

Hulme, Derek. L.J. *The Political Olympics: Moscow, Afghanistan, and the 1980 U.S. Boycott*. New York: Praeger. 1990. Pp. 179. Notes. selective bibliography. index. \$42.95.

The *Political Olympics* has been written from a different perspective than is customary for books on the Olympic Games. Derek Hulme, after completing his B.A. at St. Lawrence University received his M.A. and Ph.D. from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, and then lectured in political science at Simpson College in Iowa. The book is a consequence of one year of research following fellowship assistance from the Eisenhower World Affairs Institute and financial aid from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. Hence Hulme's analysis of the 1980 Olympic Games is from a political science perspective.

In the preface, Hulme states that his principal purpose was to address "the general questions of the degree to which political leaders can hope to utilize sport in a punitive fashion in the international arena." Specifically, he centered his arguments around three issues, the first being how international sport has come to be used by political leaders to achieve political goals. This was dependent on the second, much broader issue of how sport was used as a political weapon. The final issue specific to this work is concerned with the actual effects of the U.S. boycott.

In the introductory chapter, Hulme briefly gives an overview of the historical uses of sport in the Olympic Games prior to 1980. For Olympic historians, this cursory overview would be considered simply too brief. However, it does provide the general background for the work and allows the in-depth analytical dissection of the 1980 Moscow Games to proceed. Hulme presents a step-by-step analysis of the lead-up to the boycott and the obstacles encountered. This very thorough study is concluded with an evaluation of the process and the subsequent ramifications of the boycott.

The invasion of Afghanistan by Soviet troops on December 27, 1979, provoked worldwide condemnation, which ultimately led to the greatest Olympic boycott in history. One week after the invasion, President Carter mooted the idea of a U.S.-led boycott. His aims were to punish the USSR for their actions, and to demonstrate to the world that the U.S. still had the will to resist such acts of aggression though that resistance fell short of retaliatory military aggression. U.S. Secretary of State Vance, under Carter's instructions, established a mid-February withdrawal date of troops from Afghanistan. When this threat was not heeded, Carter proceeded with his plan. It would, however, have lost its effect if the USOC had defied the express wishes of the President. Vice-President Mondale spoke to the USOC delegates, and in an emotional speech said: "History holds its breath: for what is at stake is no less than the future security of the civilized world." The delegates voted for a boycott on April 12, 1980, with two abstentions.

Ultimately, 56 countries sent teams to the Games, while 62 did not. As

118 countries were not members of the Communist bloc. the relative success of the boycott could be debated. The greatest degree of success understandably came from the Far East and various Islamic nations, doubtless concerned about the spread of Soviet aggression. Whereas Africa and Latin America were evenly split on the matter, Western Europe almost universally rejected the boycott.

The U.S.-led 1980 Olympic boycott is presented as an excellent illustrative example of how international sport can be used as an instrument of power politics. The United States chose to *punish* the Soviet Union for its invasion of Afghanistan, and in a world which is increasingly abjuring the use of force. the boycott offered a non-military alternative. Also. the United States succeeded in ensuring that *participation* in the Games rather than the *results* became the political focus. Hulme concludes his study by stating that foreign policy objectives can be achieved through the instrument of international sport and that politicians must be cognizant of the opportunities these worldwide contests provide. However, while such policy options are definitely viable, the effectiveness can be influenced by the administrative apparatus of the Olympic Movement and the IOC. and there can be serious political liabilities if the goals are not achieved.

The Political Olympics is a careful scholarly work that is required reading for the Olympic scholar. It is strongly recommended for courses on comparative/international physical education and sport and sport in society as well as history of sport, and other courses such as sports politics.

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