

Seven questions one hundred days before the Games of the XXIIInd Olympiad

Taking advantage of the meeting of the IOC Press Commission in Moscow, the "Olympic Review" posed a number of questions to those directly involved at the highest level of organisation for the Games of the XXIIInd Olympiad to take place this summer in that city. Here are their replies.

*
* *

1. Question to Mr. Ignati T. Novikov, President of the Moscow OCOG : How do you see the staging of the Games 100 days before the opening ceremony ?



It will not be an exaggeration to say that Moscow, the capital of the Olympic Games, as well as Tallinn, Leningrad, Kiev and Minsk where some of the competitions will be held are practically ready for this beautiful festival of youth and sport. All the major

construction work at the sports venues and other Olympic sites has been completed, regulations for all sports have been prepared for some time and forwarded to the countries, the arts programme has been determined — everything has been prepared to receive participants, tourists and guests of the Olympic Games.

It is only natural that each of the 100 remaining days be filled with the most intense work.

The organisers of the Games will be dealing with three main tasks :

- completion of equipment installation at all Olympic sites and technological testing of various devices,
- completion of selection, training and practical drilling of the service personnel for the Games (the bulk of which will be students and other young people),
- adjustment of the most rational control system for the Games for this gigantic and extremely heterogeneous organism.

We are sure that everything will be done according to the established dates and that on 19th July 1980 at 16.00 hours Moscow time the Olympic flame will be lit in the Central Lenin Stadium in Moscow.

*
* *

2. Question to Mr. Novikov : According to President Carter and British Prime Minister Mrs. Thatcher, the USSR is organising the Games to gain political benefits. that is the international recognition of its goodwill. Its political system and its quest for peace and friendship. They claim that all this operation is only a parade, and that the Afghanistan invasion is the only true aspect of Soviet foreign policy.



When we put forward an application for Moscow as a candidate city and when the IOC made its decision to hold the Games of the XXIIInd Olympiad in our capital, both sides seemed to be sincerely confident that it would contribute to the development of

sport and to the education of young people "... in a spirit of better understanding

between each other and of friendship, thereby helping to build a better and more peaceful world" at it is put in the "Olympic Charter". Throughout the five years of preparations we strictly adhered to the letter and spirit of the Charter, observing all Olympic principles.

Benefits which will be derived from that are neither unilateral, nor bilateral, but really international, as all people with an unprejudiced, honest attitude to life wish our world to be more peaceful, and both the Olympic Games and the Olympic movement as a whole contribute greatly to this aim. The Moscow OCOG has set before itself the major task of staging the Games on a high level in order to give new impetus to the development of the Olympic movement and its lofty ideals of friendship among nations. The Soviet people is also striving for that and will be happy if the participants, guests, tourists and journalists coming to the Games gain a better knowledge, of our country and see the real picture, far from the absurdities and inventions, a lot of which is still being disseminated and which served as guidelines for the persons you mentioned.

As for Afghanistan. the interpretation of the events in this country and their connection with the Games of the XXIInd Olympiad, I should like to say only the following :

There are many acute problems in various regions of the modern world, and the points of view on their interpretation may be antipodal. One should not connect such stable and positive events like Olympic Games with a rapidly changing political scene. Political problems should be settled by political means and on the political level.

*
* *

3. *Question to Mr. Vladimir I. Popov, Vice-President of the Moscow OCOG : There are claims in western Europe that all children will be sent outside Moscow during the Games to avoid contacts with the press and tourists. What is the situation ? The same question applies to "dissidents". It seems that the Soviet authorities are "cleaning" the city for the Games.*



Naturally, there is no "cleaning" or, as some western observers put it "sealing", of Moscow for the Olympic Games. During the Games, this vast city with a population of eight million will live its fullblooded and varied life enriched, of course, by the Olympic

events. Cheerful voices, laughter, and songs of children and youth will be ringing in its streets, gardens, parks and stadia. There are, in fact, some aspects of social policy and tradition in our country which are strange, or, to put it more correctly, impossible in the west. One of them is the organisation of summer health-improvement vacations for the young generation with the help of the state.

Every summer, for instance, more than a million young citizens leave Moscow for the countryside to stay in kindergartens, pioneer camps, sports and health-care camps for children and teenagers. Many, of course, go with parents to relatives living outside the city. This has happened before 1980 and will also happen in the Olympic summer and after the Games. But we regret to say that we have not enough room to organise leisure for absolutely all the children in this way and many; a great many children will remain in Moscow during the Games. Incidentally, the OCOG has decided to provide school children with free tickets to morning preliminary competitions in some sports. I hope they will not think in the west that we are going to import children from Europe to make sure those tickets are used one-hundred percent.

As for the second part of your question. I should say that as far as we know on the Organising Committee, no special measures for the Games of the XXIInd Olympiad have been taken in this respect.

But generally speaking, on the so-called "problem of dissidents", once you mentioned it, one should bear in mind, to begin with, that dissent, in its literal sense, means difference of opinion from that held by majority, which in itself is not against the Soviet constitution and is not prosecuted if no Soviet laws are violated in any way. Unfortunately, however, the west calls "dissidents" those few people who violate the

Soviet laws and, consequently, are brought to adequate punishment, as in any other civilised society. It should be added that the persons the western press speaks so much about are a tiny handful, unknown, as a rule, to Soviet people.

*
* *

4. *Question to Mr. Vitaly Smirnov, Vice-President of the IOC and of the Moscow OCOG : Concerning the sports themselves, there have been some strong doubts or concern recently about the fairness and equity of doping and medical controls which will be conducted by Soviet physicians. Some have requested an international team of physicians to conduct these tests. What is your opinion ?*



Doping control at the Olympic Games has always been the responsibility of physicians from a host country. This was true in particular for the Games in Montreal and for the Winter Games in Lake Placid, this control being supervised directly by the IOC Medical Commission.

The doping control centre in Moscow has been constructed and equipped with the latest technology. The doping control committee for the Games of the XXIIInd Olympiad has been approved by the IOC Medical Commission. In October 1979, in conjunction with their meeting in Moscow, members of the IOC Medical Commission checked the organisation of the doping controls to be conducted during the 1980 Olympic Games, inspected the doping control centre and became acquainted with its future staff. They had no doubts whatsoever in the skills and fairness of the Soviet physicians.

It should also be noted that, in compliance with established procedures, the samples taken from athletes are coded and those who test them do not know to whom the samples belong. If the result is positive,

the testing is repeated using that part of the same sample which had been stored beforehand. The second test is conducted by another team of experts. On that event, three representatives of the appropriate International Federation are allowed to be present in the laboratory during testing.

*
* *

5. *Question to Mr. Popov : There are currently many doubts and uncertainties in western circles concerning the participation in the Games. What is your position towards the journalists of those countries which will not come to Moscow and more generally, with respect to what a journalist covering the Games will or will not be able to do ?*



First of all, I should like to say that we are absolutely certain that the Games of the XXIIInd Olympiad in Moscow will be full-blooded, well-attended Games which will become a landmark in the Olympic movement.

The problem of accreditation of journalists from the countries which will not send their athletes to Moscow was discussed by the IOC Press Commission at its last meeting and it was found expedient not to bar such accreditation for the purpose of better promotion of the Olympic Games. Some members of the Commission, however, noted the importance of considering the reasons compelling the appropriate NOCs not to send their teams, so that decisions contradicting the Olympic Rules and regulations could not be overlooked. It was agreed to request the IOC Executive Board to discuss the matter because only the IOC has the authority to settle finally all problems of accreditation, including journalists. As for general conditions for the work of the media during the Games in Moscow, I must say that we are trying to create optimal conditions for the press representatives

in their coverage of the Olympic events, to enable them to become acquainted with the cultural and public life of the city and the country, and to communicate with the Soviet people. A journalist accredited in Moscow will face no restrictions or limitations in his activity unless it contradicts established Soviet laws.

*
* *

6. *Question to Mr. Novikov: The USA, Great Britain and other countries have decided on an embargo on cereals and advanced technology to the USSR. How will this affect the USSR and the staging of the Games, especially in view of the opinion expressed in some European countries that many Soviet citizens fear that the Games will mean for them a shortage of goods and high prices?*



As an answer to the first part of your question, I can repeat the words of Mr. L. I. Brezhnev, our Head of State, in an interview with a "Pravda" correspondent which took place on 13th January 1980.

He stated that cynical declarations about the worsening of the food situation in the USSR as a result of the USA's refusal to sell us cereals were based on absurd evaluations of our economic potential and that the Soviet people had enough capacities to live and work in peace, to carry out their plans and to increase their well-being.

I must say that with regard to the Games of the XXIInd Olympiad in particular this will affect even less the preparations for and staging of the Games. We denounce the actions of the American administration and the few who follow it as contradicting the international legal and moral principles of relations between nations in the modern world and the provisions of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. But the hopes for the "crucial" effect of these actions are little more

than absurd and incompatible in relation to the mighty economic and technical resources of our great country. Any shortage of goods or any price rise because of the Games is thus out of the question.

*
* *

7. *Question to Mr. Constantin Andrianov, IOC member in the USSR: Mr. Andrianov, you are the senior IOC member in the USSR (since 1951). What do you expect from the Games and how do you view their staging?*



I can remember all the Olympic Games since 1952, when for the first time in history Soviet athletes took part in Helsinki. The history of the Games has not been without clouds and there have been difficulties of various sorts, including those of a political nature. But with each Olympiad grew the popularity and influence of the Olympic movement, and it became more and more universal, playing an ever greater role in the life of mankind.

I have no doubt that the present artificial difficulties will also be overcome and that the Games of the XXIInd Olympiad will be staged in the terms established by the IOC as a bright impressive festival of youth, sport, friendship and co-operation. They will serve to strengthen and enhance the prestige of the Olympic movement, to develop international sport and to establish a better and more peaceful world.

This is guaranteed by the adherence of the Games' organisers to their commitments and to the letter and spirit of the "Olympic Charter", by their firm and uncompromising stand and by the fact that they keep their word and remain true to the Olympic ideals of the International Olympic Committee.

