

Televised broadcasting of the Games of the XXIInd Olympiad



In the last issue of Olympic Review, we reproduced the speech made by the President of the Organising Committee for the Games of the XXIInd Olympiad in Moscow 1980, Mr. Ignati T. Novikov, on the occasion of the signing of the contract granting the rights to broadcast the Games by television to the American company NBC for the territory of the United States of America. Below we print the statement of Mr. Vladimir Koval, Vice-President, on behalf of the Organising Committee.

The modern Olympic Games have become a major event not only of a sports but also of a social character. They attract intense attention of sports fans from all the countries in all continents. Popularity of this event can be testified by the fact that approximately 1.5 billion people watched the Games of the XXIst Olympiad on television.

In accordance with the Rules of the International Olympic Committee the Organising Committees of the Olympic Games enter into agreements and contracts, on behalf of the IOC, with television companies for the right to broadcast the Games on television.

While working out proposals on the character and technological concept of the Olympic coverage, the Organising Committee and the State Committee for Television and Radio (Gosteleradio) proceeded from the increasing interest towards the Olympic Games in Moscow—the capital of the first socialist state.

To comply with the proposals submitted to the Organising Committee and Gosteleradio by National Olympic Committees and TV organisations on television coverage and considering the possibilities and the desire to satisfy at most the requirement of the world population to watch the Olympic competitions, we came to the conclusion that it would be necessary to create 18 international colour channels. This will enable almost 2 billion people to watch the Olympic competitions.

I would like to point out that in Munich there were 12 and in Montreal 9 international TV channels.

Naturally, considerable expenses will have to be borne to carry out this programme, which could be partially covered by selling the TV rights.

It should be mentioned that in accordance with the IOC Rules more than one third of all the amounts for the TV rights shall be paid directly to the IOC for its activities in the promotion of the modern Olympic movement.

The Organising Committee "Olympiad 80" and Gosteleradio established contacts with various TV companies of the world. Approximately a year ago at a meeting in Moscow they were informed about the technical and sports concepts of the Olympics, and facilities for TV coverage of the Games.

At the same time, bilateral negotiations on TV rights commenced with US networks. We established contacts and had preliminary negotiations with ABC, NBC, CBS and

Satra Corporation proceeding from the necessity to create equal conditions for cooperation with all TV networks.

The procedure for the sale of TV rights to US networks was worked out and coordinated with the IOC.

The bidding scheduled for 17th December 1976 was not held despite the fact that all the four companies arrived for participation in the bidding.

Three TV companies took a unilateral decision to join in a pool.

The Organising Committee had previously rejected the possibility of dealing with a pool—first of all due to technical reasons, since in this case we would have been forced to revise our technical concept and considerably increase our expenses in creating conditions for pool operations.

The Organising Committee announced that it would consider the question of TV rights only with companies and not with a pool.

Since at that stage only Satra Corporation expressed its wish to enter into a contract, negotiations were held from 17th to 21st December 1976 and a Letter of Intent of the parties was signed stating the main conditions of possible cooperation.

The letter was sent to the IOC for consideration.

While signing the Letter of Intent with Satra Corporation, we proceeded from mutual desire to cooperate on the wish of the company to acquire these rights and its possibilities to organise a national TV network for coverage of the 1980 Olympic Games.

Subsequently, due to the fact that one of the companies (CBS) withdrew from the pool and any negotiations on TV rights, the Organising Committee received proposals from NBC and ABC on acquiring TV broadcasting rights for the Games of the XXIInd Olympiad to the US territory.

A Protocol of Intent was signed on 29th January 1977 with NBC.

After negotiations with ABC and consideration of ABC, Satra Corporation and NBC proposals, the IOC, the Organising Committee and Gosteleradio arrived at the conclusion that it would be expedient to enter into agreement with NBC for the right to broadcast the Moscow Olympic Games.

The agreement signed by NBC and the Organising Committee grants this company the exclusive right for broadcasting the Games to the United States, its territories and possessions.

In accordance with this agreement, the Organising Committee undertakes to create conditions for fruitful activities of the NBC staff and allocation of technical means, grants this company the right to use the Games' emblem, accredits its TV commentators and personnel for all the Olympic competitions, and bears responsibility for accommodation of the accredited journalists and personnel involved in broadcasting the Games.

For the exclusive broadcasting rights the company undertakes to pay the Organising Committee and the International Olympic Committee on fixed dates \$35 million, out of which \$12,666,666 will be paid to the IOC and \$22,333,333 will be placed at the disposal of the Organising Committee.

At the same time Gosteleradio and NBC signed an agreement on technical cooperation in connection with the Olympic Games in Moscow.

V. Koval