.¹ Congressional medals were to be struck for the selected athletes. The President eulogized his "loyal" Olympic officials even as an ill-fated attempt by disgruntled athletes to overturn the USOC's decision in a federal court was turned down. The athletes discovered for themselves just how cold war games are played.(3)

The British Olympic Federation decision, originally scheduled for March 5, was delayed three weeks. This delay was voted on so that all arguments could be weighed properly.(4) It was not accepted kindly by the politicians who had hoped for an early victory. Bernard Levin took another swipe at the determined British Olympic Association leaders. He quoted from the Soviet Sports Officials' Handbook, published in Moscow by the NOVOSTI Press:

¹ No such support materialized.

"The view, popular in the West, 'that sport is outside politics,' finds no support in the USSR. This view is unattainable in our country ... When, for instance, Soviet representatives call for the expulsion of the South African and Rhodesian racists from the Olympic movement, this is, of course, a political move So whenever someone says that sport lies outside the framework of political relationships, we feel the remark is not a serious one.(5)

Presumably, Mr. Levin had hoped to reveal through his quotation how impoverished USSR thinking was, and, of course, he succeeded. The trouble is that he discovered two villains and no heroes in this drama. In all of the anti-boycott statements I heard not one individual or institution endeavor to exonerate the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan, nor, for that matter, had any Western voice claimed purity on the part of the Russians. The battle had been concentrated on rescuing the Games. The anti-boycott forces mustered their support on the grounds of preventing weak politicians from wrecking modern Olympism through its use as a counter weapon in the continuing warfare of international disharmony.

By March 7, Mrs. Thatcher, infuriated by Sir Dennis Follows' anti-boycott position, issued the following statement: "I told him that the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan meant that for British athletes to take part in the Games in Moscow this summer would be for them to seem to condone an international crime." (6) This statement contains the element that explains the idealist's unpreparedness to let politicians decide their fate. The world of politics contains much bluff, and brinkmanship, a position far removed from the 25-miles-a-day grind, and the dieting, and the weight training, and the heat, and the fear which faces every Olympic aspirant. It simply will not do for politicians to tell athletes that they must not bring life's ambitions to maturity because they might seem to be supporting political chicanery.

On March 12 the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Reverend Robert Runcie, urged the British athletes not to go to the Olympics. Many other church leaders supported his stand.(7) Contributions to the Games Fund in Great Britain resembled their US counterparts: donations lagged. The uncertainty of the outcome was blamed.

On March 13 the British government retaliated in anticipation of a contrary position from the British Olympic Association.(8) No special leave was to be granted to government employees, especially servicemen, selected in the British teams. They were, of course, permitted to take normal holidays, but such requests were subject to feasibility and local employment needs. In other words, selected athletes were being placed very much at the mercy of the local bureaucrats. The second government retaliation was to withdraw its special attache from Moscow. This move forced the

British Olympic Association to spend precious dollars supplying its own liaison in the Olympic city.

The way the British traditionally settle controversial issues is to schedule a debate in the House of Commons. The Opposition Labor Party decided to depart from party lines and freed up its members to vote according to their consciences.(9) The British rowing people emerged strongly on the side of going to Moscow, causing one Soviet newspaper to praise them for standing up to the "crude pressure" of the British government.(10) Also about this time, representatives of 12 Western governments met in Geneva to explore the possibility of promoting an alternate Olympics.(11) It was thought that 50 countries would support such a venture, and, if they had succeeded, collapse of the Modern Olympic movement would surely have taken place. One unhappy representative, Australian bureaucrat Mr. Graham Dempster, spoke with feeling, if in private: "I never thought I would be taking part in the dissolution of the Modern Olympic Games. It is an unhappy occasion."(12) The 12 nations, however, could not agree on an effective alternate games proposal.

The parliamentary debate on Olympic participation in the House of Commons resulted in some interesting maneuverings. The government initially tried to "hide" the debate through scheduling it at an unimportant time, and also to limit it to three hours. The opposition forced it into an all-day affair. Pro-boycott newspapers continued to insist that no unfair pressure was being put on the athletes. This assertion received little credibility. Geoff Capes, champion shot-putter, said he was prepared to give up his job as a policeman rather than accept the special leave conditions. And miler, Sebastian Coe, came right out and condemned unfair governmental pressure on civil servants. The Commons vote was to be a free vote. Conservative backbenchers, led by Terrance Higgins, threatened revolt unless the boycott was made universal; that is, covering trade and give-aways. An appeal to the Parliamentarians was made from the British Olympic Association to uphold the individual human rights and not to institute action that would destroy British sport.(13) Of interest, too, was a poll conducted by The Observer revealing that 69 percent of British people now supported their team going to Moscow.(14) British opinion was very strong on this issue, particularly as British athletes' performances enjoyed greater quality in 1980 than they had at any time since 1936. The people wanted to see the team given every chance to perform up to expectations. As the debate continued, Mr. Popov, of the Soviet Organizing Committee, accused boycotters of violating the spirit of the Olympics. He deplored "invented lies" that were being circulated, and accused the US of adopting a position "organized for the benefit of Carter's political survival."(15) The British government also suffered from an

Irish offer to handle the British attache, thus reducing the effect of the government's retaliatory measures taken two days earlier.

The Commons voted to support the boycott 315-147. An Opposition motion which urged that the British athletes be given the right to make up their own minds as individuals was defeated 305-188. Among the Tories, notable statesmen who voted against the government were former Prime Minister Mr. Edward Heath, Sir Timothy Kitson, Sir Hugh Frazier, Mr. Peter Lloyd, and Mr. Raymond Fletcher. Mrs. Thatcher's position survived, however, on the grounds that a trip to Moscow was considered to endorse the rape of Afghanistan.

The pro-boycotters announced that an open competition in July would be held, but not as a counter Olympics. Mr. Cutler assured the watching world that these competitions "would pose no threat to the future of the unitary Olympic intrigue."⁽¹⁷⁾ Russian reaction countered with charges of intrigue. In a strong condemnation of the alternate mission, they charged that the sole aim of the entire US was to bolster Mr. Carter's re-election bid.⁽¹⁸⁾ This charge was echoed around the world and, whether true or not, amply calmed any internal Russian discontent over the threatened absence of Western athletes. The boycott's success in the US was not matched in Europe. The direction was reversing as doubts about its ultimate wisdom appeared in the daily press. The pro-boycott London Times admitted this trend and advanced two reasons:⁽¹⁹⁾ (1) The people, although not supporting Russia, did not regard the Afghanistan issue as sufficiently important to wreck the Modern Olympic Games, and (2) The government and leading newspapers had failed to persuade the people of the strategic importance of united action at this time. Their conclusion on both points are probably true, but for different reasons than those implied at this time. The government actions had been unequivocal and relatively united, and the press had given huge attention to the issue. What politicians and press magnates could not understand was that people do not automatically accord credibility to Government and Press. Both were strongly behind the boycott. Both rewarded the Winter Olympians, while at the same time condemned the Summer athletes for self-glorification and disloyalty. Both failed to realize the depth of public feeling toward the quadrennial Olympic festivals. The people distrusted government motives and refused to believe that the world was on the brink of devastation. At the same time, the British citizen came quickly to embrace the plight of their athletes. In many discussions on this issue with people in all walks of life, in at least six countries, I learned that deep-seated distrust of Mr. Carter was also a contributing reason. His professed stand on human rights was seen, tragically, to be a cover-up for ineptitude and inactivity. It is difficult for people to reconcile simultaneous

press releases, often appearing on the same page, castigating Carter for political incompetence, on the one hand, and urging full support for his Olympic boycott on the other. Something was wrong. The pieces didn't fit together, and in the end the press became the object of incredibility as well. The words "media event" and "media hype" figured prominently in discussions surrounding this volatile and rousing sporting episode. Support for the boycott was cooling in official circles in Europe. Only three of 21 countries at the Council of Europe spoke up strongly in favour of the boycott: Britain, Holland and Portugal. Politicians and economists from Sweden, Switzerland, Austria, and Cyprus were muted, and the rest pleaded undecided.(20)

The IOC decided on the March 24th to play one of its own top cards. Secretary, Monique Berliou, suggested that the IOC was prepared to help struggling countries, dependent upon and deprived of government financial support, attend the Moscow Games.(21)

The British Olympic Association vote was taken on March 25. Fifteen sports voted to attend. Five voted against (field hockey, swimming, equestrian, fencing and yachting). Chairman Sir Dennis Follows commented that he believed the government was sincere, "but we believe sports should be a bridge, not a destroyer." The government's immediate reaction was to appeal to individual athletes to withdraw.(22) The London press, infuriated at the ineffectiveness of its campaign, printed only letters of protest over the next three days. Willie Daum, German Olympic Federation chief, and French observers applauded the British Olympic Association's action.(23) Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd in the US reacted angrily, "It almost makes me vomit to see the ... vacillating Suppose Soviet paratroopers were landing in France; how would the French feel about that?"(24) European response to Senator Byrd was predictable - If the Soviets were at a point of attacking the West we would agree wholeheartedly with the US position, but they are not. Our objection to the US estimation of the state of the cold war was registered in the British Olympic Association's vote.

Pro-Labor British unions urged the lifting of the ban on special leave already in place as prior government intimidatory measures, and resorted to talk of their own ultimate retaliatory weapon, strike.(25) The US had decided not to go; Britain the reverse, resulting in great strain to the communications industry in both countries. In the US, NBC announced that it would not televise the Summer Olympics from Moscow. Apparently the giant US firm had already paid the Soviet organizing committee and the International Olympic Committee 64 million dollars, 57 million of which was recoverable through insurance.(26) The BBC indicated that it would give the Olympics full coverage and the British government said it would not interfere. But, Deputy

Managing Director, Mr. Robin Scott, was quoted as fearful of a government veto,(27) and Pravda from Moscow fanned the flames with its readership, "The winds of the cold war are once again blowing in Britain." (28) The British and the US press, under heavy influence from their respective governments, announced that they would cover the Olympics, but not as the huge spectacle to which the viewers have become accustomed. They would be treated as an important international sporting event. The British Olympic Association's decision caused some vacillation among its own federations. The equestrian team would have loved dearly to participate. The Duke of Edinburgh was the President of the international association and his son-in-law, Captain Mark Phillips, would have been a British representative. Naturally, his daughter, Princess Anne, a past member of Olympic equestrian teams, would have accompanied her husband. And such royal presence would have been intolerable to the British government.(29) Indeed, at a later meeting of the International Equestrian Federation at Lausanne, Switzerland, over which Prince Philip presided, the unanimous anti-boycott ruling from that world body opened a tiny window into the private feelings of the popular Duke.(30) Many of us even today are prepared to wager considerable stake in the private opinion of His Royal Highness on the Olympic boycott of 1980. Ten Downing Street was embarrassed by the statement that emanated from the Duke's board. The Times of London put it this way: "The Prime Minister [Mrs. Thatcher] is known to be particularly proud that she has been a leader of the Olympic Boycott movement, even if the British athletes are still defying her." (31) The Fencing Association changed its mind on April 10 and decided to send a team to Moscow after much pressure was brought to bear on its office bearers from individual members. Press officer Raymond Pau offered the reason: "It remains our view that the British Olympic Association should not send a fencing team, but in the light of their decision we have resolved to send a fencing team." Lord Killanin, although firm in his resolve to continue plans for the 22nd Olympics at Moscow, realized the gravity of the three-way split in the Olympic movement. The East-West cleavage was predictable. But the division that had now arisen amongst the stalwart Olympic nations in the West seriously strained the fabric of the Modern Olympic movement. The fires of disintegration were alight resulting in his attempt at mediation through talks with Leonid Brezhnev and Jimmy Carter.

Brezhnev agreed to de-emphasize political symbolisms at the upcoming Moscow Olympics. Critics applauded this concession and it must be reported that, in spite of intensive microscopic press scrutiny, the Russians held to this promise. Talks with Jimmy Carter, although polite, were not successful in reversing the US decision. Carter was clear, however, in giving assurances that he did support the spirit and the

continuation of the Modern Olympic Games. US presidential press secretary, Jody Powell, confidently predicted that as many nations as 60 would follow the US lead.(33) The British yachtsmen decided not to go.(34) And the British Parliament made one final stand to change the minds of their Olympic sportsmen. Mr. Norman St John Stevas, leader of the House of Commons, averred that neither politics nor sport were morally neutral aspects of life. "It will be an outrage for the Union Jack to be paraded around the arena in Moscow while Soviet dissidents were being persecuted by the Soviet government." He likened such an action to the world folly in attending the Berlin Games in 1936.(35) It was in reaction to this speech that I heard the harshest remarks made by a member of the British team. "The politicians are at it again. They have their heads up their 'arses' on this issue. How do they expect us to believe their indignation over participation in a sports festival when they are still trading vigorously with the Soviet Union." This athlete went on to accuse Western politicians of taking the easy way out, of spiting the Russians rather than confronting them, of launching their attack by turning around and shooting up a group of their own men.(36)

By April 22, 16 European countries, including Belgium, Britain, Italy, and Lichtenstein, urged the International Olympic Committee to ban the use of flags and national anthems at the Olympic Games.(37) Esteemed leader, Willie Daum, the favoured candidate to take over from Lord Killanin after the Olympics as IOC President, feared that public opinion had swung more toward the boycott since the American decision. Having lost the British support and fearful of a total collapse in Europe, the US was now applying strong pressure on West Germany. Nonsense statements were being issued from the President's representatives claiming boycott success if the West Germans joined the US on this issue. Mr. Popov, Vice President of the Organizing Committee in Russia, interjected his country's opinion with this statement: "It has taken thirty years to normalize relations between Russia and West Germany. Carter's pressure on Bonn was a state of mind which smells of gunpowder."(38) On April 23, twenty-six world sporting federations criticized the heads of the Western nations in a statement from Lausanne: "The boycott of a sporting event is an improper method to use in trying to obtain a political end." These world bodies went further: "Being aware of reasons advanced by different governments for putting pressure on their national Olympic committees to boycott, (we) protest energetically against such pressure."(39) At about this time the Canadian government wilted and began to pressure their Olympic committee into supporting the boycott.(40) Britain continued her ban on special leave conditions for civil servants selected for the Games team.(41) Buoyed by the mounting tide of support for Carter's boycott, arch foe of the Olympic movement, Bernard Levin,

predicted that dozens of nations would join the boycott. The East Germans, silent through most of this drama, took advantage of Western ambivalence to attack Chancellor, Helmut Schmidt, of West Germany. They called his posture one of "pure sham." As pressure was placed on the IOC to consider permitting individual athletes without national affiliation to take part, news arrived of the failure of the US hostage rescue mission in Iran. President Carter, in spite of frequent denials and in extreme frustration, had authorized a daring, if ill-fated, rescue attempt to relieve the 53 hostages still in illegal containment in Teheran. The mission was a disaster. The helicopters' engines failed. The President aborted the mission and two of the fleeing planes crashed into one another killing eight men. The US's stocks were at a serious low. Carter's position as trusted leader of the West was again in doubt.(43) The Russians, taking advantage of this situation, accused Mr. Carter of bringing the world to the brink of war.(44) Britain and other allies rallied to Carter's support, calling the mission daring and legitimate, if unwise. The US Secretary of State, Mr. Cyrus Vance, became the political victim of this failure and resigned. Although unconnected with Afghanistan and the Olympic Games, the rescue attempt became associated through the forceful ties of the underlying US frustration. Understandably, the American people wanted action. Many spent time placing blame. Many more rued the futility of US international policy at this time. A renewed effort on the part of disgruntled athletes to reverse President Carter's Olympic Boycott decision took place, but failed.(45) Mr. Wedgewood Benn, militant British Labor leader, urged British athletes to go to Moscow to spread the word about nuclear armaments.(46) Well meaning though his motives were and gratifying though his support was to the athletes, his actions constituted just as much political interference into the affairs of sport as did Mr. Carter's.

With his foreign policy in ruins and the possibility of a presidential candidacy resurgence from Ted Kennedy, Mr. Carter decided to leave the Rose Garden in spite of the continuation of the hostage internment in Iran. Pro-US sympathy caused many Western athletes to express concern at the time. British sprint champion and eventual 100-metres Olympic Gold medalist, Alan Wells, said he was troubled but would attend.(47) Eighteen Western European national Olympic committees responded to the escalating world crisis with the following statement. "Participation is even more important in a period of tension and international conflict. We appeal to the Olympic Committees of all the countries of the world to take part."(48) As Singapore joined the boycott the bloodhounds uncovered an embarrassing relic from the Soviet history: In 1936, on similar Cartesian grounds, Soviet authorities had urged boycott of Adolf Hitler's

Games. The Soviets were tasting some of their own medicine deep from the shadows of the past.(49)

The old adage trouble never visits alone dogged the Carter administration yet again on May 7. His decision not to attend President Tito's funeral angered nations on both sides of the Iron Curtain. The London Times' lead article was firm:

President Carter's decision not to attend the funeral of President Tito is not a good one. It is unwise for reasons which are so clear that the failure of the White House to see them must deepen conviction that the US is being led by a man who is not just muddled, but is seemingly blind to whole areas of reality. In this case he shows himself blind to the stature of President Tito, to the importance of the Yugoslav people, to the mood of the Yugoslav people, to the interest of the US, and once again, to the sound advice of his own Department of State."(50) ²

Strong words from such a frequent and ardent supporter of the US. It was clear at this time that the Carter Presidency was under great pressure. Letters urging the President to seek advisory support poured into Washington. More than one critic questioned the President's ability to assess and act upon his advice during this turbulent period leading to a plunge in the job-ratings scale for Jimmy Carter. Remaining, undecided Western nations came to grips with the boycott during the May 9-14 period. New Zealand voted 12-5-1 to go. Argentina decided to boycott. The French voted 22-0-1 in support of attending the Olympic Games. The US was disappointed with the French vote, and understandably attached great importance to the West German decision. Press secretary, Jody Powell, cushioned the blow to US pride with the remarkable statement that the boycott would be considered a success if the West Germans voted to stay home. Few believed him at the international level because of his tactics of continuously redefining the criteria for success. This uncomfortably resembled tactics adopted by the axis powers during the 30's and 40's. Willie Daum, German President, vigorously opposed the boycott during the debate. But it was his sad duty to announce a 59-40 decision to support the boycott.(51) It was the fourth time West Germany would not be attending the Olympic Games, but this time for very different reason than the previous three occasions. In 1920, 1924, and in 1948 she was not invited. The West German athletes were furious at the decision, but not with Willie Daum and his Committee. Their fury was directed against Helmut Schmidt and his dependence upon Washington (London Times). The Italian and Irish governments urged their Olympic Committees

² Especially shortsighted considering that Yugoslavia was one of two Iron Curtain countries (Romania the other) to break the Iron Curtain boycott of the Los Angeles Games four years later.

not to attend the Games unsuccessfully. Belgium, Holland and the Swedes (unanimously) voted to attend the Games. Israel sided with the US.

On the eve of the May 24 deadline the Australian Olympic Federation voted 6-5 to attend the Games, infuriating the Prime Minister, Mr. Malcolm Frazer, who had stood solidly behind Mr. Carter for the previous five months.(52) The Australian Federation was composed of a mixture of sporting figures, business leaders, and civil servants. Their positive vote took the government by surprise, causing incredible pressure for decision reversal during the succeeding weeks. I wrote Mr. Syd Grange, OAF Chairman, a personal letter at this time.

I wish to commend the Australian Olympic Federation on the decision to attend the Moscow Olympics in spite of tremendous political pressure to do otherwise. No one is anxious to support thick headed Russian aggression in Afghanistan, but the World Nations is a complex of give and take, and of accommodating the ideal. Most keen students of international politics are agreed that the quadrennial Olympic festival is not the place at which to demonstrate political or idealistic differences, rather an occasion in which the language of peace and goodwill can be emphasized. The use of the Olympic Games as a political tool is deplorable and has rarely achieved the desired objectives. I include a copy of the position that I have taken publicly on the use of boycott and exclusion in the Olympic movement. This paper sets out my objections which are far reaching and, I am afraid, have been proven sound. The Australian Olympic Federation, in resisting pressure from the Frazer government, in repudiating blatant Olympic politicking, has played its part in preserving the spirit of Olympism under the most testing conditions. It is a courageous decision giving hope that 1984, and beyond, will have future. Many of us living in the United States, from all walks of life, have implored President Carter to reverse his position. He has refused which is regrettable. His failure to understand the spirit of the Olympic movement has been largely impotized by the actions of the Free Worlds Olympic Committees in deciding to attend the Games. His boycott was, I believe, rash and ill advised, and very unfortunate. Your reaction was not simply one of repair, but rather symptomatic of courage, wisdom, and vision. I commend every member of the AOF individually and the Federation as a whole for a decision well taken.

The Australians withstood formidable governmental pressures for mind change and decided to follow through with the Olympic tradition in every detail save the parading of the Southern Cross. Their thinking was clear, and to my mind, commendable. Although the Australian Olympic Council was initially divided there was no equivocation about their actions after the Vote. Paraphrased their position was as follows: "If we are to attend the Games, we are to march and do everything that we would normally do in the host city of the Olympics. No partial boycott, protests, or withholdings. The government has forbidden us to use the flag and the national anthem, so we will do away with these symbols. But everything else will be as normal. If we truly believe in the spirit of the Olympic Games, we will not deny its symbols." - The Australian public was divided fifty-fifty on the government's pressures and the AOF's commitment. With very few exceptions, the Australian athletic coaches and leading officials supported the

sportmen's decisions.(53) Leading commercial companies and business enterprises, as in the US, withdrew their support, causing last-minute reverberations in the budget, but the AOF held firm. Their action was made possible because of genuine independence from political interference which they had enjoyed and fostered from the days of the first Modern Games in 1896. Large sections of the press in Australia were vociferous in their opposition to the AOF's position, its journalists dutifully pouring venom on the Olympic effort. The New Zealand Olympic Federation arrived at a similar decision to that of their antipodean colleague. Athlete support, however, dwindled rapidly as a result of chilling pressures from government and press. Only three of the original ninety-person New Zealand Olympic Team made their way to Moscow. Their efforts were rewarded when two of them placed second in the semi final of the Kayak Pairs.(54) Similar defections were registered in other Western teams also. The British National Small Bore Rifle Association, the yachting and the field hockey teams are examples. In spite of the now well-established scenario, the political debate continued. Mr. Dennis Howell, shadow cabinet minister in the House of Commons, complained to Mrs. Thatcher about the constant berating of sports officials and athletes who had elected to attend.(55) Sportsmen believed that the campaign against the Olympics was providing a diversion from the real political and strategic considerations at issue in Afghanistan. He asked the obvious question: "Why is it wrong for them to compete in sport but right for your ministers to encourage trade European sport has shown that it is not going to be pushed around by European politicians."(56) Mrs. Thatcher had been completely silent on this question. Mr. Carter, although initially directing a ban, had permitted continuation of trade when the full extent of the impact of wheat sales became known. Argentinian wheat could feed this Russian beast as effectively as mid-western wheat. Mr. Frazer, the Australian Prime Minister, when asked the same question, admitted complicity in a rare, if injudicious, statement of preference.

The Irish equestrian team decided not to take part in the Games - not for reasons of principle, but because the Irish Defence Department had withdrawn two of the employed riders and four horses from the team. It was now time for a roll call on the Olympic attendance situation. The International Olympic Committee announced that 81 nations would compete in the Moscow Games (see chart) and 44 would not be attending. The US press, anxious to vindicate Mr. Carter's original decision, claimed that 60 nations were supporting the boycott. This was an unfortunate and misleading inaccuracy which persisted throughout the summer in the US. Slightly more than half of this number had absented themselves from the 22nd Olympiad for reasons of boycott support; the others simply had not replied, could nor afford to attend, or had already

announced their intentions of not going. It was clear by this time that Mr. Carter's Olympic-shattering boycott had not realized widespread support. Indeed, it constituted another striking blow to US influence abroad.

NATIONS ATTENDING THE 1980 OLYMPICS

A list compiled by U.P.I. on May 25, 1980

NATIONS GOING:

With the approach of today's deadline for accepting invitations to send a team to Moscow, the following is a list compiled by UPI, of decisions by national Olympic committees:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Barbados, Belgium, Benin, Brazil, Britain, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Columbia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Dominican Republic, East Germany, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Holland, Hungary, India, Iraq, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Ivory Coast, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Mali, Malta, Mexico, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nepal, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, North Korea, Panama, Peru, Poland, Puerto Rico, Portugal, Roumania, San Marino, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Spain, Soviet Union, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Tanzania, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Upper Volta, Venezuela, Vietnam, Yugoslavia, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

NATIONS NOT GOING:

Albania, Antigua, Argentina, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Bermuda, Canada, Chile, China, Egypt, Fiji, Haiti, Honduras, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Malaysia, Monaco, Mauritania, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Somalia, South Korea, South Yemen, Sudan, Taiwan, Turkey, United States of America, Uruguay, West Germany.

* Countries underlined are likely to have won medals.

The British Olympic Association's decision was a critical factor in "forcing a break in the boycott wall." (57) Sir Dennis Follows, the President of the British Olympic Association, was the key voice in this decision. The attempt on the part of the British Government to make a buffoon out of Sir Dennis backfired. The London Times admitted this in an editorial which asked the question: "Where did we fail?" While still adopting a pro-boycott pose and not relinquishing advocacy to still make the boycott work, The Times conceded that it had been a ragged boycott. With the sure knowledge that smiles were abounding in Moscow, The Times made one final plea to the British officials for a mind change. "The act of defiance (of the European Olympic committees of their governments) in itself is a valuable propaganda weapon which the Russians will use to isolate the Americans.... It is not too late to make it work." And the Russians used the final attendance figures to their advantage.(58) Tass stated:

One can state quite definitely already that the highly unseemly intrigues around the Olympics organized by some political circles have failed completely, and that they have been unable to bring about a demise of this festival of world sports.(59)

The IOC amended the count as follows: 85 attending; 29 supporting the boycott, with a further 27 who had not replied. (listed on page 74) It was noted that 88 nations had attended the Montreal Olympics four years earlier in spite of the African nations' boycott which numbered about 26 countries. Lord Killanin, in a simple statement, echoed the sentiments of the 85 nations who elected to attend the Moscow Olympics: Sport should not be used for political purposes." His thoughts were summarized in the press: (1) Perhaps some good may come out of this boycott attempt, especially a purging of escalating political actions which were threatening the Olympic spirit; (2) the boycott had proved less effective than had been expected; (3) the fact that the Games are important to the competitors of all nationalities was underscored by the many athletes (from boycotting countries) who requested permission to participate as independent individuals; (4) those who had sought to compare the 1980 Moscow Olympics with those of Hitler's Games in 1936 were unfair, such comparisons are invalid; (5) there was a need for the world press to monitor its own responsibilities in the use of the tremendous power available to them. He discriminated between genuine sports reporters and the predators who sought headlines at any cost. "I issue a warning that the Olympic Games are for sporting journalists, not for fashion writers or political reporters." (60) His final point is the reason I have headed this chapter "The West Divides." He hoped that the deep divisions created between and within countries by the US-led boycott would reconstitute and mend during the next four years.

World champion Finn sailor, Camm Lewis from Sherborn, Massachusetts, sailed in the US Olympic trials in Rhode Island, off Newport in June. He had spent nearly every day of the previous two years preparing for these trials. He quit the University of Rhode Island, spent the summer in Europe, and busted himself in mastering this difficult yachting class - physically the most demanding of the seven Olympic sailing classes."

"I'll tell you, I really wanted to do the Olympics," he said. "When I got off the plane in Los Angeles after the worlds (1980 World Finn Championships in New Zealand last February, which Lewis won) and heard we weren't going to the Olympics - well, I've just been spinning my wheels ever since.

"I haven't sailed more than five days in the last three months," he said. "Two years," he said, "That's two years out of my life."

Newsweek called Lewis and his colleagues the Lost Class of 1980.(62)

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CHAPTER SIX

ETERNAL OLYMPISM "1980 - THE GAMES SURVIVE"

It was 8:00 pm and raining in London. Unperturbed, city music lovers flocked to Royal Festival Hall to hear Rachmaninov's music sung and played magnificently. It struck me that Rachmaninov was Russian, very Russian. Displaced - yes; a US citizen in his final years - yes; but nevertheless very Russian. Critics have decided his third symphony, "The Bells" is the most Russian of all his works. And playing the music of this latter day genius was another Russian - Shura Cherkassey. Born in Odessa he had migrated to the US as a child. Now an acknowledged specialist in Rachmaninov's music, he thrilled us with his lyricism and frolic and rhythm and brilliance. These were two Russians who were honored and revered. Neither had visited Afghanistan recently. Neither appeared to the expansive, cosmopolitan audience to be anything other than magnificent musicians and master craftsmen. They brought us to life with language that spoke a common good, a message that transcended race, or creed, or ethnicity, or political conviction. For a short time we spoke together, their music and our senses, then life returned to normal as we filed out of that beautiful hall and rode the Tube to our respective abodes. A passing acquaintance in the sodden space of a celebrated city, yet we were enriched, deeply touched - Maslov would call it actualized - and I was grateful.(1)

I've experienced similar enrichment in Melbourne and Mexico City and Montreal, and in many other places around the globe. Mankind can rise to beautiful heights of technical and spiritual achievement. The goal is not without struggle, nor is the pathway easy to tread, but it is inestimably worthwhile. Those who travel this road know its pastures and defend them passionately. Art, Medicine, Poetry, Drama, Music, and Human Movement are weighstations on this eternal road.

I wish everyone saw the Olympic Games as spiritually true, as an ideal that drives the body, mind and spirit to grow together, but obviously this is not the case. The fact is

that nearly every golden moment in sport is charged with political and social significance. The shrewd eyes of coach, ally, competitor, bank manager, entrepreneur and politician are forever focused on the performance first and then the man. Soon it will be the same for woman as she grows in importance in the world's sporting scene.

Olympism is a modern day religion to those who aspire to the golden heights. Those who denigrate this fact, cynics who decry Olympism, constantly quoting examples of cheating and quick cure and valueless banalities, fail to understand. While mankind has often fallen short of the lofty ideals of Olympism, he has also climbed to magnificent heights of human endeavor through the Olympic movement. Distance, height, time and performance set their own criteria. They are intangible, measurable and competitive. There is room for only one at the top. The striving after novelty in these criteria is stuff from which ultimacy is made. Man will literally die to achieve the unachievable. Like great mountaineers who will tell you they scaled Mt. Everest or the Matterhorn, or whatever, because it was there, athletes need only the spiritual challenge to consume their efforts, their time and their pocket books. We keep using words like "the pure Olympian" (of Jesse Owens) or "the lithesome machine" (of Abebe Bikila) or "the Lithgow Flash" (of Marjorie Jackson). It was these indestructible people who haunted the efforts of the 1980 political leaders to enlist Olympism as a weapon of punishment and destruction.

If we only had used the Olympic ideal as a weapon of peace. If only Jimmy Carter had said boldly and courageously: We send our best to Moscow in peace, not as marauders or plunderers, but as envoys of the greatest good in Man. Look at them, fellow leaders, and heed their message. No lasting good can come of aggression only sadness. These athletes of ours have shown a way, one way of peaceful coexistence among different philosophies. This is our answer to your abuse of the Olympic Charter. Edwin Moses as he scales 10 hurdles faster than anyone else, and John Doe as he finishes unplaced in the 3000 meter steeplechase, breathless and exhausted. We will not cooperate in any meaningful way in weapons, or in engineering that which can be twisted to war machinery, but our answers to your treachery are to confront you in every other way possible.

But he didn't. He was obsessed with punishment and fearful he might fall off the most difficult pedestal there is on Mother Earth - the Presidency of the United States.

The days that followed the drawing of sides in the Olympic debate were marked with anger, recrimination and despair. We all knew the alternate games would amount to nothing. The overwhelming US press corps flooded us with so much information and opinion that careful, studied words were lost alongside uninformed and ignorant clatter.

Attention instead focused on the shortcomings of the Moscow Organizing Committee and the unfortunate habit the Russians have for distrusting people, of lining the streets with "peace" keeping officials. Every piece of dirt that could be unearthed was, and every ounce of moisture was wrung from the towels that cleaned up Moscow.

The US turned off the Olympics as they do their television sets each night. Another load of stimulus was on its way. As a free people we had the chance to show our unfettered ways to the communist world, but we blew it. We ended up in the words of Robert Kane (USOC President) on his return from Moscow: "You would think it was the US that invaded Afghanistan" -- we were the villains of the peace in Europe. In their eyes we had tried to desecrate the Modern Olympic movement; and in vain."

I flew to Paris on June 24. The next six weeks were spent reading and debating and listening to the unfolding Olympic saga. With the Australian track and field team in Cologne and at the 32-nation track meet in Stuttgart, thousands of words were exchanged eagerly and sadly. Each lip told a different story and each pair of eyes explored hungrily for a new message, a new insight, something, anything, that would make their performance better. Australian high jumper, Chris Stanton, was working on a double arm scoop at take off; triple jumper, Ian Campbell, sought speed and position at take off; 400-meter specialist, Rick Mitchell, revelled in a perfecting stride pattern; and 200-meter runner, Denise Boyd, battled a persistent, nagging chest cold. Each athlete prepared for the upcoming trauma and each was convinced that the trip to Moscow was worthwhile, or important to them personally, and true to the noblest ideals of the Human Race. To these athletes the struggle was real.

Less noble things happened, too. British Airways cancelled six Olympic charter flights to Moscow in mid-June. The airlines claimed it was for commercial reasons. Mr. Gerry Draper, the airline commercial director, said: "There is no question of any political directive, whatsoever, otherwise we wouldn't have left it as late as June 12. The decision was entirely based on an assessment of whether or not the traffic was likely to materialize." Mr. David Dryer, head of a travel firm organizing the tours, had this reaction:

"It is a real kick in the teeth at this stage to be told, just three weeks before the event, that no flights will be available. These people we're taking to Moscow aren't 'Commies', they're not hooligans planning to smash the place up. They are ordinary people like Daley Thompson's Aunt. Their explanation that the contract wasn't signed in time isn't good enough."

The Evening Standard, which reported this incident, went on to say that government ministers had talked "informally" to British Airways about its Moscow

arrangements but stressed no leverage was involved. This is hard to believe. The Government was very upset at the revolt of the athletes.(2)

Similar stories came out of Australia. Two West Australian athletes employed by the State government were refused leave to participate in the Moscow Olympics. A public appeal, organized and led by the opposition party, more than reached the \$1,500 needed for salary compensation.(3) The New Zealand athletes were not so lucky. Facing tremendous pressure from the government and a partially informed public, only three oarsmen finally made it through to Moscow. One rower, with a wife and three children, was told he would not have a job to return to when he came back.(4)

Many anomalies crowded the press coverage, providing rich pasture in which the highly imaginative journalistic mind could graze. Four Puerto Rican boxers, who, of course, are US citizens with US passports, participated in the Games. Afghanistan, the focus of the initial controversy, attended with full honors. Led by Guljam Sahi Hasani, who is the General Secretary of their Olympic Committee, they were given tumultuous reception when they marched into the Stadium. Mind you, they were inaccessible in the Village, being housed safely in one of the 16-storey blocks of apartments and missing a number of the original team members - yes. But still they were there, and obviously with pleasure. Hasani loved the village, "Allah couldn't build it better.... You capitalists couldn't build it in such a way."(5) One is tempted to remark that with such Russian help who needs Allah, but that would amount to sour grapes. The fact is that the Afghans, the people violated by the USSR nine months earlier, were competing in the Games, and the United States, the people defending their rights, were not.

About this time an editorial in the Boston Globe highlighted another anomaly.

The Carter administration had given permission for "an unspecified number of team officials of American sporting organizations to attend meetings in Moscow before, during, and after the Olympics." The US would lose positions of influence if they were not represented was the rationale used. The Globe, correctly in my judgment, didn't accept this explanation:

... the officials should be asked to make the same sacrifice as the athletes. The voting power and status that would be given up by the official cannot be considered more significant than the opportunities for the athletic immortality given up by the athletes. There should be no double standard in this boycott.(6)

Making the national team whether as an athlete or official is one of the strongest goals in amateur sport. To deny one population and oblige the other is an error of serious proportion.

Another anomaly concerned the public statements of Party Chairman Leonid Brezhnev ("sport brings nations closer together and helps people comprehend and understand each other better") and the private actions of the Soviet powers in disembarking thousands of Muscovite children far into the country for the period of the Games on the dubious ground of providing "country holidays."(7)

The contrasts are revealing, but these facts were known to the West six years previously. If we had so many doubts about legitimizing Soviet propaganda, 1974 was the time for us to protest, not during 1980. At the eleventh hour we looked like "welshers," or worse still, like people without the "backbone" to lay our principles squarely against theirs in open competition for lifestyles and medals. The boycott was not an effective weapon. Many Europeans saw it as a "cop out." Purists object to making comparisons of lifestyles through the medium of sport. Of course, their argument is consistent with keeping politics out of sport. I have used this obvious criterion because so many people persist in connecting respective lifestyles and achievements - and perhaps it is true to say that the jury is still out on this issue.

My reasons for opposing the boycott were set out in the letter to Jimmy Carter printed on pages 35-37. I have never seriously doubted the wisdom of my position - but one has to have an open mind. East-West rivalry has persisted since the Bolsheviks wrested control in Russia during the 1917 revolution, and encampment is hardly a substitute for freedom of religion, choice and lifestyle. I deliberately journeyed to West Berlin in early July to see the "Wall" and reflect about the two living standards.

What if the conservatives were right after all? Should one do anything with people who use machine guns, attack dogs, iron and steel pylons, and electrified wiring to contain their populace? Would first-hand contact with these life realities change my mind? It didn't. I walked the Wall for hours, periodically climbing the ladder to vantage points set up by West Berliners to survey the "other side." The double-walled barricade and ugly sentry boxes provoked antithetical passion, but also raised inevitable questions about the complex nature of East-West relationships and the need for everyone to explore points of common agreement, ways in which we could reduce the likelihood of a Third World War and its certain doom - to find exchange media that would deaden the need for such inhuman structures and demeaning fetters. I became more convinced than ever to run, jump, throw, even wrestle against a Russian was not to embrace his political philosophy. In no way did this action legitimize his religious or party feelings. Common decency would decree that we at least try to understand each other, but conversation or competition in apolitical spheres do not constitute complicity or conversion. Not every Russian was in agreement with the thick-headed action of

Christmas 1979 in Afghanistan. Indeed, like many Americans during the Vietnam tragedy of the 60's, he probably abhorred the violence and the intrusion. But he was a loyal Russian, and reveled in seeing fellow Russians perform well in games or through worthwhile scientific achievements. It is shortsighted to throw away precious, permanent and worthy contacts with adversaries for temporary gain.

The trip to the Berlin Wall angered, frustrated and saddened me. My anger was directed against Communist duplicity and mistrust, and frustration arose at our misjudgment in throwing away a chance to dispel that mistrust. But the sadness was the bitterest of all pills to swallow. Why does mankind continue to desecrate himself? Why do we lust so strongly after power and subordinate the obvious good that's there, somewhere? And why were we in the West custodians of freedom, squandering another opportunity to demonstrate an unfettered, worthwhile lifestyle?

I watched the opening ceremony on Dutch television. It was grand. Very little of the protest organized by the West was viewed in five hours of continuous broadcast. The Soviets had done their homework well. The immense preparations were well rewarded, a minimum of direct political intrusion was witnessed although a handful of US enthusiasts waved the Stars and Stripes to the tune of a large and warm Muscovite ovation. We had not succeeded in keeping Uncle Sam's famous vest out of the Olympics after all.

After journeying to Slagelse, Denmark, for a conference, I continued to watch the Olympics for many hours each day. Danish TV covered the events thoroughly. Somebody in Moscow was doing well with the \$57 million worth of equipment "donated" to them by the US.

The Moscow Olympics were not without controversy. Officials were accused of cheating, with substance, and a disgraceful disruption over judging in women's gymnastics took its toll, but by and large the Russians did well.

The 6,000 or so young men and women housed in the Olympic Village appear to have been well satisfied with their accommodation, their food, and the training facilities offered them. (New York Times, Aug. 4, 1980)

They ran an efficient and polite Olympic Games. The attending athletes helped by breaking 16 world records, thus averting the odious label -- 2nd class. Peter Axthelm wrote with conviction covering the cheating, the sham, and the rule bending. He repeated an often asked question. "Are the Olympic Games worth saving?" His conclusion was negative and his concerns were real. I don't agree with Axthelm on this

last question; the Olympics have been in trouble before and will be again. Notwithstanding, the Charter is worth fighting for.

Many people expressed surprise at how little the celebrated absentees were missed. US absence was noticed, of course, especially in Men's Swimming, Boxing, Track and Field, Shooting, Basketball and Women's Swimming, Volleyball and Hockey. Boston journalist, John Powers, attempted a determination of medal results if the US had attended. He compared Moscow results with the best US performances from the current season and that's where he got into trouble. He should have compared best performances with best performances, or at least US trial results with Olympic results, but it made better copy the other way.(8) All comparisons were both moot and inaccurate. Although the USOC continued with its trials and named official Olympic teams for 1980, the heart had gone out of American performances. Even extended tours of Europe and China and meetings with Olympic foes, before and after the Games, were anticlimactic. Rowdy Gaines put it this way after winning the 100 and 200 meter freestyle events at the United States trials:

These have never been the Olympic trials. It is like comparing diamonds to dirt. The level of excellence is reduced here. In the Olympics you swim against people. My time in the 200M freestyle would have won the silver medal in Moscow. I know that if I was there I would have won the gold. I'm not bragging. I just know that.

In the light of his competitive performance four years later (Gold, in the 100-meter freestyle), (1984) who can invalidate his claim. Very few of the US athletes competed with conviction. Edwin Moses was a noted exception. He ran many 400-metre hurdle races in Europe during the summer season and won all with quality. His medal was symbolically retired long before the starter's gun sent the Moscow finalists on their way.

As expected, Russia monopolized the medal placings, but the West scored some impressive victories. Britain's Coe, Ovett, Thompson, and Wells performed magnificently as did Italy's Mennea and Simeoni. Competition in Swimming, Shooting, Boxing, Volleyball, Track and Field, Basketball and Field Hockey events was seriously reduced, and shrewd judges tell me that the US men's gymnastics team would have been very competitive, too. But the overall quality of performance was high, and even in the devalued events performances were noteworthy. Little Zimbabwe captured the gold medal in Women's Field Hockey. I wondered how fellow Bostonian, Chris Larson, felt the instant this result was announced.

The former Rhodesia, a British colony, had been invited at the last moment by a frustrated Russian Organizing Committee. Nobody expected them to produce winning results. It did not surprise me. Women's sport in Southern Africa is of exceedingly high caliber, it's just that the world has excommunicated them for so long now that memories have faded. It took a gold-medal-winning performance by a bunch of white, expatriate, Mablereign school girls from Bulawayo to remind us that we cannot hide sporting achievement in politically inspired boycotts or exclusion. I fervently hoped this first-ever Olympic medal-winning performance by the now Zimbabwean citizens would help to cement goodwill and friendship among the many ethnic groups comprising its population as it struggles to independent maturity. And even if it doesn't, every Zimbabwean can take heart from seeing their new flag and new national anthem given the highest airing, the supreme honor the sporting world can pay.

The Games were good for Moscow -- as historically the Olympics always are for the host city. New roads, cleaner buildings, refurbished housing, and lots of renewed landscaping will serve the city well. The other four Olympic cities, Minsk, Leningrad, Kieve, and the lovely Tallin benefited as well. I grumbled when I saw the USSR color troops goose-stepping behind the Olympic flag during the Opening and Closing Ceremonies, but was quickly reminded that the Nazis did not invent this parade drill, and were not entitled to retire it, either.

An Iron Curtain descended on the US TV coverage of the Games even as an important sporting event - "Out of sight, out of mind," said Gengi Vescey.(8b) The newspapers were filled with biographical accounts of sportsmen and women and the perennial fight that Billy Martin has with the baseball authorities. Little serious Olympic coverage was attempted. Neil Arndur of the New York Times wrote well and fairly from Moscow. Probably the Soviet action of denying John Powers an entry permit added to the derelict coverage in the Boston papers. The US media refused to accord even casual attention to anything other than statistics of massed Soviet gold medals and fights in the Village disco hall. The media situation in the US was very much the opposite to that of Europe. It was not hard to see how national barriers are dropped quickly with whole populations influenced by partisan communication efforts.

US athletes, when interviewed, refused to be drawn into the comparisons game. They reluctantly accepted the situation and praised the efforts of their more fortunate Olympic rivals. A US government official interviewed in NBC's post-Olympic summary claimed, tentatively, that the boycott would be a success if the Russians withdrew from Afghanistan within two years. This abysmal response accurately summarizes the success of the 1980 Olympic boycott attempt. Plainly speaking, it failed. Mercifully, it failed to

failed to ruin the Olympic movement. There is little doubt, however, that the five interlocking rings were bent out of shape. But for the steadfastness of Follows, Killanin and a handful of Olympic officials, the Games of the modern era would have ended as a world entity in July of 1980. The apolitical athletes of 81 countries contributed in no small measure to this rescue, also.

As to the next Olympics festival, scheduled ironically for Los Angeles, USA, conjecture was mostly pessimistic. I believed at the time that the necessary repairs would be made and the world would assemble in peace.

As for the drama of 1980, we can be quite concrete. The hastiness of President Carter's boycott decision, coupled with his intransigent stand on review, the rashness with which Western politicians jumped to his side, the arrogant insensitivity of the Politburo towards Afghanistan's internal rights, and the hyper tensions generated by an unbridled press produced a most serious threat to the harmony of Olympic ideals, and world peace in general.

If one visited Mother Earth for the first time from another galaxy and witnessed the sorry goings-on of 1980, only two conclusions would be possible: wisdom is not yet as honored guest to the peoples of Earth, and SHALLOW WERE THE GIANTS.

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IN RETROSPECT

Many months have passed since I began this sequel to *A Wilderness of Spite*, etched in the sad happenings of 1980. I made an optimistic prediction at that time that the Russians would travel the high road in 1984, and be present at Los Angeles thus healing the serious rift in the Olympic family caused by the unfortunate 1980 boycott. Readers now know that this did not occur. Under the guise of questionable security and with contempt for the "capitalist commercialization," Mother Russia stayed home protesting US mismanagement etc, etc. She organized the Freedom Games in opposition to Los Angeles and forced her satellite countries to follow suit.

The dire predictions of 1968 had now partially materialized. 'When the big fellows fight the fallout may be fatal.' But the Olympics have survived and survived again Seoul in 1988, although prediction of political intrusion was again rife. Indeed, the Olympics have proven themselves to be the most resilient of modern institutions and the best way to stem the tide of cynical disparagement and negativity amongst the nations of the world.

One hundred and forty-five countries attended Los Angeles, a games pronounced a resounding success. Yugoslavia and Roumania fled the Eastern cause and attended, apparently with impugnty. Countries not attending within the Eastern Bloc nations lost credibility within international ranks and had to be contained by the threat of force. The aging, senile Soviet Premier, Chernenko, seemed to be avenging the West for the 1980 snub to his former patron, Leonid Brezhnev. There is some doubt as to whether Chernenko was in control of the country at that time, giving rise to the suspicion that it was really turmoil within the USSR which produced the conservative decision. Many argued that Moscow stayed home for fear of failure, exposure to and, in particular, to the likelihood of forced recognition of the success of the US organizers.

Satellite countries, particularly East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Poland raised havoc within the USSR confines. It was not beyond the realms of possibility that more defections might have taken place but for the movement of Soviet soldiers and the presence of the menacing tanks on the borders of satellite countries.

And so the boycotts continued, spoiling the Games of the Twenty-fourth Olympiad. The Americans produced that incredible phenomenon called the consummate businessman in Peter Ueberoff, who eventually raised a profit in excess of \$250 million. When matched against the huge deficits of Mexico City, Munich, Montreal and Moscow, this Herculean effort was hailed a modern-day miracle. Ueberoff engaged an army of volunteers to perform the many tasks needed to host the world's nations at such a complex gathering. He, himself, accepted a salary of \$1 for the year of the Games, matching his volunteers' enthusiasm with a consummate form of amateurism. Quaint; yes, but certainly in the spirit of the Olympic movement. And the American Games, gaudy, brazen, expensive and charismatic, produced a standard of performance in theater, art and sport that excelled in brilliance and drama even of the Berlin Games of 1936, and the Tokyo Olympiad of 1964.

The five interlocking Olympic rings were again bent out of shape, but not broken. The individual variance of each ring was distorted, but the co-variance of the interlocking sections remained firm. Perhaps this one fact is the secret, the pride of the Olympic movement. People want to believe in it. Their dreams are aimed in the direction of the highest of all models in sporting achievement. The status accorded the winners, and those that almost win, ranks above all else in the world of sport and is a pinnacle of achievement and the demeaning rancor of boycotts, nationalism, terrorism and racial bigotry.

Juan Antonio Samaranch, current President of the International Olympic Committee, proved himself to be a worthy successor to Lord Killanin. He was untiring in his efforts to defeat the boycott and bring the countries of the globe together, but unflinching in his determination to uphold the objectives of the Olympic movement.

And the obvious heroes of these Games were the Olympic officials of Roumania and Yugoslavia whose intrepid actions brought both live and vast television audiences to their feet each time a representative performed. It was likely that retribution in specific areas would take place in all its sinister forms of anonymity but eventually the victims' names would be emblazoned across the Olympic skies - True heroes.

The politicians tried, yet again, to drag the Olympic flag through the lurid soil of sanctional parochialism and, of course, they disturbed and ruined the careers of some very great athletes. World pole vault record holder, Serge Bubka of the USSR and world record holder Vladamir Salenkov in the 800 and 1,500 meter freestyle swimming, were just two great athletes who missed their opportunities in 1984. They join the unsung heroes of the US who missed their chances four years previously.

And, of course, the tragedy of such boycotts is always seen at its worst in the lives and efforts of the individuals who strive so hard for ultimate achievement. The happenings of 1984 confirmed the fear that political intervention is not yet a spent force in the Olympic movement, but they also attested to the strength of the Olympic movement, and gave rise to an undeniable optimism. In a different part of the globe, with arrows of different colors, it was predicted that the warriors of destruction would again assault the Olympic movement in 1988, but they would receive the same resistance, the same defeat. Both sides of the Iron Curtain had their best shot, and both failed. It is almost enough to make one a believer in Olympism. Perhaps, after all, ideals are not dreams and fantasies, extant and discardable - perhaps the dreamer is the ultimate realist in that history of the universe marked SPORT.

In fact, the 1988 Games in Seoul, Korea, a country not even recognized by the USSR, were a resounding success. No one of consequence stayed away. The Russians anchored their hopes on a floating village off the notorious waters of Pusan. At long last the Olympics began to tackle other serious problems like Drugs and Commercialism. Some performers slipped through the "Drug net" but others, like Canadian sprinter Ben Johnson, paid the ultimate price - chagrin, shame, pitiable failure. There were others who escaped detection, particularly those using Human Growth Hormone, but their day will come too.

Barcelona, the pride of Columbus' embarkation enterprise and the hub of the proudly distinct Spanish province of Catalunya rode its responsibilities into action with few disturbances. The world by now was heartily fed up with boycotts and exclusions. Disturbances resided in long shot AIDS transmission exaggerations and concerns about eligibility. The collapse and disintegration of the USSR proffered surprised optimism from all quarters. Perhaps, perhaps, the end of the 21st century is the wellspring of better and more humane sporting persuasion.

There is a finiteness to cynicism and decay, a time in the human nature when each has run its course, but Plato's eternal forms endure, infinite and perfect. Whereas, one would be hard pressed to call the Olympic movement perfect, it is not difficult to use the word 'perfection' when one talks of the unexpiated optimism Olympism brings to all it touches and which has survived this century. It will, more than likely, survive the next, also.

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