

THE 1980 UNITED STATES OLYMPIC BOYCOTT:  
AN ANALYSIS OF SELECTED SPORTS COLUMNS.

by

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Thesis Committee:

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For the School:

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Michelle Nan Beachly  
University of Kansas, 1976  
Adviser: Calder M. Pickett

The 1980 Olympic boycott by the United States is perhaps one of the most controversial political and sporting events of the century. The boycott, carried out for political reasons, involved the 1980 Summer Olympics in Moscow.

The boycott was announced in January, became official in February and was approved by the United States Olympic Committee in April, 1980.

This is the story of that boycott and the events surrounding it, as told through sports columns from ten selected U.S. newspapers. Mixed with the columns are magazine articles, public opinion polls, editorials and the words of our U.S. athletes.

It is a story of a sad time, but one in which America took a decisive stand and held to that stand despite pressures from within and from our allies.

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Special Note

The prospect of writing a thesis came as both a challenge and a total panic.

I would like to thank Professor Calder M. Pickett, not only for serving as the chairman of my committee, but for being patient and guiding and for being a friend throughout the endeavor.

Thanks also go to Professors Charles Chowins and J. Laurence Day for sitting on my committee and for their moral support and assistance in my project.

I must thank Professor John Bremner, although he is on leave at this time, for his ability to make me think. He encouraged me to question and respect the language.

A final thank you goes to my parents. Without their support I could not have met the challenge or survived the panic.

Michelle Nan Beachly  
November 24, 1980

"THE ROAD TO THE OLYMPICS DOESN'T LEAD  
TO MOSCOW. IT LEADS TO NO CITY, TO  
NO COUNTRY. IT GOES FAR BEYOND LAKE PLACID  
OR MOSCOW, ANCIENT GREECE OR NAZI GERMANY.

THE ROAD TO THE OLYMPICS LEADS, IN THE  
END, TO THE BEST WITHIN US."

Jesse Owens,  
April 1980

## INTRODUCTION

This is the story of one of the most controversial events of 1980. It is the story of the 1980 United States Olympic boycott. The story's base is the columns of sports writers from ten U.S. newspapers. Combined with these columns are magazine articles, news articles, editorials, opinion polls and the words of the athletes themselves. All these are rolled into the story of a controversy not soon to be forgotten.

The story I have chosen to tell is important to me as a former athlete, a sports fan and a student of journalism. It is a piece of history and is about a time that concerns many people.

To begin this project, I chose ten U.S. newspapers. They were picked to represent the country geographically: north, south, east, west and mid-America. Circulation, politics and stature of sports writers were not considered. I asked the sports editors of these papers for help, and many agreed to assist in my endeavor.

The ten papers I selected are the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Miami Herald, the Chicago Tribune, the Kansas City Star/Times, the Des Moines Register/Tribune, the Dallas Times-Herald, the Atlanta Constitution,

the Los Angeles Times and the Christian Science Monitor.

I selected them, in part, because of their availability through Watson Library, interlibrary loan and friends.

By using the Reader's Guide, Editorials on File, and the New York Times Index I have added background and depth to the story.

This story is told chronologically, beginning in January 1980, when President Jimmy Carter announced the boycott in protest of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and ending in August, when the Games were over.

Key terms for this story are defined thus:

Sports Columns: The columns by sports writers appearing regularly in the selected papers. These columns will be discussed and quoted in the story.

Public Opinion: Opinions presented in polls such as ABC, AP, NBC or Harris.

Athletes' Views: The words of the U.S. athletes on the boycott. Their thoughts will be woven in as part of the background of the story.

Background and Connective Material: Magazine articles from sources listed in the Readers' Guide,

especially Sports Illustrated, Editorials on File, and other news sources.

Time Periods: The story will begin with a background of the boycott and then focus of these dates:  
January 4 - the Russian invasion of Afghanistan and President Carter's speech suggesting the boycott.

January 21 - Carter's announcement of the Olympic boycott.

February 20 - the boycott becoming official when the Russians did not retreat from Afghanistan.

March 1 - the athletes submitting a petition to President Carter.

March 21 - the U.S. athletes going to Carter with a plan to participate in the Games. The plan was rejected.

April 9 - Puerto Rico's decision to participate in the Games despite Carter's request for support.

April 13-14 - the U.S.O.C. vote to support the boycott.

April 23-24 - 18 athletes filing suit, and Canada and West Germany voting to support the boycott.

July 19 - beginning of the Games.



Because this topic is so recent I do not expect to find many previously written sources available. Secondary sources will consist of books on methodology and research materials such as the Readers' Guide and the New York Times Index.

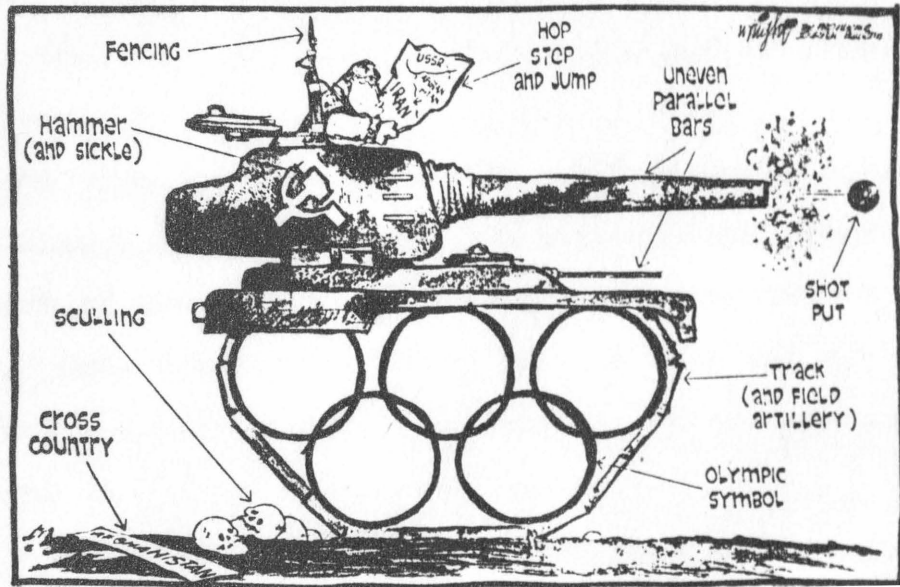
I will tell the story in chronological chapters, each dealing with a month and the boycott dates within that month. Subject matter will consist of sports columns, responses, evaluations and quotes, plus polls, news and athletes' views.

A conclusion will end the story. It will consist of my evaluation of the columns and the boycott.

I expect this to be a story of the 1980 Olympic boycott, as seen through the eyes of the American press and the American people. The story will describe the changing tone of the people between January and August in a controversial time in our history.

JANUARY

Time, January 28, 1980, Wright.



## I. JANUARY

The pinnacle of an amateur athlete's career is to participate in the Olympic Games. They represent the opportunity for the world's athletes to compete face-to-face in a neutral sports arena. However, the sports arena for the 1980 Summer Olympics was not a neutral one: they were held in Moscow, in the Soviet Union. They were not the games of a peaceful time.

The Olympic Games had originated in ancient Greece more than 2,700 years ago. The ancient Games were formed as part of the religious festival dedicated to the god Zeus. Only men participated, and the best men were awarded a laurel wreath. The decline of the Greek empire brought an end to the Olympic Games. <sup>1</sup>

In 1896, the Games were revived by a Frenchman, Baron Pierre de Coubertin. The modern Games were started to build individual character through athletic training and competition. They were meant to promote peace by providing friendly contacts among the athletes of the world.

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<sup>1</sup>Encyclopedia Americana, 1979 ed., Vol. 20, "Olympic Games," pp. 722-726.

The rewards for excellence now range from the thrill of the gold medal and national anthem to television contracts and lucrative career opportunities.

The Olympic Games were originally designed to be separate from politics, but this high ideal now appears to be unattainable. The Games have been plagued by political issues almost from their inception.

They were canceled during World War I and II. The cancellation was due, in part, to the number of Olympic nations involved and the conditions throughout those countries. The Berlin Games of 1936 were referred to by many as the "Nazi Olympics." Americans debated about making an appearance, but decided to compete. With the talent of Jesse Owens, a black athlete, the United States showed Hitler and the world that the Aryan "race" was not supreme.

In the 1948 Olympics Israel was excluded on a technicality following a boycott threat by the Arabs.

Politics again invaded the Olympic Games in Melbourne, Australia in 1954. As Soviet tanks were crushing revolts in Hungary, blood was flowing in the water polo match between the two countries.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Dennis A. Williams, "Olympic Politics Past," Newsweek, January 28, 1980, p. 24.

In 1968, black U.S. athletes Tommie Smith and John Carlos raised their gloved fists in protest of racial discrimination.

The Games continued in Munich in 1972 despite the murder of eleven Israeli athletes by Arab terrorists. Expulsion of athletes and the exclusion of Rhodesia added to the confusion and chaos of Munich.<sup>3</sup>

The Games were the basis of argument and court involvement in the Taiwan and China issue in both 1976 and 1980, and twenty-eight African nations boycotted in 1976 because of New Zealand's South African rugby tour.<sup>4</sup>

All this time the people of the world have been reminded that the Olympics represent the competition of athletes in athletics. The athletes were not to be involved in the politics of their nations.

The most recent political involvement in the Olympic Games was the boycott of the 1980 Moscow Games by the United States. The boycott was initiated in retaliation for the Russian invasion of Afghanistan in late December 1979. The boycott, announced by President Jimmy Carter in

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

early January, approved by the United States Olympic Committee and the U.S. Congress and generally accepted by the American people and athletes may be the biggest example of political involvement ever.

On January 4, 1980, President Carter, in a speech concerning the Russian invasion of Afghanistan, called for a grain embargo and mentioned an Olympic boycott. The nation was stunned. For the next two weeks many people hoped the Russians would make a move toward withdrawal.

On January 21, 1980, on NBC's "Meet the Press," President Carter outlined his position. It was a flat-out ultimatum: if the Russian forces were not out of Afghanistan by February 20, 1980, the U.S. would not participate in the Moscow Olympics. Carter asked the United States Olympic Committee to relay his message to the International Olympic Committee. He asked that the Olympics be postponed, moved or canceled unless the Kremlin met his deadline. Carter wrote:

The course I am urging is necessary to help secure the peace of the world at this critical time. The most important task of world leaders, public and private, is to deter aggression and prevent war. Aggression destroys the international amity and goodwill that the Olympic movement attempts to foster. If our response to aggression is to continue with international sports as usual

in the capital of the aggressor, our other steps to deter aggression are undermined. <sup>5</sup>

The call to the nations went out, asking for support of the United States boycott. Carter knew he needed the support of many nations to make the boycott effective. International leaders looked to each other for a clue as to the correct way to move. The Games would lack luster if the U.S. was absent, but the United States would appear foolish without the support of others.

"A unilateral U.S. boycott, frets four-time Olympic discus champion Al Oerter, would be 'like sticking your tongue out at someone.'" <sup>6</sup>

The United States did not want the boycott to be unilateral.

The sports columns written at this time reflected opinions on both sides. The columns in January were divided pro and con, some offering vignettes from past Olympic history. No one professed to have an absolute solution.

The first column to be published in the papers studied was on January 4 by Red Smith in the New York Times (p. A-16). Smith's column, titled "Boycott the Moscow Olympics," compared the 1936 Olympics to the 1980 ones.

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<sup>5</sup>Jimmy Carter, "President's Letter - January 20, 1980," Department of State Bulletin, Vol. 80, March 1980, pp. 50-52.

<sup>6</sup>Jerry Kirshenbaum, "The Olympic Ultimatum," Sports Illustrated, January 28, 1980, pp. 7-8.

He said the U.S. should have known better than to go to Berlin in 1936.

Smith discussed past political involvement in the Games. In a sarcastic tone he quoted Avery Brundage, the late president of the U.S.O.C., who said in 1935:

Frankly, I don't think we have any business to meddle in this question. We are a sports group, organized and pledged to promote clean competition and sportsmanship. When we let politics, racial questions or social disputes creep into our actions, we're in for trouble.

Another historical column was written by Blackie Sherrod in the January 31 issue of the Dallas Times-Herald (p. 1F). Sherrod wrote about the political ingredient of the early Greek Olympics in his column, titled "The Olympics.... and business as usual."

Sherrod wrote that the winner in early Greece was escorted back to his hometown in honor, was wined and dined at public expense and was given the maidens of his choice. He was allowed to build a monument to himself, was housed by the city and was free of taxation forever. Sherrod said athletics and politics always have been and always will be mixed together.

Pro-boycott columns appeared in most of the papers. The first pro-column was carried in the Washington Post.



On January 6, Shirley Povich, a guest columnist, wrote "Boycott of the Games Obligatory for U.S." (p. D-3). The column favored the boycott, calling it essential for the U.S. Povich said:

The Olympics have long been overrated as a festival of international harmony that would make the whole world just peachy in future years. The Games have bred more ill will than good will. Their image of friendly strife is a hoax and the amateurism of the athletes, particularly in the Soviet bloc, is a complete sham.

Povich wrote about paid athletes, Olga Korbut and Vassily Alexyev in particular. He also wrote about the cheating that goes on in the Games and cited a fencing incident in Montreal involving a Soviet fencer and an attempted bribe by the Soviets to Tom Goff, U.S. diving team manager.

Povich said he saw no reason to compete in the Games being held in a hostile country. To hold the 1980 Games in Moscow would be an honor for the Soviets, he said; to have the United States team there and competing would be a dishonor to America.

"To withdraw now from the '80 Games would be to take a stance in the highest ideal of athletics: the good sense of fair play," Kansas City Times columnist Mike McKenzie wrote. In a column on January 7 (p. 10),

titled "United States Should Boycott Moscow Games," he said that the U.S. must move away from its wishy-washy appearance and do something positive. McKenzie favored a boycott of the Games in Moscow. He wrote about various incidents of political involvement in the Olympics, and said, "The Olympiad is deeply entrenched in politics. Always has been, always will be. And should be."

McKenzie was the only columnist to suggest that politics should be involved in the Olympics picture. McKenzie seemed afraid the United States would back down and not go through with the boycott. His column took the strongest pro-boycott stance of any read.

Edwin Pope of the Miami Herald wrote two columns in January. His first, "The U.S. or the Olympics? Are You Kidding?," was carried on January 14 (p. 1F). In his column he questioned the patriotism of various athletes who were opposed to the boycott.

Pope wrote about a discussion with Dr. David Sime, an ophthalmologist and former Olympian who was angered by the remarks of Bill Rodgers, Olympic marathoner, who said he might not honor the boycott. Sime said that if Rodgers did not honor the boycott it would be an unpatriotic

action. Sime and Pope seemed to feel that most Americans thought the same way and wanted to believe patriotism would be more important than sports.

Pope also wrote about Bruce Jenner, who agreed that the boycott was a mistake. Jenner, 1976 decathalon winner, spoke out against Jimmy Carter, saying that when Carter could finish a ten-kilometer race, he could start making decisions about sports.

Pope said, "The equally obvious retort is that when Jenner learns the difference between foreign policy and a discus, he can start offering opinion on foreign policy."

The second Miami Herald column appeared January 29 (p. 1F). The column, "Stake Sinks Deep Into Olympic Heart," favored acceptance of the boycott. Pope wrote that the United States had every right to refuse to enter Moscow's "grandiose showcase."

Both of Pope's columns dealt with patriotism and the athlete. In his second column, Pope talked about two alternatives to the Moscow Games. The first, proposed by a 72-year-old Miamian, Isadore Wasserman, was simply to withdraw from the Games. Wasserman, former U.S. fencing trainer, said that by withdrawing we would be

"Avoiding a boycott, we would retain International Olympic Committee membership and perhaps some chance for rejuvenation of future Summer Olympics."

The second alternative was offered by Buck Dawson, executive director of the International Swimming Hall of Fame in Ft. Lauderdale. He said the Olympics should be divided into five categories--Winter, Team Tournament, Individual Land and Sports, Cultural and Aquatic Olympics.

Pope tended to agree with Dawson, writing that "just plain bigness" had killed the Summer Games. He wrote that human nature and ego had destroyed the ideal of the Games, just as trouble sprouts when adults take over Little League baseball.

Pope ended by saying: "The most we can hope for the Olympics now is that some of the pieces may be picked up and rejoined in smaller and more workable sections--human against human, forever removing nation against nation."

In a column that attacked sports as well as the Olympics, John Schulian of the Atlanta Constitution wrote that the Olympics, which once belonged to the world of sport, had been turned into a political toy. The column, "Olympics: Political Plaything," was published January 11 (p. 1D).

Schulian cited the Arab terrorists and Tommie Smith and John Carlos as examples of political toys. He said that with any luck the Games would soon be so broken and misshappen that they could be deposited in the only home they deserved -the trash can.

Schulian was vindictive in the column, writing that sports are the next best thing to war but cheaper. The sports wars are financed, he said, by American corporations such as Levi, Schlitz and Chiquita.

Schulian said:

The hypocrisy and contradictions pile up unanswered. It is as if the I.O.C. waits for them to be overwhelmed by the shimmering brilliance of a Nadia Comeneci, a Sugar Ray Leonard, a Franz Klemmer. Maybe that gimmick used to work, but no more. The age of sugar-plus fairies is over, shoved aside by the era of the jaundiced eye.

The Atlanta Constitution carried another column on January 26 (pp. 1C and 5C), by sports editor Jesse Outlar. In "Boycotting Won't Stop Soviet Army" Outlar said the boycott would not stop the Soviets. He suggested individual competition instead of team participation.

Outlar wrote:

Also, if the U.S. is going to use the Olympics to restrain the Russians, why doesn't the President order the committee to ban the Soviets

from the upcoming Winter Games in Lake Placid, N.Y.? With feeling running so high against the Soviets in the U.S., their athletes are likely to be in real trouble on the Olympic front long before the Summer Games are scheduled to start in July.

The Chicago Tribune's column on the boycott dealt with the loss of money by NBC. Gary Deeb wrote on January 11 a column titled "Soviets Make NBC Nervous." He said NBC was up to its peacock feathers in misery. He quoted a figure of \$125 million as the amount of money that NBC had invested and stood to lose. The Tribune column (p. 6, sec. 3) did not vote one way or another concerning the boycott.

The Christian Science Monitor carried a pro-and-con column, by Ross Atkin, entitled "Olympic Boycott...?" on January 18 (p. 15). The column gave both sides of the picture. On the pro side of the boycott, Atkin said world peace must take precedence over the need to keep the Games apolitical.

On the con side, Atkin said there was need of some area besides the United Nations for nations to come together peaceably. Speaking out against a boycott, Atkin wrote: "For one brief, shining moment; it is felt peoples of the globe should have an opportunity to see that differences can be laid aside."

Neither the Kansas City Star or the Des Moines Tribune ran boycott columns in January so, the last of the papers to run a boycott column was the Des Moines Register. On January 27 (p. 7D), the paper carried two columns, side by side, concerning the boycott. The first column, pro-boycott, was by Bob Dyer. The anti-boycott column was written by Maury White. The two columns appeared under the head "There are two sides to Olympic boycott."

Dyer definitely favored the boycott. He wrote that it was about time for something to be done about Soviet aggression, and that although the boycott would not get the troops out of Afghanistan, it was a start. Dyer said it was extremely satisfying to him to see that so many Americans, athletes, congressmen and citizens were coming to the conclusion that Moscow was the last place they wanted to be.

Dyer talked about political involvement and past Russian boycotts. The Russians, it seems, had pulled out of a track meet with Canada and the U.S. in 1966. The boycott was to protest American involvement in Vietnam. The Russians also were, he said, then supplying the North Vietnamese with AK-47 rifles.

Politics are involved, said Dyer. He wrote: "Robert Kane, president of the U.S. Olympic Committee, and Don Miller, U.S.O.C. executive director, pretend the injection of politics into the Olympics is new and terrible. For that attitude, those gentlemen can share the Avery Brundage Ostrich award."

Dyer again stated the need for a message to be sent to the Soviets about aggression. He said the United States must be the country to send such a message.

Maury White, on the anti-boycott side, said he was for boycotting World War III, inflation and other things, but he questioned whether boycotting the Olympic Games would stop Russia from fighting a war.

White expounded on the good qualities of the Olympics. He said: "The hope of the Olympics is that, through the mingling and exchange of athletes from 137 nations, friendships and understandings will result that help erase fears and spread trust."

White said that any time 137 nations could agree on something, if it was only who could run or swim the fastest or who could wrestle the best, it was a good thing.

White discussed the profit and propaganda of the



Games. Profits of being the host city are eaten up by the expenses of the staging, he said. The debts of Munich and Montreal are good examples.

White suggested that instead of sending the message that we would be absent, the U.S. should send the best propaganda possible. It should send a friendly, talented team of free Americans. He cited the youthful ambassadors who broke the ice in China by playing a good game of ping pong.

White's column, the strongest anti-boycott column to appear, ended by saying: "Our people have trained as private citizens, rather than as part of a war effort or propaganda machine. Even if some of the rest of the world insists on lumping sports and politics, wouldn't it be Olympian of us to rise above that?"

January was an important month for columns on the boycott. It was also an important month for polls and diverse views. A New York Times poll in early January showed that 75 percent of the people polled were in favor of a boycott. Athletes were divided on the matter. Bruce Jenner was against it, but Kurt Thomas, U.S. gymnast, was reported to have said that if Carter ordered a boycott,

the athletes would boycott.

Muhammad Ali's sports clubs supported the boycott. Ali said, "Sports don't mean nothing. If it means sacrificing the Olympics to wake these people up and make them think, then it's all worthwhile."

The American people could only wait until the February deadline to see whether there would be a United States team in the 1980 Summer Games.

FEBRUARY

Business Week, February 4, 1980, Marc Nadel.



## II. FEBRUARY

February was a red-letter month in boycott history. It was a month of disagreement. The athletes wanted to go to Moscow, the President wanted them to stay home. The U.S.O.C. was against a boycott and the American people were split on all issues.

Robert J. Kane, president of the U.S.O.C., spoke out against the boycott. "We do have a problem to face if we're out there alone, swaying in the wind. If we are the only nation not to appear in the Games, what good would this do?" he asked. <sup>1</sup>

Kane's plea for Olympic participation proved futile. The U.S. House of Representatives approved the boycott and the Senate seemed certain to follow.

Athletes spoke out against a boycott. The 47-member Athletes' Advisory Committee took a poll of U.S. athletes. Of the 42 answering the poll, thirty were opposed to an Olympic boycott. Steve Lundquist, a swimmer from Southern Methodist University, said: "You look forward to this all your life. Suddenly they just pull it out from under you." <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>"On Your Marks, Get Set, Stop!" Time, February 4, 1980, pp. 20-22.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

Al Feurbach, a shot putter who finished fourth in Montreal in 1976, said: "I am 100% opposed to any pullout, for any reason. We make the sacrifice, we pay our own way, we're not connected to the government. It's not their life dream that's being tampered with." <sup>3</sup>

Bob Mathias, gold medalist in the decathlon in 1948 and 1952, added: "Our people want to go to Moscow to beat the hell out of those guys and tell them face to face what's wrong with them." <sup>4</sup>

Other nations were beginning to decide their own boycott stance. In January Saudi Arabia joined the boycott. The question now was, who else would back up the United States?

Carter asked some 100 nations to join the boycott, and the answers were slow in arriving. In Great Britain, despite Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's governmental support, the British Olympic Committee continued to oppose the boycott.

Mexico announced its intention to send a team to Moscow.

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<sup>3</sup>"The Olympics: To Go or Not To Go," Time, January 28, 1980, pp. 15-16.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

Egypt, New Zealand and the Netherlands chose to support President Carter's decision. Fiji, Qatar and Djibouti, all countries with no Olympic teams, supported Carter.

In Australia, Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser requested the Australian National Olympic Committee to seek relocation of the Games if Carter's deadline was not met.

China favored the idea of a boycott or a move. Japan was caught between traditional U.S. policy support and fears of Soviet reprisal.

In Canada, Prime Minister Joe Clarke spoke in favor of the boycott. His opponent for the re-election, former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, was cool to the Olympic ban. <sup>5</sup>

West Germany was a key nation. West German officials who had criticized Carter's lack of sternness in his dealings with the Kremlin could hardly go against his ultimatum now.

Italy's Olympic Committee said it would take an official veto by the government to keep Italy from entering a team in Moscow. <sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>"Drive to Boycott Olympics Gains Steam Abroad," U.S. News and World Report, 88 (February 4, 1980), p. 24.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

A big issue in the boycott of the Olympics was money. The money Russia had spent and the money the U.S. had invested was at stake.

In an article in Business Week on February 4, 1980, money losses were the topic. The Kremlin was reported to have said publicly that it had spent between \$220 and \$230 million preparing arenas, pools, hotel accommodations and facilities for the Olympic Games.

It was the belief of Business Week, however, that the Russians had spent nearly \$3 billion. A new luxury hotel cost \$270 million alone, not to mention \$60 million in broadcast equipment and computers. <sup>7</sup>

The most severe economic blow to the U.S. would be the loss to NBC-TV, said Business Week. Other U.S. corporations, such as Levi, McDonald's and Burger King also would suffer a loss.

February 20 came and went. The Russians did not move out of Afghanistan. President Carter decided the boycott would stand and the United States would not make an appearance in Moscow.

A cry went out pitying the athletes who had spent so

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<sup>7</sup>"What a boycott would cost Moscow," Business Week, (February 4, 1980), pp. 30-31.

many years training for the Games. A cry for national patriotism went out. The Winter Games began in Lake Placid with a Soviet team present and the knowledge of the boycott on the minds and tongues of many.

The debate remained between the International Olympic Committee and the White House. Lord Killanin, president of the I.O.C., said:

The International Olympic Committee is fully aware of, and sensitive to, the world conditions which have created the most serious challenge to confront the Olympic Games....All 73 members of the International Olympic Committee are unanimous that the games must be held in Moscow as planned. 8

President Carter replied:

To me it is unconscionable for any nation to send athletes to the capital of a nation under the aegis of the Olympics when that nation, that host nation, is actively involved in the invasion of and the subjunction of innocent people. And so for that reason, I don't believe that we are at all obligated to send our athletes to Moscow. 9

Another problem with the boycott, one important to journalists, was the announcement by I.O.C. officials that only journalists from competing nations would be accredited to report the Games. This would mean that American

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<sup>8</sup>"U.S. Loses Round 1 in Olympic Fight," U.S. News and World Report, (February 25, 1980), p. 30.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.



reporters would be barred from Moscow if the U.S. did not field a team. <sup>10</sup>

The sports columnists had much writing to do in February regarding the boycott. The columns were in favor of President Carter's decision, against the decision, full of suggestions and full of comment on athlete's emotions.

In early February a column appeared in the Miami Herald. Edwin Pope submitted a letter from Bob Giordano to his parents. Giordano, a U.S. weightlifter, said the boycott should not be used as a weapon to combat Russian aggression in Afghanistan.

The letter, titled "Dear Mom and Dad--I'm Scared and Confused," was carried on February 7 (pp. 1C and 7C).

Giordano talked about his love for his country and his lifelong desire to compete in the Olympic Games. He wrote about his life in the United States and his dreams and goals. He said he remembered the first time he had put on a USA warmup and the pride he had in being part of the team. He said proud athletes now had tears in their eyes.

Giordano wrote:

It doesn't look good though. The Olympics seem

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

to be in danger of dying. That's a heartbreak to all of us who can feel in our hearts the ideals of the Games. We love our country dearly, but we also love the ideals of peace and brotherhood. Maybe all those people out there just don't understand us. That's why I try so hard to tell them. I wish they would listen.

Two columns by Blackie Sherrod appeared in the Dallas Times-Herald. The columns, February 19 and 20, dealt mainly with the Winter Olympic victories, but both said there was a sadness in knowing the U.S. would not compete in July.

Sherrod, who was in favor of some form of boycott, said he was sorry for the athletes but that the United States could not let Soviet aggression go unanswered (February 19, p. 1D and February 20, p. 1D).

Jesse Outlar of the Atlanta Constitution stuck with his earlier opinion on the boycott (February 20, p. 1B). He did not feel the boycott would stop Russia, and he did not want to get involved. "I still say the boycott won't remove a single soldier from Afghanistan, and the U.S. should not get involved in jock diplomacy."

In the Kansas City Star published February 13 (pp. 1C and 6C), Joe McGuff blasted the International Olympic Committee in a column titled "I.O.C. Shows Self-Perpetuating

Attitude."

McGuff said the I.O.C. believed change was evil and that it was only challenging President Carter. He wrote that the I.O.C. set itself up as the purveyor of goodwill and peace, but that it was ignoring the dark side of human nature. McGuff said neither Munich, Montreal nor African boycotts had changed the I.O.C., but that perhaps Jimmy Carter could.

McGuff wrote:

The I.O.C. rationale for supporting the Moscow Olympics and the Berlin Olympics before them is simple and, to the I.O.C. consoling. So the Soviets have invaded Afghanistan. Well, the world has been filled with violence since that eventful day when Cain slew Abel. So the Jews are persecuted in Russia and the dissidents are shipped away to cleanse the intellectual atmosphere of Moscow. History books are full of events having to do with persecution and suppression. Come, let us run and jump.

In the Washington Post on February 14 (pp. F1 and F7), Ken Denlinger wrote "White House Words Have Slushy Feel." The column dealt with compromise. Would Carter compromise the February 20 deadline? What if the Soviets moved out of Afghanistan before the official entrance date of May 24? Would out athletes suffer unnecessarily?

Other compromises appeared on I.O.C. and U.S.O.C. policy. Would the I.O.C. consider a relocation after all? Would the U.S.O.C. vote against President Carter?

Denlinger said the American peoples' support came as a sign of apathy. Americans don't get excited about the Games until a month before they begin, he said. "We will call this event--and it has dominated sports as no other for weeks--the Olympic bluff."

A different type of column was carried in the Los Angeles Times on February 19 (pp. 1 and 10-III). "Putting on '80 Games," was the title of Jim Murray's column. In it he said the controversy of the Olympic boycott had degenerated into a hawk and dove affair. The hawks wanted to beat the Russians in any way possible. The doves, on the other hand, feared the boycott would solidify enmity with Russia, because, Murray said, "...hell hath no fury like a host or hostess scorned."

Murray suggested changes that might satisfy both hawks and doves and allow U.S. participation. His changes included such items as rewriting the javelin throw rules to read that the object is for the javelin to stick into someone instead of sticking into the ground. For instance,

When the U.S. team throws, the Russian team stands no more than 200 feet away and tries to catch the javelin. Points would be awarded, ten for hitting the heart or jugular, nine for a fatal stomach wound and dwindling down to eight, seven and six for non-lethal punctures.

The shot put would be a grenade, the steeplechase's water jump would be mined and,

TRIPLE JUMP: We will replace this with an event to be known as the 'double cross.' It will be a competition in spying open to intelligence agents from all Olympic nations. Competitors, of course, will be anonymous, or competing under assumed names and false passports. Qualifiers will be anyone who can get through Russian customs without disappearing.

Winner will be the agent who can make the most murders look like suicide or who can start the most revolutions or wars in underdeveloped countries without suspicion pointing at his country.

Is it any wonder that the Times carried no more boycott columns?

In his column Red Smith said the Olympics would be boycotted for two reasons. The New York Times column, "Petitions, Girls and Euclid Ave.," appeared February 29 (p. 22).

Smith said the U.S. would boycott the Games because:  
(1) President Carter, Congress and the people believed it to be correct and,

(2) With all respect for the young people who competed so earnestly at Lake Placid, there is no evidence that sliding downhill, chasing a puck or describing figure 8's on ice automatically qualify one as an authority on foreign relations equipped to advise the President and his staff.

The last of these columns appeared in the Miami Herald (February 3, p. 2F). It was unique because it was about the boycott as seen from the other side. It was written by Russia's Nelli Kim.

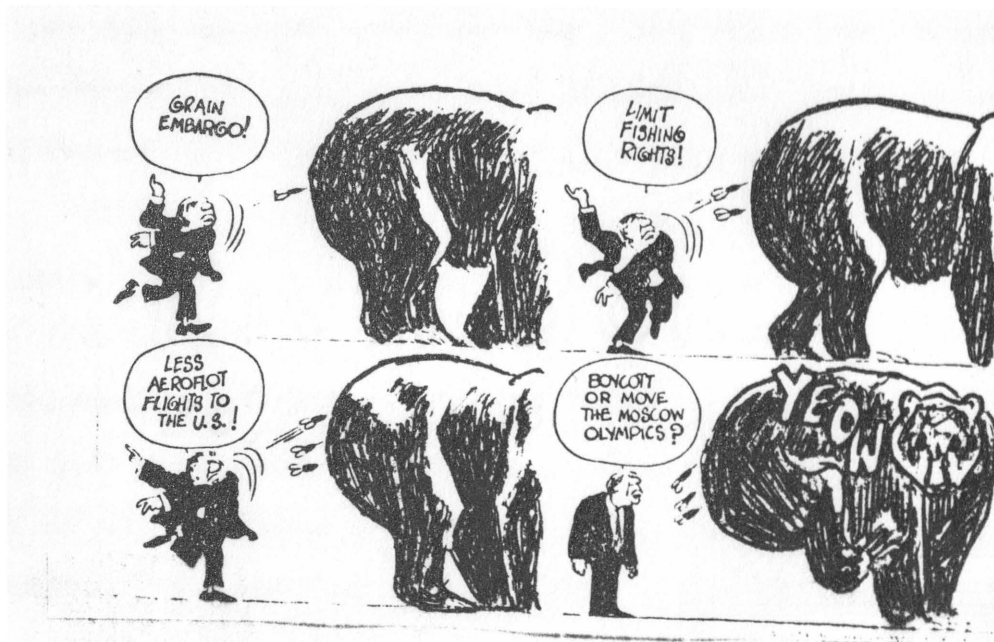
Kim wrote about the meaning of Olympic competition, sportsmanship and the rights of athletes to participate in the Olympic Games. She said the boycott was an encroachment of those rights.

Kim said: "It is my conviction that no one will ever break the five intertwined Olympic rings symbolizing the sports unity of the youth of all continents. Young people in different countries are continuing to prepare for the friendly meetings at the Olympic Games in Moscow. And the Games will take place."

Yes, February was a red-letter, decisive month in boycott history. The decision had been made and history had been changed.

MARCH

U.S. News and World Report, February 4, 1980.



### III. MARCH

March was a relatively quiet month in boycott history. The White House made no new announcements concerning the boycott. The U.S.O.C. made no new statements. March was the month of moves by athletes.

On March 1, a group of Winter Olympic athletes presented a petition to President Carter. They said they believed the Summer athletes should be allowed the right to shine in Moscow as they had done in Lake Placid.

The petition received no response and the boycott stood.

On March 21, a group of Winter athletes, Summer athletes, coaches and trainers went to the White House to meet with President Carter. Their mission was to offer alternatives that would allow them to enter the Games. The group said they would enter as individuals, not as a team, that they would go to Moscow but not be present for opening ceremonies and that they would not accept medals if they won any.

The White House rejected all the alternatives offered and told the athletes that the boycott would stand.



Secretary of State Cyrus Vance said: "We will oppose the participation of an American team in any Olympic Games in the capital of any invading nation. This position is firm. It reflects the deep convictions of the U.S. Congress and the American people." <sup>1</sup>

Only one column was carried in the papers during March, by Bob Rubin in the Miami Herald on March 24 (p. 3F).

The column, "Murder, Games Can't Coexist," dealt with four stories in March that Rubin said, evoked wonder, sorrow and anger.

In March, sixteen European countries met in Brussels, rejected Carter's proposed boycott and said they would not accept an alternate site for the Moscow Games. This was the major story.

Another story told of a proposal by unhappy American athletes that they be allowed to go to Moscow if they agreed to boycott opening, closing and award presentation ceremonies.

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<sup>1</sup>Cyrus Vance, "U.S. Favors Transfer of Summer Olympics," Department of State Bulletin, Vol. 80, March 1980, pp. 50-52.

An American rower, Anita DeFrantz, was the subject of a third story. DeFrantz, a member of the twenty-one member U.S.O.C. administrative committee, said the Carter administration "should not get off scot-free" if the U.S. athletes were forced to abide by the boycott order.

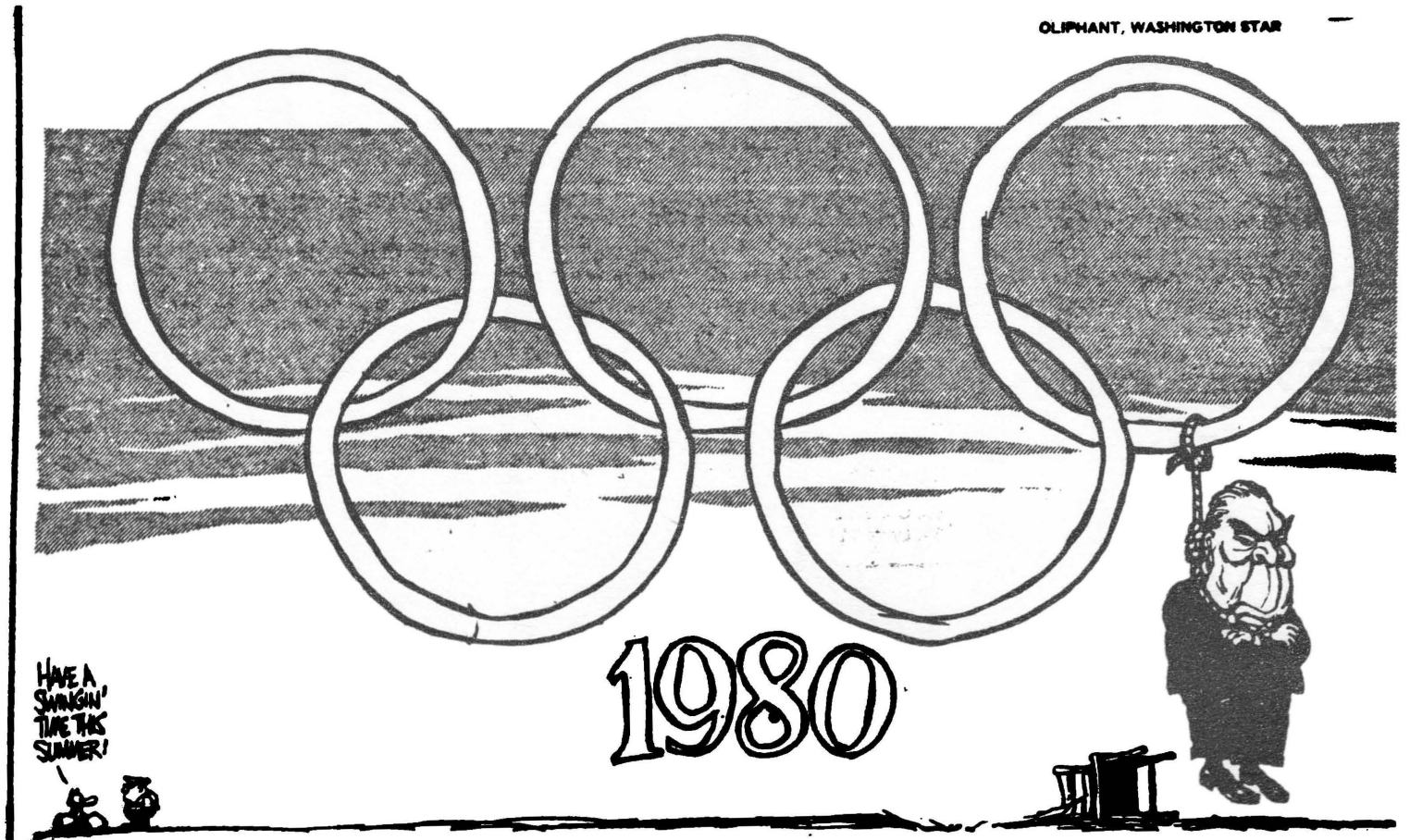
DeFrantz suggested U.S.O.C. support should be repaid by large amounts--"kick across with a big pile of money"--for U.S. amateur athletes. Rubin said she had a "play me or pay me patriotism."

The final story discussed by Rubin dealt with a predicted famine in Afghanistan, the result of disruption of agriculture by the war.

Rubin asked two pertinent questions about the four stories: "First, with allies like ours, who needs enemies?" and "Second question: Is the spirit of sacrifice and ability to unite for a greater good dead in this country?"

Ending with a definite favorable vote for the boycott, Rubin said:

The complex, amoral world of international power politics, in which we must hold our noses and sleep with despots for strategic or economic consideration, too seldom permits the United States to take an action that is morally, tactically and politically sound. The Olympic boycott gives us that chance. If we don't follow through, what do we stand for?



OLIPHANT, WASHINGTON STAR

HAVE A  
SWIMMIN'  
TIME THIS  
SUMMER!

1980

APRIL

Des Moines Tribune, April 16, 1980, Oliphant.

#### IV. APRIL

April showers could have been the tears of the American athletes. In April their fate was sealed.

On April 9, Puerto Rico decided to compete in the Olympic Games, despite President Carter's request for support. On the 23rd and 24th, both Canada and West Germany voted to support the boycott.

But the showers of tears came after the April 13 and 14 U.S.O.C. vote. Three hundred members of the U.S.O.C. House of Delegates assembled in Colorado Springs and voted to support the President's boycott. The fight was over.

The athletes were not the only ones with tears. Robert J. Kane, president of the U.S.O.C., was asked whether he had kept a journal of the past three and one-half months since the boycott announcement: "Kane's sad, soft eyes narrowed as he said, 'No. I couldn't stand to review anything this painful.'" <sup>1</sup>

The U.S.O.C. holding game was over. The committee had clearly been stalling for time. In January it said it would support the boycott, but that official support

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<sup>1</sup>Kenny Moore, "The Decision: No Go On Moscow," Sports Illustrated, 52 (April 21, 1980), pp. 30-33.

must come from a House of Delegates vote.

They were hoping something would happen--either a shift in American public opinion or a shift in Soviet troops. Neither happened.

The U.S.O.C.'s hopes were raised when the British Olympic Committee elected to send a team to Moscow despite Prime Minister Thatcher's wishes. The White House made its position perfectly clear: the U.S.O.C. should comply.

Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti even went to the extreme of saying the President could prevent U.S. Olympic participation under the International Emergency Economics Powers Act. Carter told a meeting of the American Society of Newspaper Editors: "If legal actions are necessary, then I will take those actions." <sup>2</sup>

The affected athletes' feelings shifted from eagerness to debate to recognition of the administration's power. "'This kind of press is like death,' said four-time Olympic long jumper Martha Watson. 'You don't really think about it until it takes someone you love.'" <sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

The accusation the athletes now heard was that they were unpatriotic. They issued a statement reaffirming their basic agreement with the President's ends, but saying it was his means they disputed. Marathoner Don Kardong asked: "What was the most effective use of symbol? The African boycott of the Montreal Games, which passed without a ripple, or the raised fist of Tommie Smith on the victory stand a Mexico City in 1968, which is indelible in the memory of everyone who saw it?"<sup>4</sup>

Delegates for the U.S.O.C. House fought between loyalty to Carter's proposal and their feeling concerning the Games. Dr. T.E. Dillon, delegate and representative of the National Rifle Association, said: "I feel I have no choice but to support the President or be perceived as supporting the Russians. I resent that."<sup>5</sup>

The Soviet Union did not immediately release the U.S.O.C. vote results. It called the campaign "brazen and cynical."

The House of Delegates meeting was taken seriously by the White House. Vice-President Walter Mondale went

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

to Colorado Springs to represent the administration. He addressed the delegates, saying: "History holds its breath, for what is at stake is no less than the future security of the civilized world....I am convinced that the American people do not want their athletes cast as pawns in that tawdry propaganda charade." <sup>6</sup>

The vote was called for. One thousand, six hundred four delegates voted in favor of a boycott, and 797 voted against.

The sports columns began to roll out.

Red Smith of the New York Times was the first columnist to speak out, on April 9 (p. B-10). In "The True Olympic Spirit," Smith wrote about arguments, myths and misconceptions about the Games.

His first argument was that politics has no place in the Olympics. The fact remained that the early Greek Olympics were shot full of politics, he said. In ancient times, city-states held the Games. Television is used in modern Games to show "national pavilions."

The first myth Smith wrote about was that a sacred truce suspended all wars during the Olympics.

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

What about the Greek Wars, the World Wars, Korea and the Soviet invasions? asked Smith.

And a misconception: our sinless amateur athletes compete for medals but are opposed by professionals from Russia and other Communist bloc countries.

The column said, in fact, that when athletes in ancient Greece complained that the wreaths of olive leaves were worth more to goats than to themselves, Athenians passed a law saying that anyone winning four events would eat on the state for the rest of his life.

This column continued, treating other arguments, myths and misconceptions.

While Joe McGuff of the Kansas City Star was in favor of the boycott, he said Carter bungled the handling of the boycott (April 13, p. 1). His column in the Star, "If U.S. is alone, so be it," described the House of Delegates as being wiser and braver than the I.O.C. McGuff said:

Perhaps the U.S. will find itself alone among nations boycotting the Olympics. That should not be a consideration. In fact this could be a good experience for our waffling allies, who will learn what it is like to compete against the Iron Curtain without the U.S.

The Washington Post carried three columns that month.



The first, on April 15 (p. D1), was by Barry Lorge and was titled "Politics and Patriotism Influenced U.S. Boycott Vote."

The column reviewed Anita DeFrantz's speech at the House of Delegates meeting. DeFrantz, a former Olympian, now an attorney, said:

The Olympic Games are a festival of human achievement, where people come together and attempt to reach goals that have never been reached before.... That's what we're interested in, continuing that opportunity. We have so few.

Lorge's second column was titled "Boycott Would Make Games Less Than Olympian" (April 19, pp. D1 and D4). Lorge likened the Olympic boycott to a magnificent, colorful contest to determine the worlds best ice cream flavor. He asked what if, all of a sudden, chocolate, strawberry, peach, pistachio, maple walnut and others withdrew?

As a sporting event, a Summer Olympics without the United States and its major allies would be equally devalued--interesting and flavorful for some connoisseurs, but far from definitive or compelling to the general public.

Lorge wrote about what the Games would be without some of the major countries. He said the Olympic basketball tournament without the U.S. would be worth nothing. And men's gymnastics without Japan and China would be less

than Olympian. Yachting without Australia, the U.S. and Great Britian would be off-keel.

Lorge listed the various Summer Olympic events, discussing the probable winners and the effect of a U.S. absence.

Again he brought out the "ice cream Olympics," saying:

Others such as yachting, equestrain and field hockey, will be reduced to absurdity if the Western powers that historically prevail in them do not take part. (Imagine peppermint stick winning the ice cream contest in the category, "Goes best with hot apple pie."

The last Post-column was published April 20 by Dave Kindred (pp. M1 and M5). Peter Schnugg was the topic of the column, which he headed "Athlete Finds Heartbreak in Boycott, Cites Politics."

Schnugg, a water polo player, was "steamed." He was a member of the U.S. water polo team, which was ranked second in the world, and he now had no Olympics to attend.

He didn't like the suggestions the U.S.O.C. gave to Presdient Carter. Schnugg didn't want a specially cast medal, or a dinner invitation to the White House. He also didn't want a national festival at Kennedy Center.

He wanted to go to the Olympics, and he said so.

Schnugg was the elected representative to the U.S.O.C. House of Delegates from the water polo team. He received

a telegram asking him to vote in favor of a boycott. The telegram, from President Carter, stressed patriotism and national security.

Schnugg said the administration twisted arms and used brass knuckles to get a boycott.

Schnugg voted to go to Moscow: "I had to vote my heart and if the president wanted to take it away from us, he could."

Schnugg voted and left for a water polo tournament in Hungary, where the Americans did very well.

Kindred said the administration killed the dreams of the Olympics. He again suggested a special medal or a dinner or a parade. Schnugg said:

But I don't want to go to the White House. I don't want to have to shake the President's hand. I don't want to stand on the White House steps and have him give me a hug. Maybe I'll cool off in a month, but right now..."

David Israel of the Chicago Tribune suggested an easy way to save the Games in an April 17 column (p. 4, sec. 2). The title told the story, "Here's an easy way to save Games--Olympicworld."

Israel suggested the formation of Olympicworld, a year-round attraction comparable to Disneyworld. The "world"

would have tracks, pools, basketball, boxing and other sports. It would have museums, exhibition centers and participation opportunities.

"Olympicworld" would be a training center for the athletes of the world. The center would be supported by the 137 I.O.C. nations. Support would be based on the Gross National Product of each nation.

Israel wrote: "It is so simple an idea that it is not surprising the I.O.C. has not had it. But they'd better. It might be the only way for them to stay in business."

The former Olympic hero, Jesse Owens, wrote a column for the Chicago Tribune shortly before his death. On April 21 (pp. 4 and 10) the Tribune carried "A Fitting Solution for U.S." Owens called for a way to be found to allow a boycott and an Olympics for the U.S. He said American athletes should boycott the perpetrators of aggression, but not by staying away from Moscow.

He said the Olympics should be individual, not national competition, and that the U.S. should disavow any involvement so the athletes could go as themselves.

Owens said a good boycott would be going to Moscow and proving we are not bigoted and that we believe in peaceful competition.

He said:

The road to the Olympics doesn't lead to Moscow. It leads to no city, to no country. It goes far beyond Lake Placid or Moscow, ancient Greece or Nazi Germany. The road to the Olympics leads, in the end, to the best within us.

Another column about an athlete's frustrations appeared in the Miami Herald (April 27, p. 7C). The column, "U.S. Athletes the Only Losers in Boycott," was by Bob Giordano, U.S. weightlifter. Giordano was angered by what he termed political coercion by the Carter administration. He said he felt as if the government had stolen his Olympic moment from him. He cited the threatened loss of tax exemptions for sports committees, threatened ban on passports and revocations of charters.

Giordano ended:

But it's not over. The American way is to fight for what's right. My Olympic aspirations have cost money, time and a marriage. The athletes will fight back. The battle is not over.

Moscow deserved the pleasure of hosting the 1980 Summer Olympics, said Blackie Sherrod of the Dallas Times-Herald (April 23, p. 1F).

Moscow, he said, deserved the honor of the financial burden, the strife that builds in the citizens and the same stigmas other Olympic host cities have been stuck

with.

In "Olympic stigma likely to stick on Moscow," Sherrod wrote about murder in Munich, taxation, strikes and delays in Montreal, price hikes and transportation problems in Lake Placid and cultural shocks in Tokyo and Mexico City.

Moscow deserved all these honors, said Sherrod.

The last of the April columns appeared in the Des Moines Register/Tribune (April 6, p. 1C). Robert Jewett and John S. Lawrence teamed up to write "U.S. Shows Naivete in Olympic Boycott." The column dealt with the involvement of government in a sporting matter.

Jewett and Lawrence wrote neither for nor against the boycott, only in judgment of it. They said they could not question the boycott or the motives behind it, just the harm being done to the American athletes and the American image.

April ended with the showers of tears and the end of an Olympic hope. Robert J. Kane summed up the boycott vote, by saying:

I am satisfied it was a completely right decision, while feeling desperately sorry for the athletes who have been hurt by it. They believed there was another way to demonstrate their disapproval, by not going to the ceremonies, so it is unfair, it is a slur, to call them unpatriotic. 7

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<sup>7</sup>Moore, "The Decision: No Go On Moscow," Sports Illustrated, pp. 30-33.



## Countries That Won't Send A Team to Olympics

Forty-five countries have indicated that for one reason or another they will stay away from the Summer Olympic Games in Moscow. The Games are scheduled to begin on July 19.

Argentina	Haiti	Philippines
Albania	Honduras	Qatar
Antigua	Iran	Saudi Arabia
Bahrain	Kenya	Singapore
Bermuda	Liberia	Somalia
Bolivia	Liechtenstein	South Korea
Canada	Malawi	Sudan
Central Africa	Malaysia	Taiwan
Chad	Mauritius	Thailand
China	Monaco	Uganda
Chile	Nicaragua	United States
Ecuador	Norway	Uruguay
Egypt	Pakistan	West Germany
Fiji	Papua New Guinea	Virgin Islands
Gambia	Paraguay	Zaire

## Countries That Will Send A Team to Olympics

Forty countries have indicated that they will send a team to the Summer Olympic Games. Olympic committees must inform the Soviet hosts by May 24 of their intentions.

Algeria	Greece	Romania
Austria	Guatemala	San Marino
Brazil	Hungary	Soviet Union
Britain	Iraq	Sweden
Bulgaria	India	Switzerland
Costa Rica	Ireland	Syria
Cuba	Kuwait	Tanzania
Cyprus	Libya	Venezuela
Czechoslovakia	Mexico	Yugoslavia
Denmark	New Zealand	Zimbabwe
East Germany	Panama	
El Salvador	Peru	
Ethiopia	Poland	
Finland	Portugal	
France	Puerto Rico	

MAY and JUNE

Miami Herald, May 18, 1980.

## V. MAY and JUNE

Boycott history was pretty well written by the end of April. Canada and West Germany had decided to support the United States. So had Japan and China. The list of those going and those staying was becoming clearer by May and June.

Forty-five countries had indicated that for any number of reasons they would be staying away from the 1980 Summer Olympics which were scheduled to begin July 19.

On the other hand, forty nations indicated that they would be entering a team to compete in Moscow. The deadline to enter a team was May 24.<sup>1</sup>

It appeared that the Games would not be the "grandiose showcase" as earlier predicted. The United States did not lack support of some of its allies.

During late May and early June the country count became final. The total: 58 countries decided to remain at home.

European nations, on the whole, did not support the boycott. President Carter asked nineteen nations to support him. Seventeen of them rejected the boycott proposal. Of those, all but four did confirm that they would

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<sup>1</sup>"The Moscow Games--Who's Going, Who Isn't," Miami Herald, May 18, 1980, p. 1F.



not participate in the opening ceremonies, or the closing ceremonies. The Miami Herald (June 29, p. 8C), reported:

In an effort to remove all semblance of politics from the Olympic Games, Western European nations sending teams to Moscow next month decided Saturday not to attend the opening and closing ceremonies and to shun all national identification.

Only one column was published in May and June. That column, "Boycott Puts Torch to Olympic Fields," was in the Miami Herald (pp. 1C and 8C). In it Michael Janofsky opened by saying:

By now most of the whimpering is over. Athletes from the United States and 57 other nations have resigned themselves to a summer without Olympics, leaving Moscow and the XXII Games with little more than a fancy backyard bar-be-que tournament.

Janofsky's column dealt mainly with who would not be in Moscow and who would not receive medals. He wrote about people who would have been shoo-ins and those who would now win because of the boycott.

Olympic swimming would have belonged to the United States, at least in the men's division, he said. In the 1976 Games in Montreal, American men won twelve of the thirteen possible gold medals. They were picked to repeat the performance. The U.S. women were also rated highly in the world and stood to bring home much of the Olympic gold.

In diving, Greg Louganis of the United States was the unanimous choice for first in the three-meter and platform events.

Janofsky said a survey by Track and Field News revealed that 39 percent of the men ranked in the top ten in the world in 1979 would not be in Moscow in 1980. The United States athletes in track and field events were picked to do well, especially Edwin Moses and Renaldo Nehemiah.

In gymnastics, without the United States and Japanese teams, the Soviets would dominate. U.S.'s Kurt Thomas was the one who could bring the first Olympic gold in gymnastics to the United States.

Janofsky said that archery, equestrian events and wrestling would become lesser competitions without the boycotting countries. Field Hockey lost nine of the twelve men's teams. In women's field hockey, only the Soviet team remained to play.

Janofsky said: "What remains is an Olympic Games with all the impact of a semifinal, all the intrigue of Mike Schmidt hitting a home run off a minor-league pitcher."

The column then looked at the events and the probable winners. By reading the field of competitors it was easy to see that without the boycotting nations, the Games were destined to be less than exciting.

JULY and AUGUST

Miami Herald, January

20, 1980.



## VI. JULY and AUGUST

The final chapter in boycott history began July 19. The XXII Summer Olympic Games opened in Moscow, and the United States and fifty-seven other nations were not there. The opening ceremonies lacked the customary luster and the air of excitement. The NBC cameras were not there to show the U.S. who was playing and who was winning. There would not be evenings of sports coverage to watch.

Sports columns and sports coverage of the Games were dwindling. Americans just didn't seem to care whether a Soviet or a Romanian gymnast won. The only races that were important were the 800- and 1500-meter races in track, where Britain's Coe and Overt were neck and neck.

On July 13 Bob Rubin of the Miami Herald wrote an article headed "Athletes Right On Boycott," (p. 1F).

Apparently worried about what citizens might learn from western visitors, the Soviet government has banned its own people from entering Moscow during the upcoming Olympic Games. Residents of Moscow are being warned to avoid contact with westerners with horror stories about lurking CIA agents. Soldiers and police crowd the streets. Such is this glorious triumph of socialism.

Rubin said that Presidnet Carter should hold a giant party at the White House on the opening day of the Olympics. The guests should be the U.S. athletes who had given up a

lifetime dream over a matter of principle. He also said Carter should invite the courageous athletes of the foreign countries who chose to support the United States in this boycott. Rubin said the true heroine of the 1980 Summer Games was not a U.S. swimmer or gymnast, a Canadian runner or a West German basketball player. The real heroine was Tracy Wickham. Australia sent its team, but swimmer Wickham, world record holder in the 400- and 800-meter freestyle events chose to stay at home. He wrote:

What does the boycott accomplish, opponents ask? Not one fewer Afghan will be butchered as a result. Perhaps not, but by refusing to play games with murderers, Americans can enjoy the clear conscience that comes from having done the right thing, not the expedient.

The remainder of the July columns came from Blackie Sherrod of the Dallas Times-Herald. He wrote three columns during July.

The first of these, "Writer doesn't see red over Olympic boycott," was published on July 14 (p. 1F). Sherrod wrote:

Even at the risk of forfeiting journalistic history, it is probably just as well that the 1980 Olympics begin this week without some of us pressbox crusties. Personally I had rather be right here, creating exotic omelettes on the sidewalk, than participating in The Great Moscow Adventure.

Sherrod talked about traveling to foreign countries

to cover sporting events. He said he did not like going to a country where a passport was necessary and where that same passport could be lost.

The column continued with talk about Russian power at Lake Placid. Power consisting of one large press room, private, while all other journalists shared a cramped room; their own luxury quarters; their ability to withstand the cold and lastly, an incident involving the hijacking of a bus going to Wilmington, N.Y.

The Soviet delegation, it seems, had taken the van away from a freezing group of reporters, right before their eyes. In the group of frozen correspondents were two Americans. The Soviets also demanded a bus to take them to all the stops, shops and hot-spots. Sherrod said: "Mind you, this was in our country. This week, they have the home court advantage. It says right here they are welcome to it."

The second Sherrod column, "Sports heroes don't have to speak English," appeared July 25 (p. 1F). "In our World of Perspiring Arts, the belief not only is America First, but America Second and Third and Also Ran," he said.

Sherrod wrote of heroes from other countries and of

Americans' refusal to believe that anyone foreign could be good at anything.

He cited the challenge Isao Aoki made to Jack Nicklaus, both professional golfers, but only one American. How could a guy who "didn't even spika da inglash" ever challenge the Golden Bear at the U.S. Open?, he asked.

He said we know the name of Valery Borzov because he won the 100-meter race in Munich. He won, we say, because our sprinter misread the schedule and was late.

We know Vassili Alexyev because we see the rather large figure on television at all the sports events for weightlifters. He looks like, said Sherrod, every New York cab driver you've ever seen.

Television is the key to recognition, said Sherrod. Television gave us Olga Korbut and Nelli Kim and Nadia Comeneci. But television is the only reason they are accepted in the U.S. as "not too foreign."

"Why, the biggest news out of Moscow this week, to Americans anyway, was Ms. Comeneci falling on her Romanian tokus," he said. "Had ABC been privy to this action, Jim McKay would have broken down, on camera."

The last Sherrod column appeared July 31: "Soviets get bounced out of their own show."

The column dealt with the Russian defeat in basketball. The Russians had been the team to beat, because the U.S. would not field a team. Everyone considered the Soviets a shoo-in for a gold medal, everyone, that is, except Yugoslavia.

Yugoslavia won the gold. Italy the silver. For the Rusksies to have to accept the bronze in front of the home folks must have been terribly embarrassing. The consequences, if we are to believe the booger bear stories, could be even more serious than embarrassment.

August brought the end of the Olympic Games. The medals were passed out and the teams headed home. The boycott was over. The Soviets were not out of Afghanistan, but the absence of the United States and the other boycotting nations was felt. The Games were just not the same.

The only August column published was in the Miami Herald. Bob Rubin published "It's Time to Say 'Nyet' to Olympics," August 5, 1980, (p. 9D).

Rubin's column questioned the amateur athletes of America competing against the professionals from Russian and East German teams. He said no one cared that the Olympics were over, and no one cared how many medals the Soviet pros had won. What was important, he said, was whether it would be worthwhile to resume competition four



years from now.

Rubin talked about the paid athletes of the Communist bloc countries and the amateur athletes of America, who would always come in a close third.

Rubin questioned the feeling of some athletes that the U.S. should get into the "jock biz." He said he did not oppose pro athletes competing in the Olympics, if their salary was earned in other ways than as an additional tax on his salary. The important question was, he said:

Which brings us the subject of the 1984 Games in Los Angeles. Do you want to spend billions of dollars to provide facilities as they pile up medals against our hopelessly outclassed amateurs? I say nyet.

Yes, the Games were over and the question was, "What will happen in 1984?"

## CONCLUSION

As the author of this thesis and a long-time lover of sports I wish I could say, "The end. They all lived happily ever after." I can't do so.

The story of the 1980 Olympic boycott is now in the past. It was a sad story for the athletes who were forced to give up their dreams. It was a costly one for the American corporations that invested do much money in the Games. It was a triumphant story for the Carter administration, which got its way. It was a pointless one for the teams that competed anyway.

To me the story was all of these. I had mixed emotions in January when Carter announced the boycott. I felt sorry for the athletes, but I still felt proud of the government. The administration had taken a stand and the athletes had lost their lifelong dreams.

Come February, I was sure the administration would change its position. I felt the administration would be wishy-washy and not remain sure of itself. I thought maybe the athletes had a chance, after all.

I couldn't believe the government would stick to its guns and make the boycott official.

I was wrong. The U.S.O.C. angered me with the stalling tactics it took.

March rolled around and I hoped President Carter would listen to the pleas of the athletes. He didn't, and the boycott continued as scheduled.

The vote in April by the U.S.O.C. House of Delegates sealed the fate of the athletes and the country.

I was pleased as nations began to vote to support us. If we weren't going, it was nice to have company at home with us. I decided that if the President and the U.S.O.C. had made the decision to boycott, the best move was for the American people to stand behind them 100 percent.

I was sorry for the athletes and their broken dreams, but I felt a unified boycott and a unified image would make this country strong in the action.

This thesis told the story as it appeared in some of the papers of America. The sports columns studied here related many different opinions, views and options concerning the boycott.

The columnist of January ran almost entirely pro-boycott, Maury White of the Des Moines Register being the only anti-boycott advocate. It seemed to be the concensus decision of the sports writers I studied that the U.S. should be

strong and show that strength by the boycott. They said the athletes would suffer, but that our national status must reign above our sports.

As the months between the boycott announcement and the Games' beginning decreased so did the number of columns being written. The American people and the sports writers did not seem extremely interested in an Olympics they were not attending.

The columns that appeared still remained in favor of the boycott. Some offered solutions, as "Olympicworld" and the event changes of Jim Murray. Some of the columns were written by athletes, former Olympians and one by a Russian gymnast. The columns were all very different.

April's columns dealt mainly with the U.S.O.C. vote, the athletes' feelings and the reaction of others to the U.S. boycott. Columnists still seemed to believe that the U.S. had made the right decision. There were, in fact, no real anti-boycott columns written after the April 14 U.S.O.C. vote. The only columns written in a negative light were those by athletes, written against the use of government "brass knuckles."

Between May and August there were only seven columns published in the papers I was studying. It was as if

people didn't want to think about the Olympics at all. After all, television coverage was limited to newsclips on the 10 p.m. news and the papers published only results.

The sports columnists on the whole wrote in favor of the Carter administration and its actions. They wrote of patriotism, national image and the athletes' dreams. They wrote about history and political involvement. The columnists told a story which will not soon be forgotten.

The boycott was over. The troops did not move out of Afghanistan and the war did not stop.

The boycott did, however, picture the United States as a nation set on its convictions. We said we were protesting Soviet aggression and we stood up for our beliefs. I was proud.

The Olympics without the Americans and boycotting nations were not the same. There were no media heroes like Nadia or Olga. There would be no pictures in our minds of a Bruce Jenner waving an American flag. It is as if the Olympic Games did not really happen.

I am glad to know that they did happen, without the United States, and that we made the difference.

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