

China's place in world sport

by the Marquess of Exeter

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The Marquess of EXETER, member of the I.O.C. for Great Britain, sent us the article, which is printed on the following pages and which was published by the "Daily Telegraph" in its column 'Letters to the Editor'.

"Arising out of the visit of the table tennis team to China, I have had a number of inquiries concerning the position of the International Amateur Athletic Federation and our ex-member for China, and in the light of the substantial comment in your newspaper, would be grateful for the courtesy of your columns to give the position.

The I.A.A.F. is the largest international amateur sport controlling body and, to all intents and purposes, includes among its affiliated countries and areas every part of the world except at this moment China. Athletics is an Olympic sport, and the I.A.A.F. has always worked very closely with the International Olympic Committee.

To fill in the background, which I can do from actual knowledge (I have been President and Chairman since soon

after the War), it is necessary to go back to when Russia and certain neighbouring countries joined international sport and the then Government of China removed itself to Formosa and the present one took over in Peking. Out of these events an extremely difficult problem arose of the three divided countries.

We try to run our organisation as far as possible separately from politics, and aim to embrace all the athletic youth of the world, whatever may be the complexion of their Government. It was therefore decided that mainland China, which controlled the athletic youth of millions of people there, should be affiliated as China, that the western part of Germany should remain, as it already was, as Germany, and that the Seoul part of Korea should remain Korea.

We were most anxious too that the youth from the other halves should not be debarred from world athletics. With violent disagreement, however, on top political level on their status, it was not for us to take a decision appearing to do so.

Under our rules we can affiliate Members not only by countries but by territories too if they *de facto* control amateur athletics there. We therefore affiliated them under the name of the geographical area in which they actually were; Formosa as Taiwan, the other half of Germany as East Germany and of Korea as North Korea.

However, with the cooling of the passing years, the Congress of the I.A.A.F. lately decided to allow our Members to call themselves what they like; for example, East Germany has become German Democratic Republic and North Korea Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The original decision was taken in Australia in 1956 at the time of the Olympic Games, and some two years later our Chinese Member wrote and said it was going, to our regret, to withdraw on the grounds that we were recognising two Chinas.

I think perhaps a misunderstanding may have arisen, probably through the language problem, for I do not think that it was fully appreciated that the I.A.A.F. had not recognised a second China but had affiliated the body in a geographical territory which alone could control and administer athletics in their area of some 20 million people and ensure that I.A.A.F. rules were kept. I should emphasise that there were no sporting disagreements between the I.A.A.F. and our Member for China.

I know that I, and I have no doubt the overwhelming majority of Members of the I.A.A.F. too, would be happy if, now that this point has been cleared up, our ex-Member from China should decide to rejoin our great sporting movement.



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