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Edwards, Harry

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PERSPECTIVES ON OLYMPIC SPORTPOLITICS: 1968-1984*

Harry Edwards**

Sports unavoidably reflect society, particularly with regard to the character of human and institutional relations, and the ideological foundations rationalizing those relations. It is this fact that makes sports and politics inseparable.

Most commonly, sportpolitics become manifest in the tendency, not least of all by established political authority in a society, to characterize athletic achievement as demonstrable proof of the adequacy, if not superiority, of prevailing ideological sentiments. This embellishment of out-standing sports performances with the trappings of patriotism occurs in all societies. Nowhere is sportpolitics more clearly evident than in modern international sports, where world class athletes and other sports personnel emerge as little more than "political foot soldiers" or frontline troops in assorted cultural and ideological struggles camouflaged under the pageantry of international competitions.

THE EAST-WEST STRUGGLE FOR SPORTPOLITICAL SUPREMACY

Over the greater part of the twentieth century, international sports by every measure have been dominated by western, developed nations. For the most part, these societies have proffered the notion that sports are inherently "apolitical." Based upon this definition of the situation (this myth of sports' political insularity), the very reason for sports' existence has been laid generally to its presumed role as a vehicle for fostering social integration, cooperation, and understanding both within and between societies. Beyond the display of national colors and the representational role of participants, any overt political demonstration has traditionally been abhorred as a betrayal of "ethics of sportsmanship," as well as "good taste." With the notable exceptions of a bitter political conflict between the United States and Britain that spilled over into the 1908 Olympics and the infamous "Nazi Olympics," international sports, until recent decades, have indeed proven a reliable and stable tool of established western political interests.

However sports at no level—least of all international sports—can be isolated and insulated from the impact of objective forces which shape the contours of human events, no matter how remote from the sports arena such forces might appear. Therefore, even as western nations luxuriated in their political and athletic dominance of international sports, developments that

* Since the writing of this article the Soviets and other Eastern Bloc nations decided to boycott the Olympics. However this article presents some very thought provoking reasons for and implications of the boycott as it relates to the Olympics as well as international sports in general.

** Professor Sociology at the University of California, Berkeley. Ph.D. (Sociology), Cornell University, 1972; M.A. (Sociology), Cornell University, 1966; B.A., San Jose State University, 1964.

would ultimately generate unrelenting challenges to western sports hegemony were already advancing.

By the 1960s, revolutions had generated new governments, new ideological systems, and new societies. Classical colonialism had been almost wiped out, and the developing nations had emerged as a Third World force. But it was the emergence of the U.S.S.R. as a global power that had the greatest impact upon international sports.

Upon entering international sport competitions with the west, the U.S.S.R. openly challenged western definitions that portrayed sports as "apolitical." Because the U.S.S.R. was not only beyond the control of established mechanisms (diplomatic and otherwise) that for so long had kept "unconventional" politics out of sports among western countries, western powers were not able to shield international sports from this new development.¹

Thus, being the leading capitalist nation in the western camp, the United States accepted the Soviet challenge and in 1952, the attention of the world shifted from the performances of individual athletes competing for world recognition to a Cold War drama being acted out in the international sports arena by two titans locked in an ideological struggle.

In their highly publicized struggles for international sports supremacy, throughout the 1950s and into the early 1960s, the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. provided the keen observer with excellent lessons in the political manipulations and exploitation of modern media-saturated international athletic competitions. In black America and the nations of black Africa, these lessons did not go unheeded.

BLACK AFRICAN - BLACK AMERICAN CHALLENGES TO THE SPORTPOLITICAL STATUS QUO

In its revulsion to South Africa's apartheid policies in sports, black Africa took the initiative in insisting upon the expulsion of that nation from the international Olympic movement. Black Africa's first success came when the International Olympic Committee barred South Africa from participation in the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games. Then, primarily due to a threatened boycott of the 1968 Mexico City Games by black African nations and black American athletes, the racist South African regime was again denied access to the Olympic political forum.

This black African-black American cooperation toward the achievement of a mutual political goal in the realm of international sports was a high point in the struggle termed "The Olympic Project For Human Rights" (hereinafter referred to as "OPHR").²

The OPHR's principal goals were domestic. In the late 1960s, Afro-Americans were embroiled in a determined and frequently bloody struggle to achieve full human rights in the United States. As part of the black political and cultural consciousness movement that coined "black power" as its

1. In addition, the Soviet Union was unwilling to compromise on its basic ideological principles.

2. I, along with several other black activists, termed the struggle "The Olympic Project for Human Rights."

slogan and goal in domestic affairs, OPHR sought to (1) stage an international protest of persistent and systematic violation of black people's human rights in the United States; (2) expose America's historical exploitation of black athletes as political propaganda tools in both the domestic and international sports arenas, particularly as the latter related to propaganda efforts aimed at the Third World; (3) establish a standard of political responsibility among black athletes relative to the interests of the domestic and international black community; and (4) make blacks and other oppressed people, particularly in the Third World, more aware of the substantially hidden political dynamics and consequences of established sports institutions and the affect of their participation in such activities.

Despite some powerful reactionary forces arrayed against the OPHR, substantial success was achieved in realizing its goals but, of course, not without considerable cost. Tommie Smith and John Carlos, the two athletes who made the historic black power protest salute from the Mexico City Olympic podium, were banned from international amateur sports competition for life by the United States Olympic Committee—a punishment acceded to by a western-dominated International Olympic Committee. Interestingly enough, another black American athlete, heavyweight boxing gold medalist George Foreman, also staged a political demonstration after his victory in Mexico City—he paraded around the ring waving the American flag and was applauded by U.S. Olympic officials.

Additionally, black athletes and other persons associated with the OPHR were thereafter unable to find long-term employment in the U.S. for many years. Some, such as 400-meter gold medalist Lee Evans, eventually left the U.S. in search of work abroad, particularly in black African countries. I was summarily fired from my teaching position at San Jose State University as a result of my organization and leadership of the OPHR. I also received hundreds of death threats and became the subject of continuing Federal Bureau of Investigation and local police surveillance.

But far from discouraging or dissuading us from our convictions, the actions taken against us reaffirmed what we had contended from the outset: that "the Olympic Games *are and have always been* political. The question, therefore, is not whether black American athletes will engage in Olympic politics, but whether they will do so *intelligently* or as willing or unwitting dupes of a social system which oppresses them and their people."

By the 1968 Games, the potential utility and accessibility of the Olympics as a political forum was widely recognized. With each successive Olympiad, the politics have escalated. "Black power" boycotts and protests and the Mexican students' demonstrations at the 1968 Games were surpassed in both media drama and impact by the armed attacks upon Israeli athletes at the 1972 Munich Games. In 1976, governments and heads of state raised the political ante when twenty-eight African nations boycotted the Montreal Games. In 1980, the first superpower boycott of the Games occurred when the United States declined to participate in the Moscow Olympics following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. It was the United States' behavior during the course of the 1976 and 1980 Olympics that is likely to resonate most clearly in Los Angeles in 1984.

SPORTPOLITICS IN THE 1976 AND 1980 OLYMPICS

Since the expulsion of South Africa from the Olympics, the racist regime governing that nation and its western supporters have persistently sought to improve South Africa's image, hoping to thereby enhance the credibility and acceptability of the apartheid regime and its policies. One tactic has been to attempt to keep South Africa active in the international sports arena despite its pariah status. The South African regime has even paid bribes, in the form of grotesquely exorbitant performance fees, to foreign athletes who, for the "right price," have been willing to compete in South Africa or against South African athletes.

Cooperation with South Africa by western sports interests is precisely what prompted a worldwide movement to expand anti-apartheid efforts in sports to include isolation of those athletes, sports organizations and nations persisting in their sports contacts with South Africa. Black Africa has been most aggressive and uncompromising in leading the way in this expanded sportpolitical struggle.

In 1976, at the Montreal Olympic Games, the issue was the International Olympic Committee's refusal to ban New Zealand from Olympic competition in the wake of that nation sending a rugby team to South Africa during the Soweto uprising and the attendant massacre of African school children and other civilians at the hands of South African police and security forces.

The resulting anti-apartheid Olympic boycott was resoundingly condemned in the west. The disposition of United States Olympic and government officials was particularly vitriolic, though the United States itself was leading a sportpolitical campaign with then President Gerald Ford strongly hinting at a potential U.S. Olympic boycott of the 1976 Games in response to Canada's stand in the People's Republic of China's dispute with Taiwan over the issue of national nomenclature at the Olympics.

Claims of media independence notwithstanding, in the United States it is often the case that in international affairs "when the government calls, the media is the first to report to duty." Therefore, it was no surprise when in 1976, as the work of Professors Vincent Mosco of Temple University and Leon Chorbajian of the University of Lowell illustrate, many major U.S. news publications quickly took up the official U.S. political line criticizing the Canadian government's position on Taiwan and utterly condemning the African boycott.³ For example, the author of an essay in *Time Magazine* admitted that the Games have a long political history.⁴ He went on to express the view that politics in sports is *appropriate* "to the degree that nationalism equates with patriotism."⁵ But in contrast to his support for "patriotic" traditions allowing for western conservative, status quo oriented sportpolitics, this same author surmised that "the magnitude of the African boycott has placed the Games at the mercy of political blackmailers."⁶ He concluded his article with a statement from a U.S. State Department official

3. L. Chorbajian and V. Mosco, 1976 & 1980 Olympic Boycott Media Coverage: All the News that Fits (unpublished manuscript).

4. *Are the Olympics Dead?*, TIME MAGAZINE, Aug. 2, 1976, at 48.

5. *Id.*

6. *Id.* at 49.

who warned, "one thing is certain, if politics is not removed—and quickly—the [Olympic] Games have no future."⁷

Similarly, the *New York Times* also adopted a strong government line on both the Taiwan and the African boycott issues. Typical was an editorial which stated in part, "The whole concept of open, global sporting competition is being debased before the world's eyes."⁸ The editorial went on to be highly critical of the African nations and to dismiss their protest as being "totally outside of the Olympic framework."⁹

In contrast to the coverage given sportpolitical issues bearing upon the 1976 Games, major U.S. media was overwhelmingly supportive of the U.S.-led boycott of the 1980 Moscow Olympics. Again, the *Time Magazine* and *New York Times* sportpolitical coverage is instructive.

Unlike its coverage of the 1976 African boycott—which essentially ignored the historical and broader contemporary contexts of the African struggle against apartheid—*Time Magazine* prefaced its coverage of the 1980 U.S. Olympic boycott with late 1979 and early 1980 news coverage that reflected a growing "neo-Cold War" mentality. This tended to heighten reader sensitivity to broader U.S. concerns over Soviet activities and U.S.-Soviet policy differences.

The December 24, 1979 issue of *Time* spoke of the "rising Soviet threat" in an article on the NATO decision to strengthen its nuclear strike force.¹⁰ The first *Time* issue of the new year featured a major story on the Soviets in Afghanistan; "the most brutal blow from the Soviet Union's steel fist since the Red Army's invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968."¹¹ The cover of the January 14th issue read *Moscow's Bold Challenge*.¹² In the cover story, then President Carter stated that: "[his] opinion of the Russians has changed most drastically. . . ."¹³ For the first time we read of the Olympics while Carter hinted of a boycott in his discussion of sharp controls over exports of technical equipment and grain to the Soviet Union.¹⁴

The next three issues of *Time* contained articles on the Olympic boycott. In the January 21st issue, the article *Should the Torch Be Passed*,¹⁵ contained statements by then President Carter and Vice-President Mondale endorsing a boycott. The author then quotes people who contend that the Olympics should be above politics. To disprove their point, he equated the Moscow Games with those of Berlin in 1935: the Soviets want the Games "as a way to greatly increase their nation's prestige, even as a way to legitimize their system."¹⁶ The January 28th issue contained the article, *Olympics—To Go or Not to Go*,¹⁷ informing readers that "there is probably no single action short of war that would punish Moscow more than to have the

7. *Id.*

8. N.Y. Times, July 20, 1976, at 30, col. 1.

9. *Id.*

10. *A Damned Near-Run Thing*, TIME MAGAZINE, Dec. 24, 1979, at 2, 30.

11. *Steel Fist in Kabul*, TIME MAGAZINE, Jan. 7, 1980, at 72.

12. TIME MAGAZINE, Jan. 14, 1980.

13. *Id.* at 10.

14. *Id.*

15. TIME MAGAZINE, Jan. 21, 1980 at 21.

16. *Id.*

17. TIME MAGAZINE, Jan. 28, 1980, at 15.

Olympics taken away or spoiled."¹⁸ By the opening of the Moscow Games, *Time* had become a stalwart critic of the Moscow Olympics and a staunch advocate of the U.S.-led boycott of the 1980 Games.

Time articles in the July 28th¹⁹ and August 4th²⁰ issues stressed the boycott, Soviet security, press censorship and the negative impact of the boycott on the quality of the Games. *The Games: Winning Without Medals*²¹ was the second of the magazine's two page essays and was strongly supportive of the boycott. The author asked, "Is the U.S. a spoilsport?"²² and went on to answer in a resounding negative. In stark contrast to 1976, *Time* asserts that *the Olympics are not and have been free of political considerations*. Readers were told that "the countries participating in the Moscow Olympics are symbolically abetting the Soviet takeover of Afghanistan."²³

The contrast between the sportpolitical coverage of the 1976 and the 1980 Olympics was no less vivid in the *New York Times*. Editorial writers and sports columnists were unflinching in their support, if not advocacy, of the U.S.-led boycott of the Moscow Games. *Times'* editorials repeatedly informed the public that the Soviet Union's goal was to use the Olympics for political purposes, that the U.S. could severely and justifiably foil their intentions by boycotting, and that *such a boycott is consistent with the political nature of the Olympic Games*.²⁴

Ultimately, of course, the United States Olympic Committee itself endorsed the boycott of the 1980 Games, thereby removing the final obstacle to endorsement by every major western government save France and Italy.

SPORTPOLITICS: LOS ANGELES, 1984

There is nothing to suggest that the sixteen year pattern of political escalation at the Olympics will come to a halt or be reversed in 1984. To the contrary, the Los Angeles Olympics might well be the most politically charged and vulnerable games in post-World War II history.

Potential national boycotts head the list of political threats confronting the Los Angeles Olympics. Although Iran has already announced that it will boycott, chief among those countries whose intentions are of concern in this regard is the Soviet Union. The Soviets have repeatedly asserted that they "will not boycott the 1984 Olympics," but to date, as a student of Olympic politics, such assurances are unconvincing.

First, "boycott" is a technical term, and so, technically, the U.S. did not boycott the 1980 Moscow Olympics. Rather, this nation's Olympic committee returned its invitation and "declined to participate." The U.S.S.R. could well return the favor in 1984—notwithstanding its expressed position.

Further, the political reverberations of the 1980 U.S. boycott of the "Socialist" Moscow Games have been exacerbated by a host of other political and military developments that have deepened the overall "Cold War"

18. *Id.*

19. *On Your Marx, Get Set, Go!*, TIME MAGAZINE, July 28, 1980, at 47.

20. TIME MAGAZINE, Aug. 4, 1980, at 28.

21. TIME MAGAZINE, Aug. 4, 1980, at 67.

22. *Id.*

23. *Id.* at 68.

24. Chorbajian & Mosco, *supra* note 3, at 12.

freeze in Soviet-American relations: the downing of Korean Airlines Flight 007 by the Soviets, the arrival and planned deployment of U.S. Cruise and Pershing-2 Missiles in western Europe, the U.S. invasion of Grenada, the C.I.A.'s less-than-covert action against the government of Nicaragua, and the expansion of U.S. military involvement in the Middle East.

There is also the extreme Soviet concern over the adequacy of security arrangements for its athletes and other personnel during the Games, a concern that has been heightened in the wake of the most intense barrage of official U.S. anti-Soviet rhetoric in thirty years. The threatened drug testing of the athletes and the question of whether the tests will be rendered impartially are other sources of concern.

Finally, there is the fact that the L.A. Games are being widely hailed as the "capitalist Olympics," and as a showcase illustrating the superiority of "free enterprise" as a strategy and basis for Olympic and, by extension, national development. This blatant propaganda plot is unlikely to incite much Soviet enthusiasm to participate and help make the Games successful.

Opposing these disincentives are several considerations that would appear conducive to Soviet participation. First, in the 1984 Games there is the prestige and propaganda potential inherent in Soviet prospects for defeating the U.S. in head-to-head athletic competition.²⁵

Second, due to the 1980 U.S. boycott of the Moscow Games, Soviet participation in the 1984 Olympics would allow the U.S.S.R. to project itself as the superpower most concerned about peace and least inclined toward vengeful, "eye-for-an-eye" type reactions in the realm of international relations—a considerable "image coup" given to the U.S.-Soviet competition which wins hearts and minds in the international peace and disarmament movements.

Third, there is the consideration that a Soviet boycott would put tremendous pressure upon the U.S.S.R.'s allies and major client states to decline participation as well. One need only review the international press coverage of the 1980 U.S. Olympic boycott to witness the myriad of strains generated within the Olympic movement and between allies by such pressures. For its part, the Soviet Union has opted to make its decision in late May of 1984—close to the deadline for advising the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee (hereinafter referred to as L.A.O.O.C.) as to its intentions.

In the interim, there is only the irony of the L.A.O.O.C. holding to the hope that the reluctantly, and only recently, acknowledged "politics of participation" will save the 1984 Games from the "politics of protest." This concern is well founded for several reasons. A boycott by the Soviet Union and its allies would not only mean the loss of what has become the "center-piece" of the summer Olympics—head-to-head U.S.-U.S.S.R., East-West competition for athletic supremacy—but it would drastically alter the L.A.O.O.C.'s budgetary planning. Such a boycott would activate a down-

25. It is all but conceded by knowledgeable sources that the U.S.S.R. will win the overall medal race at the 1984 Games, largely because of its superior national athletic training program, the fact that the U.S. does not emphasize some sports, such as Greco-Roman wrestling and canoe-kayaking, and declining U.S. prospects in many women's events. The real race appears to be between the U.S., East Germany, and perhaps Cuba for second place.

ward renegotiation clause in the organizing committee's two hundred and twenty-five million dollar broadcast contract with the ABC television network, resulting in the loss of perhaps as much as sixty million dollars to L.A.O.O.C. coffers. A Soviet boycott would similarly affect foreign broadcast contracts and, of course, most particularly, those with the Organization of International Radio and Television representing the eastern European countries and with the Soviet Union itself.

Some black African nations are also candidates to boycott the 1984 Games, particularly if the L.A.O.O.C. permits South Africa to send what is reportedly a "demonstration delegation" to Los Angeles—not to participate, but armed with millions of dollars and prepared to lobby for South Africa's reinstatement into the Olympic movement in time to qualify for participation in the 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul, South Korea.

Already incensed over increased U.S. economic, military, political and sport contacts with South Africa under the Reagan administration, black Africa is likely to consider *any* organized South African presence at the 1984 Games to be an unconscionable and outrageous affront. As was the case in Montreal in 1976, a mass exodus of black Africa from the L.A. Olympics over the issue of South Africa's involvement could have a devastating impact upon both the image of the L.A. Olympics and the caliber of competition during the Games—and all the more so if mass demonstrations erupt and athletes from other nations, including black Americans, are drawn into the dispute.

Potential boycotts are only part of the international difficulties facing the L.A.O.O.C. For the first time in thirty-two years, the People's Republic of China (hereinafter referred to as PRC) will be participating in the Games. The PRC's delegation of 200 athletes will compete in fifteen sports and is expected to be very competitive for medals in gymnastics, weightlifting, diving, fencing, archery, shooting, women's volleyball and track and field. Its greatest hopes for Olympic honors rests with Zhu Jianhau, who holds the world record in the high jump at 7 feet 9-3/4 inches. However, the presence of the PRC will be felt long before its athletes arrive in Los Angeles if the L.A.O.O.C. is unable to resolve that nation's continuing heated dispute with Taiwan over national nomenclature and the question of which of the two governments involved holds legitimate claim to representing a billion mainland Chinese in the Olympics. While the absence of either or both Olympic delegations due to a failure to resolve their conflicting claims would have less athletic and political impact upon the Games than a Soviet or black African boycott, a Montreal-type dispute over the issues involved are unlikely to flatter either the Games or the interests of any party involved.

L.A.O.O.C. efforts to ameliorate some of these international concerns have been hampered by a series of public relations and political faux pas. For example, while the L.A.O.O.C. labored feverishly to convince Soviet Olympic and government officials to send a team to Los Angeles, the California State Legislature was busy passing a resolution declaring the Soviet Olympic delegation unwelcome in California and asking that the Reagan administration and the L.A.O.O.C. ban the U.S.S.R. from participating in the Los Angeles Games in retaliation for the U.S.S.R.'s downing of Korean Airlines flight 007 and the consequent deaths of 269 people, including sev-

eral Americans. Then there was the problem of the U.S. visa application which must be completed by all foreigners traveling to the Games, except athletes. The form lumps questions about Communist Party affiliation with inquires concerning criminal records and heinous communicable diseases—a categorization that seemed rather curious to eastern block Olympic officials given L.A.O.O.C. assurances that “all Olympic delegations will be heartily welcomed at the Summer Games.”²⁶

Along with the international problems confronting the L.A.O.O.C. are a host of domestic concerns and organizational difficulties which might pose an even greater threat to the success of the Games. Most of these concerns and difficulties stem from the fact that the 1984 Olympics are the Games that nobody wanted. The only other city in competition as a possible Games site was pre-revolution Teheran, Iran. Los Angeles, under the circumstances, was awarded the Games virtually by default. The already clouded future of these Games darkened considerable when the citizens of Los Angeles voted not to support them financially.

Enter Peter V. Ueberroth and the L.A.O.O.C. with their concept of “free enterprise” Olympics. Not only have Ueberroth and his staff proposed to stage the Games under a “new and innovative free-enterprise format” requiring “no city, state, or federal government funding,” but they project a “budgetary surplus” or profit of some \$15.5 million after the Olympics are over. What strikes many as astonishing about the L.A.O.O.C.’s proposition is that Ueberroth and company propose to stage these games at a *total cost* of four hundred and ninety-seven million dollars—less than half the \$1.1 billion *debt* left by the six billion dollar Montreal Olympics, and only a small fraction of the nine billion dollars spent by the Soviets to stage the “spartan” Moscow Games. Most of the L.A.O.O.C.’s funds were derived from a combination of television broadcast revenues, license fees and donations from corporate sponsors, plus ticket and memorabilia sales.

Traditionally, expenditures by Olympic organizing committees have been determined by one consideration: whatever is required to successfully stage the games. However, owing to its severely limited, if not fixed budget, the L.A.O.O.C. has been forced to adopt a “bottom line” philosophy on every decision surrounding the staging of the 1984 Games. The questions, “How much will it cost?” and “How much will it produce?” have overridden practically all other considerations.

The critical impact of this bottom line strategy is evident throughout the L.A.O.O.C. effort. For instance, because budgetary considerations have compelled use of existing facilities as Olympic venues, activities associated with the Games’ 383 sports events are spread out over three states with the preponderance of Olympic competitions taking place in five southern California counties stretching over an area 190 miles long and 40 miles wide, and encompassing 19 Olympic sites that are connected by 705 miles of the most traffic-congested freeway system in the United States. The 10,000 athletes expected to participate in the Games will be housed in dormitories at the University of California at Los Angeles, the University of Southern California, and the University of California at Santa Barbara—“Olympic Vil-

26. “East Germans Miffed about ‘Classification’ on Visas,” Associated Press, November 25, 1983.

lages" that will require some athletes to travel as far as 40 miles to their competitions.²⁷

If the traffic problems confronting athletes and other members of the "official Olympic family" appear difficult, the circumstances of Olympic tourists and spectators in this regard can only be defined as a potential disaster. Their problems will start not on the ground but in the air. Air traffic at southern California's seven major airports is expected to be so congested that the Federal Aviation Administration has considered requiring both private and commercial aircraft to make reservations for take-offs and landings. While the L.A.O.O.C. officials point out that the region's airport facilities have adequately handled Super Bowl and Rose Bowl crowds in recent years, some air traffic analysts affiliated with the Air Transportation Association are still concerned about the capability of the airports to manage the equivalent of a Super Bowl or Rose Bowl crowd arriving, and in many instances leaving, on each of the sixteen consecutive days of Olympic activity.

Ground traffic planners are even more concerned. In the words of one planner, "[o]f all the problems with these Olympic games, traffic and transportation are the surest and most inevitable mess unless we get people to adjust their use of their personal vehicles."²⁸ Getting people to "adjust" essentially means getting them out of cars and on to buses, especially those spectators attending glamour events such as track and field, swimming, and gymnastics which are located in densely populated, heavily traveled areas. At least two-thirds of the spectators traveling to these events must come and leave by bus to insure the smooth flow of traffic and because of a shortage of parking spaces at event sites.²⁹ Further, no one is sure whether adequate numbers of dependable mass transportation vehicles can be acquired and reliably deployed or "trip coordinated" to meet the transportation needs posed by the L.A. Olympics. Both police officials and academicians have warned that Olympic traffic could bring some sections of Los Angeles to a complete halt, prompting thousands of spectators to abandon their cars on road sides in an effort to get around traffic snarls and reach event sites.

In its attempt to allocate game tickets as fairly as possible, the L.A.O.O.C. has inadvertently compounded its potential traffic problems. Tickets have been distributed through a lottery system. Thus, spectators are not assured of getting tickets to any specific event and so can coordinate neither their itineraries nor their travel arrangements. This will practically force reliance upon personal transportation.

Complicating the situation even more for traffic planners concerned about devising alternative routes around trouble spots and bottlenecks is the possibility of demonstrations and "terrorist activities" staged to take advantage of the Olympic spotlight or to disrupt the Games. Dealing with terrorism will be the responsibility of elite personnel among the more than 17,000

27. In the face of this situation, a corporate sponsor for one U.S. athlete has reportedly already chartered a helicopter to ferry him to his competitions during the Games if traffic congestion renders surface transportation unreliable.

28. "The Olympics: A Traffic Nightmare," *Oakland Tribune*, May 9, 1983, at A10.

29. Under normal circumstances only one-tenth to one-fifth of the spectators attending Los Angeles sporting events arrive and leave by bus.

security officers who will operate with a budget—including contingency funds—reported to be in excess of one hundred million dollars, making security the single most costly feature of the Games. Though most of the details about security arrangements have been kept secret, what is known provides little basis for anyone planning or attending the Games to feel very secure.

Administratively, only seven months from the opening of the Games and less than six months before the arrival of the first foreign Olympic delegations to Los Angeles, the security force had yet to establish either an effective chain of authority or a reliable means of rapid interagency communication. Part of the problem here is traceable to the fact that the Game sites are spread over so many law enforcement jurisdictions. This has given rise to difficulties not only in settling authority relations but even in deciding upon an appropriate radio frequency for Olympic security-related communications. Furthermore, there has been an ongoing "turf" dispute between the Federal Bureau of Investigation (hereinafter referred to as the FBI) and the Los Angeles Police Department (hereinafter referred to as the LAPD). The FBI has announced publicly that in case of a major terrorist incident or disruptive threat to the Games, it would "take the lead" in dealing with the situation, making use of its newly deployed Hostage Rescue Team (H.R.T.), if appropriate. The LAPD immediately accused the FBI of attempting to "seize bureaucratic turf" and insisted that the LAPD S.W.A.T. team should be assigned to handle any situation where the FBI's H.R.T. unit might be used.

The third force assigned to monitor and respond to any terrorist threat at the Games, the counter-terrorist military unit dubbed "Delta," which undertook to rescue Americans held hostage by Iran, has voiced no public opinion on the FBI-LAPD "turf" dispute. Its role in the overall scheme of Olympic security has not been revealed. What has been disclosed relative to Delta is the unit's disposition toward the perceived terrorist threat to the Games and how to handle it. According to the "father" of the Delta unit, Charles Beckwith, a retired former Green Beret, "There is a terrorist threat. But we can meet it, I think, if they [the FBI and LAPD] stop all of this arguing back and forth We may have to compromise [with a terrorist] if the demands don't cost us too much. But when we know who the terrorist is, kill him."³⁰

The security force's definition of the magnitude of the terrorist threat to the Games was revealed in a statement by Commander Paul Myron, head of the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department. Of particular concern, according to Myron, is the possibility of chemical and biological warfare perpetrated by terrorist groups and acts by "individual crazies," such as bomb threats, the disruption of traffic and sabotage to public transportation systems. The security force lists eighty foreign and twenty domestic "terrorist groups" as well as four hundred and twenty Los Angeles street gangs that are considered to pose some disruptive threat to Olympic activities. However, notwithstanding its huge budget and efforts to identify and monitor groups and individuals presumed to pose some threat to the Games, there is still

30. "Army Maverick: 'Let's Kill Any Terrorist at the '84 Games,'" S.F. Examiner-Chronicle, Dec. 18, 1983, at A-8.

apparently no ground swell of confidence in the capability of the force to guarantee security or even to keep traffic flowing smoothly in an emergency—which is why Los Angeles Fire Department officials have requested ten helicopters, complete with military crews, for use during the Olympics to cope with possible terrorist and medical emergencies at Olympic events.

Mass demonstrations pose yet another threat. Issues that have already become rallying points range from world nuclear disarmament and Reagan's Central America policy to local minorities' lack of access to promised Olympic economic benefits and the appointment of Bobby Knight as the U.S. Olympic basketball coach. The problem of the L.A.O.O.C.'s relations with local minorities is particularly acute in the south central community where the L.A. Coliseum and the University of Southern California "Olympic Village" facilities are located. As community leader Antonia Ecung states: "Its like having a giant party, and we're hosting it only we're not invited to it."³¹ It seems that local minorities not only are not invited but have been ignored. The L.A.O.O.C. will not even return telephone calls from community groups in the overwhelmingly black and Latino south central/Coliseum area of Los Angeles. The result is that these communities have developed what several news reports define as a "fortress" approach and disposition toward the Games—meaning that Olympic visitors traveling through these areas had best keep moving, and fast.

It appears that not even nature and the environment can be depended upon to cooperate with those attempting to stage the L.A. Games. Dr. Larry Folinsbee of the University of California Institute of Environmental Stress warns that both Olympic athletes and spectators could be plagued by the worst weather of Southern California's smog and heat season. Records show that high temperatures and smog tend to develop together in the L.A. basin during June, July and August. He further states that while the biggest problems anticipated as a direct result of even the most inclement weather conditions during the Games will be some minor respiratory and eye irritation, minor problems in and of themselves, such as physical irritations along with the heat could intensify other frustrating developments and lead to increased irritability and emotional outbursts.

What will it take to salvage the L.A. Games? Peter Ueberroth said it himself: "We have a chance to pull off something great here: *a modern miracle*." It may indeed take a miracle to prevent the L.A. Games from degenerating into a nightmarish chaos of olympian proportions. Privately, even some once supremely optimistic individuals inside the L.A.O.O.C. now admit that the "free enterprise" Games format involves great risks. Other associated with the L.A.O.O.C. effort point out that though people tend to look back upon the 1932 L.A. Olympics with nostalgia, those Games were far from trouble free. The Great Depression was worldwide, the burgeoning spectre of political upheaval and war was already evident in Europe, and prohibition was seen by many as a direct threat to foreign spectatorship and tourism. As Gwynn Wilson, now 85 and former associate director of the 1932 Olympics states, "Nobody thought we could do it. Nobody thought we could successfully stage the Games."

31. " '84 Olympics Won't Be a Big Bonanza for all of Los Angeles," Oakland Tribune, Dec. 4, 1983, at C-11.

However, for all the difficulties and complexities of the times, the 1932 Games were nonetheless of a simpler age: those Games had no security budget; the total cost for food, lodging, and transportation for each athlete was three dollars a day (as opposed to 35-45 dollars a day per athlete in 1984); there was no drug testing; there were no traffic or law enforcement jurisdictional problems to contend with; and there were no socialist or black African candidates for national boycotts and no issues of national sovereignty or nomenclature.

It remains to be seen whether the businessmen, bankers, real estate developers and others who comprise the administrative leadership of the L.A.O.O.C. will in the final analysis prove themselves better at selling and promoting the L.A. Olympics, than at organizing and staging what have become extremely complicated and potentially explosive Games. However that question is resolved, given the ongoing tradition of escalating political challenges facing the Games, an issue of much broader and forboding consequence to the Olympic movement could well be at stake in Los Angeles in 1984: Could it be that the Olympic Games as a nineteenth century western institution has finally been outpaced and overrun by the course and complexity of twentieth century political events? Between July 28 and August 12 of 1984 in Los Angeles, we could be witness to not only the success or failure of the "free enterprise" Games, but to developments that will significantly determine the future and the very survival of the Olympic Games as a concept.