

The International Olympic Committee in the years 1980-1994

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In this paper I shall try to briefly describe some important facts, decisions, changes and the general evolution of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in the years from 1980-1994, which are also the years in which H.E. Juan Antonio Samaranch has been president of this international organization, being at the 83rd IOC Session held in Moscow right before the Games of the XXII Olympiad.

In February 1980, at the opening ceremony of the 82nd IOC Session in Lake Placid just a few days before the start of the Winter Games, the Secretary of State of the United States declared, on behalf of President Carter, that the government of his country was opposed to American athletes taking part in the Games in Moscow because of the intervention of Soviet armed forces in Afghanistan. The IOC President, Lord Killanin, prepared a declaration, unanimously approved by the members at the Session confirming that the Games of the XXII Olympiad would take place in Moscow. However, several National Olympic Committees (NOCs) were placed in a difficult position vis-à-vis their governments which were exerting pressure on them not to take part in the Games in Moscow, and many of them did not. It was one of the greatest challenges ever to confront the Olympic Games. The President and members of the IOC did everything within their power to enable the Games of the XXII Olympiad to take place in a good atmosphere in Moscow. Finally, in spite of all the powerful political pressure from outside the Olympic Movement, the Games in Moscow were held successfully. On this occasion the IOC showed great courage and determination, and the Olympic Movement gained greater strength and prestige.

In 1980, at the time of President Samaranch's election, the IOC was expanding fast, with 147 recognized NOCs. It had duties and inviolable ties to all the athletes of the world; it had a universal vocation. It needed to enlarge its headquarters, to

have a library, and audio-visual facilities worthy of its mission and history. It was vital for it to obtain, as quickly as possible, the status of an international organization recognized by the Swiss Confederation. And this soon became reality, thanks to the excellent relations between the International Olympic Committee, the city of Lausanne, Canton of Vaud and the Swiss Confederation. The Federal Council of the Swiss Confederation published a decree concerning the importance and special vocation of the International Olympic Committee and on the 17th September 1981 it confirmed the granting of a "special status" to this international organization because of its specific character and universal activities.

As had been the case with the Games of the XXII Olympiad in Moscow in 1980, a boycott also threatened the Games in Los Angeles in 1984. Two weeks before the deadline for athlete entries, the NOCs of the USSR and thirteen other countries decided not to take part in the Games in Los Angeles, claiming that the security provided for their athletes was inadequate. Despite all the IOC's and President Samaranch's personal efforts to make them reconsider their decision, they refused to do so. Once again, the chief victims of this political decision were the athletes of those NOCs which had decided not to take part in the Games. For the third time in a row, the Games were spoiled by the absence, for political reasons, of some members of the Olympic family: in 1976 in Montreal, 1980 in Moscow and 1984 in Los Angeles. Once again, influential politicians took advantage of the importance of the Games to serve their own interests, without respect for Olympic principles or the dignity of their athletes and Olympism had to pay a high price for the renewed increase of political tension in the world. Nonetheless, the Games in Los Angeles were a great success, with a record number of 140 NOCs taking part in a great festival of the world's sporting youth.

Another major test which the IOC had to face during this period was the danger of a boycott, again for political reasons, of the Games of the XXIV Olympiad in 1988 in Seoul. The IOC and its President J.A. Samaranch showed extraordinary goodwill and at the same time worked to maintain peace through their efforts to resolve the situation. The demand by the government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) to co-host the Olympic Games went against the Olympic Charter,

yet the IOC encouraged and created the opportunity for dialogue between the two Koreas. Rather than the UN, it was the IOC which played the role of conciliator between the two parts of the divided country. A study of the history of the Olympic Games in Seoul reminds us of the contribution made by Olympism to the policy of reducing tension in the world, something which merits a prominent place in contemporary history.

The recent upheavals occurring in the world are a cause of serious problems with which the Olympic Movement will have to cope with. Nevertheless, the IOC's position has always been to respect the fact that political problems require political solutions and so it should not try to move ahead of them. It never intervenes directly in politics, believing that to do so could produce results contrary to those it wishes to obtain. It does, however, act to uphold its principles and it defends them when they are threatened. It fights against all forms of discrimination affecting the Olympic Movement and it protects athletes from becoming the innocent victims of the political situation in their country or region.

Thus for example, when the Soviet Union ceased to exist and the three Baltic Republics, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia became independent States recognized by the U.N.O. and created their own National Olympic Committees, the IOC immediately recognized them in 1991 and they were invited to send their Olympic delegations to the 1992 Olympic Winter Games in Albertville. Likewise the former Yugoslav Republics of Croatia and Slovenia were invited and competed at those Games. On the other hand at these same Winter Games the remaining twelve former Soviet Republics which were not recognized yet by the IOC were invited to compete in a joint team called the "Unified Team". Five of them participated. The National Olympic Committees of the former Soviet Republics were recognized by the IOC later on in 1992 and they participated independently in the Barcelona Games.

The United Nations imposed an embargo on the athletes of what remained of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) for political reasons. After long discussions the IOC managed to persuade the United Nations to make an exception in the embargo and to enable the athletes of that country to participate as individual competitors. The athletes of Bosnia - Herzegovina participated in the delegation of their own National Olympic Committee.

For some years, already before 1980, the IOC had been approaching the problem of the top level athletes in a realistic way. Sport has evolved so much that, in order to be competitive at the highest level, an athlete must train intensively every day. In view of this fact, an athlete must be allowed to live, to find means of supporting himself. There is very little difference between an athlete provided for by the state, and a top level athlete paid by a company or receiving a sports grant. The great progress in high performance sport and its immense popularity are the main reasons for the indispensable but controlled emergence of commercialization within sport. This can, and indeed must contribute to the development of sport, but the IOC tries not to allow a spirit of commercialism to reign unchecked within sport. The commercialization of Olympic sport must be led and controlled by the IOC, the IFs and NOCs. Olympic sport must respect the Olympic ideals. Respect for one's opponent, honesty, the surpassing of oneself, all that can be expressed in the term "fair play", are the fundamental principles of the Olympic Movement. These must be the characteristics of Olympic sport. Olympism is idealistic; but it must not be naive. Its idealism must be clear-sighted and consequently, obtain for its athletes and the development of the Olympic Movement a part of the money that sport generates, in the form of contracts with the economic sector.

Olympic marketing which has developed tremendously in recent Olympiads basically includes television broadcast rights, sponsorships, licensing, tickets, coins and philatelic programmes. The revenues derived from Olympic marketing help provide the Olympic Movement with its financial independence. However, the IOC, in developing marketing programmes must always remember that it is sport that must control its destiny, not commercial interests.

At present, TV rights account for just under 50% of Olympic revenues. The fundamental IOC television policy, is to ensure maximum presentation of the Games to the widest possible audience around the world. Television can provide direct finance for sport through the payment of rights fees; it can provide indirect finance by giving exposure opportunities for sport sponsors. However, the most important benefit that television can bring to sport and Olympism is promotion. Sponsorship contributes over 30% of revenue to the IOC and comprises the

second largest revenue source. I shall not mention any figures nor details in this paper. Sponsor contributions include increased technical and product support to the Olympic Games Organizing Committee as well as a number of programmes to benefit athletes, coaches and spectators. Licensing programmes market licensed Olympic products; of these, usually, Olympic pins are the single largest sales. Ticket programmes are developed by the organizing committee of the Olympic Games. The IOC, under the Host City Contract requires that the organizing committee keep ticket prices reasonable to ensure that attendance at the Games is available to everyone.

As a result of what we have just said the Olympic Movement has more financial resources than ever before and these are distributed more fairly and better used in the realization of the Olympic ideals. There is much activity within Olympic Solidarity, which is the IOC department responsible for developing sports and aid to the National Olympic Committees. There is also a more equitable distribution of funds between the five continents. The IOC makes enormous efforts to facilitate participation by all the National Olympic Committees at the Olympic Games. Thus for example, in Los Angeles in 1984, 140 National Olympic Committees participated with 5,230 male and 1,567 female competitors in 221 events and 21 sports. In Seoul in 1988, 160 National Olympic Committees participated with 6,279 male and 2,186 female athletes, i.e. 8,465 competitors in total, in 237 events and 23 sports. In Barcelona, in 1992, 172 National Olympic Committees participated with 6,659 male and 2,705 female athletes i.e. 9,364 competitors in total, in 257 events in 25 sports

During the last fourteen years (1980-1994), the Olympic programme has gone through changes. The number of events for ladies has increased significantly. The new sports included in the Olympic programme in this period, in which both men and women compete are tennis, table tennis and badminton. Softball for women will be incorporated in the programme at the Games of the XXVI Olympiad in 1996 in Atlanta. Newly included disciplines evolving in this period for ladies are rhythmic gymnastics and synchronized swimming. Women also began to compete in the following new sports for the first time: cycling in Los Angeles in 1984, judo in 1992 in Barcelona and women will also compete in ice-

hockey for the first time in Nagano in 1998. In equestrian sports all the events are mixed at present, i.e. men and women compete against each other. There are also new mixed events in yachting as well as shooting. In the Olympic Winter Games, of the seven sports, including curling, which will be on the programme from 1998 onwards, only bobsleigh will be exclusively for men. Women will compete in the other sports, even in ice-hockey. During the period which we are dealing with women have been elected to the IOC for the first time. Today there are five lady members of the IOC, one of them is on the Executive Board. There is one female honorary member of the IOC.

In order to avoid gigantism in the Olympic Games and their becoming uncontrollable, the IOC has reiterated several times its will to limit the number of athletes who are lodged in the Olympic village to 10,000. The number of officials should not exceed 5,000.

Another characteristic of the period we are studying is the increased support the IOC is giving to disabled sportsmen. At the Sarajevo Olympic Winter Games in 1984 disabled sportsmen had their first competitions in a so-called exhibition. Since then "Paralympic" Games are organized a few days after the Olympic Games under the patronage and with the moral and financial support of the IOC.

In October 1984, the IOC began to build its new administrative building next to the existing headquarters which had become too small for its needs. The creators of the project were two outstanding architects, Pedro Ramirez Vazquez from Mexico and Jean-Pierre Cahen from Lausanne. The beautiful modern building of the new administrative site was inaugurated on 12th October 1986.

The International Olympic Committee and President Samaranch have given a great deal of importance to the association of sport with art and other fields of human activity, such as science and pedagogy in general. Thus, for example, the IOC and the International Federation of Sports Medicine published the beginning of an Olympic Encyclopaedia of Sports Medicine which will give valuable information to all people involved in training, teaching or sports education.

The IOC is far more concerned than before with the history of the Olympic Movement as well as with the moral and philosophical aspects of Olympism. A beautiful new Olympic Museum was built and

inaugurated on 23rd June 1993. The creators were the same two architects who designed the administrative headquarters. This Museum is an international institution devoted to art, sport and culture. In its premises there is the Olympic Studies and Research Centre I have the honour to head, a public library, photo library, film archives, a large part of the archives of the Olympic Movement, and many other facilities. A special section of the Olympic Museum displays the largest Olympic philatelic and numismatic collections in the world.

The Olympic Movement is committed to a determined fight against doping which is a total negation of sport and its role. The use of performance enhancing drugs is harmful to health and contrary to sports ethics. The Olympic Movement protects the physical and mental health of young athletes, the values of fair-play and the integrity of sport. In conformity with the Baden-Baden declarations of 1981, as well as these of the IOC athletes' commission held in Lausanne in 1985, the IOC is waging a firm international struggle against doping in sport through its medical commission and the support of the International Sports Federations. In September 1988 the IOC adopted the "International Olympic Charter Against Doping in Sport" in order to fight against this social plague.

The International Olympic Committee and the Olympic Movement work together with governmental and non-governmental organizations, especially those involved with sport and, on occasion, conclude cooperation agreements with them. Some of the most successful examples of such a cooperation are: (1) the resolution adopted by the 48th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations in -October 1993 proclaiming 1994 as the "International Year of Sport and the Olympic Ideal" as well as the one proclaiming the "Observance of the Olympic Truce", (2) The IOC also has a good cooperation with the UNESCO and with the World Health Organization, (3) The IOC is concretely interested in the opinions of the athletes with regard to Olympism and sport and an athletes' commission was created in the period we are dealing with which expresses the opinions of Olympic athletes and makes proposals which are very useful for sportsmen and the Olympic Movement.

The IOC has confirmed its firm opposition to racial discrimination. Let us briefly recapitulate the events relating to apartheid in South Africa. In 1970, the

South African Olympic Committee was excluded from the Olympic Movement by the IOC because in the practice of sport, it applied the laws of apartheid, thereby violating the Olympic Charter. The IOC's decision rendered a strong impact in the world of sport.

In 1988 the IOC convened an "African Sports Summit" following which the "Lausanne Declaration" on apartheid was adopted and an "Apartheid and Olympism" Commission set up with the mandate of gathering facts and reinforcing the anti-apartheid policy in sport. In 1989, the head of the South African State, President de Klerk, proclaimed his determination to eliminate apartheid. In that year Nelson Mandela, then Vice-President of the African National Congress, was liberated from prison. The IOC agreed to a request from the South African Sports Organizations, who had been asking to be heard, entrusted the Association of National Olympic Committees of Africa (ANOCA), in relation with the other African sports bodies, with the task of organizing meetings with the South African Sports Organizations. In March 1991, an IOC delegation visited South Africa. Conditional recognition was granted to an "Interim National Committee of South Africa". The conditions this NOC had to satisfy were: (1) the abolition of apartheid in sport; (2) respect of the "Olympic Charter", (3) establishment of relations between South African national federations and the International Federations, (4) continued unification of sports on a non-racial basis, and (5) normalization of relations with sports organizations in Africa.

In July 1991, the "Apartheid and Olympism" Commission recommended that the IOC recognise the National Olympic Committee of South Africa. This recommendation was adopted. Thus the prestige of the IOC and the power of sport as a social phenomenon had enough influence to play a significant role in the abolition of the apartheid laws in connection with sports activity in south Africa. Since 1992 South African athletes of all races compete and represent their country in the Olympic Games.

The protection of nature, of the environment in which we live, is of increasing concern to mankind. The athletes of the Olympic Movement feel it too. The quality of our air, water and soil is at great risk. Where once these problems were local of regional context, they are now global. Such alarming issues as rising carbon dioxide levels, the deteriorating

ozone layer, and the rapid destruction of the world's forests must now be seriously studied by every organization gathering large numbers of people devoted to a certain activity. The roots of these problems reach into every aspect of society and life in general. There is no doubt that the nature of modern society has gone wrong and caused this crisis. A deep analysis of where we have gone wrong would have to range across politics, history, sciences, economics, psychology, religion, sports, etc. An important part of the blame lies with our political leaders, especially in the last century and a half. Many of them did not take into account the long term consequences of timid policy choices. Likewise, many of our economists have not been able to assess the true cost of society's ravenous consumption of non-renewable resources.

We have also seen growing concerns of an environmental nature being directed at the Olympic Games. There is no doubt that, if the host city and the host country as a whole are not very careful, the environment can be seriously harmed by deforestation, the building of facilities which may emit harmful gases and by the concentration of large numbers of motor vehicles and spectators. Philosophically and implicitly, Olympism embraces respect for nature and the environment in general. It believes that man should be in harmony with himself, his fellow man and his world.

What should and what can the Olympic Movement and the International Olympic Committee do for the environment? It must first of all learn about the environment and the ways to protect it. That is what it is doing at present. We have witnessed an example of wise action taken by an organizing committee and a host city, Lillehammer. The XVII Olympic Winter are a splendid example of how the Olympic Movement should proceed. Another good example at a much lesser scale is the case of a hundred year old tree which was saved during the process of construction of the Olympic Museum in Lausanne by an alternation of the architectural plans of the

building. The IOC asks the host cities to undertake an appropriate environmental impact analysis before deciding on the location of Olympic infrastructure and venues. Such environmental impact can be further limited by an assessment at the end of the Games to limit and control any damage already done. Cooperation between the International Olympic Committee, the organizing committee of the Olympic Games and the host city municipality in environmental issues is of utmost importance.

However, all that the IOC and the Olympic Movement have accomplished has not produced a sublime state of matters, nor caused smug satisfaction. Although the IOC has contributed greatly to the progress of sport, it has failed, as yet, to realize perhaps its fondest hope, that being, the achievement of an integral global education wedding culture to sport. Neither has the IOC been able to absolutely ensure that sport be practiced true to the basic Olympic principles. In this regard, sport should help those who practice it to develop principles that shape worthy life practices: courage, justice, moderation, a sense of duty, indeed, to choose positive models of emulation, and to reject the opposite. The IOC must also give thought to the dangers of alienation that threaten modern sport and which seek to divert it from its true role. Such phenomena as promotion of the cult of stardom, the subordination of all things to ever better performance, and the glorification of nationalistic chauvinism are disruptive to the true mission.

As we have seen, the Olympic Movement is facing many challenges at the threshold of the XXIst Century. The XIth Olympic Congress (the Centennial Congress) held in Paris a scant month ago discussed these challenges and their solution. Even though the Olympic Movement, at this time, has never been stronger in its now 100 year history, there is much to be done. I feel that the IOC is reasonably confident that it now has the resources and the resolve to meet the crucial problems which have been, and continue to be, a fact of global life.