

# THE POLITICAL IMPACT ON THE OLYMPIC GAMES BETWEEN 1936 AND 1984

**Raul-Marian TODOR\***

“Lucian Blaga” University of Sibiu

Str. Dr. I. Rațiu, Nr.5-7, Sibiu, tolor\_raul@yahoo.com

**Abstract:** The OG between 1936 and 1984 were influenced and affected by a series of problems which created tensions in the international politics: racial discrimination against Jews and black people (Afro- Americans), the soviet troops' invasion in Hungary and Afghanistan, the Suez crisis, Arabian-Israeli conflict. These events led in the best case scenario at boycotting the OG (by not participating) or of the national governments (The Black Power greeting, avoiding the use of the national symbol on the flag and replacing the logo of the National Olympic Committee), but there were also bloody episodes (the repression of students in Mexico, the attack in Munich) which left an irretrievable negative mark.

**Key words:** Olympic Games, boycott, attempt, propaganda, racism, rights.

\* \* \* \* \*

## INTRODUCTION/ BACKGROUND

The period between 1936 and 1984 was characterized by an interference between the political sphere and the Olympic movement, especially noticeable after the beginning of the Cold War. In this context, the IOC was forced to adopt a fair and consistent set of solutions to the major problems related to the recognition of national identity (the problem of the two Germanys and the two Chinas) against violation of human rights and international crises.

After 1930, a series of bad signs were predicting a deep crisis in the international political area. At the 29th session of IOC, kept in Barcelona in 1931, the votes for the 1936 Olympic Games were: 43 for Berlin and only 16 for Barcelona. The most controversial Modern Olympic Games in the history of the Olympic Games, were, with no doubt, in Germany, the international boycott was between 1933 and 1935. The historiography debated these games from two points of view: in what manner the Games were a triumph of the Nazi propaganda or they were an opportunity for Jesse Owens and other black athletes to counter the German racial doctrines. Beyond Adolf Hitler's enthusiasm related to the Olympic Games, seen like a good opportunity for the propaganda, the President of IOC, Baillet-Latour was concerned about the discrepancy between the racist principles and the Olympic Games principles, a problem discussed in the next meeting in Vienne, in June 1933. On this occasion, three of the German members of the IOC, Lewald, Karl Ritter von Halt and Adolf Mecklenburg were questioned about the participation of the Jews to the Olympic Games, especially the German ones from the Olympic lot. They managed to obtain some ambiguous promises from the German Government (Guttmann A., 2006, 65sq).

At the American Olympic Committee Convention (AOC) in November 22, 1933, Gustav Kirby pleaded for an American boycott, if the German Jews were not allowed to train and to participate to the Olympic Games in 1936. Although Hans von Tschammer declared that there was no official decree to eliminate the Jews from the sports, AOC chief, (Guttmann A., 2006, 67), showed his dissatisfaction, underlining the German propaganda cunning, showing that they were not going to respect the arrangements made at the IOC meeting in Vienne, an opinion shared by Lord Aberdare too, the Great Britain official. Therefore, in IOC meeting in Athens (May 15, 1934), it was officially requested a point of view regarding the assumed arrangements. Brundage was sent to evaluate the situation, having meetings with friends and German officials, but also with Jews, the last ones monitored by the authorities. Following this investigation, Brundage sustained the acceptance of the invitation, a fact confirmed by his vote. But AAU (Amateur Athletes Union of USA) was precautious, and at the annual

---

\* Raul-Marian Todor

convention decided to cancel the decision of accepting the invitation. In fact, until the middle of 1935 there was a massive boycott in Canada, France and Great Britain.

The pro and against boycott campaign grew after the publication of Brundage's article called "Fair play for the American athletes" (16 pages), in which he pleaded for the differentiation of the two spheres – politics and sports – and the athletes were not to involve in the problems between Jews and Germans. Avery Brundage believed that behind every pro boycott call was a Jew or a person who was convinced about their propaganda. Leading the boycott were American Jews, Roman-Catholics, but also political personalities like the Governor of Massachusetts, James Curley and the Governor of New York, Alfred Smith or the Catholic Magazine "Commonweal".

Judge Jeremiah T. Mahoney, the AAU president, wrote himself a pamphlet: "Germany had broken the Olympic Code", in which he mentioned the expulsion of Jews from the sport clubs, the interdiction to participate with German athletes (Guttmann A., 2006, 68). In the summer of 1935, the survey made by Gallup Poll showed that 43% of Americans are pro USA boycott. Because of the insurances made by the Germans, Brundage considered the opposition as a conspiracy of Jews and communists. Mahoney's team was completed by an outstanding ally, Ernest Lee Jahncke, member of IOC, who wrote an open letter to Baillet-Latour, published in New York Times (November 7, 1935). Baillet asked Jahncke to resign, but he refused. Afterwards, he was excluded from the next meeting of IOC, in his place being chosen Avery Brundage. Even if it failed, the boycott campaign was not meaningless, because Jew athletes refused to participate with their lot. Furthermore, Germany's summer team did not include Jew athletes (Guttmann A., 2006, 67sq).

During the 11th Olympic Games in Germany (1936), The National Socialist regime led by Adolf Hitler, sought to control and to manipulate the competition according to the Nazi interests. In that moment, when the Olympic flame was lit up on the German stadium, the Nazi party was in climax. In USA, there were controversies regarding the participation to the competition. The faction opposing the participation considered that this thing meant, in fact, sustaining the "bad" German regime (Levinson D., Christensen K., 1999, 280).

Hitler wanted to impress the world: the stadium projected by Werner March has cost 77 million German marks and was able to host 100.000 persons; the outside pool had 18.000 seats; there were statues made by Arno Brecker and Josef Wackerle; the Olympic village had more than 100 buildings and kitchens; and there was a giant bell with an inscription: *Ich rufe die Jugend der Welt* (I call the youth of the world). The Greek Spiridon Louys, the winner of the first marathon in 1896, was invited in Berlin, arriving with an olive tree branch. In spite of that, the star of the Olympic Games was Jesse Owens, an African-American athlete, who had a world record at 100 m and an Olympic record at 200 m. And more athletes had proven the contrary of Aryan doctrine: Sohn Kee-Kung (Kitei Son), Ralph Metcalfe and Ibolya Czák (Guttmann A., 2006, 70sq).

The Nazi representatives tried to offer something spectacular to reflect the order, power and efficiency. Because of the Nazi doctrine, other Jew or black athletes from USA were quite reluctant regarding their participation (Crego R., 2003, 170).

After beginning of WW II in 1939, the summer and winter Olympic Games which were supposed to take place in Tokyo and Sapporo (Japan), were canceled. The same fate had the summer OG in 1944, which were supposed to take place in Helsinki (Levinson D., Christensen K., 1999, 280).

The first boycott in OG took place in 1956 in Melbourne because of a series of events which affected the international politics: the Franco-Britannic intervention in the area of Suez (October-November 1956) after the ultimatum addressed to Israel and Egypt, the invasion of Hungary by the soviet troops, etc.

The nationalization of the Suez Canal by Nasser (26 July 1956) was endangering the economic interests of France and Great Britain. Although the Convention of Constantinople (1888) stipulated the crossing of the Canal for any ship in peacetime or war, Nasser banned the crossing of Israeli ships and those carrying goods to Israel. After the invasion of the Sinai Peninsula (29 to 30 October 1956) by Israeli troops, France and Britain sent an ultimatum demanding the end of Israeli-Egyptian hostilities and the withdrawal of troops at 16 km from the Canal (Duroselle J.-B., Kaspi A., 2006, 115-118). The stakes of this international crisis represented the free movement of ships through the Suez Canal.

The disagreements between political circles in Hungary led to the resignation and replacement of Rákosi as prime Secretary by Ernő Gerő, seconded by János Kádár. The demonstration of sympathy for Hungarian students for the coup in Poland has turned into an armed confrontation in which the troops of General Leo Maleter passed on the side of the demonstrators (23-24 October 1956). In this situation, Imre Nagy was designed Chairman of the Board, but the Soviet troops let the impression that they did it on their request. After seven days of fighting, the protesters managed to impose a series of claims and the Soviet troops withdrew from Hungary (Duroselle J., B., A. Kaspi, 2006 91sq).

If Libya, Lebanon and Iraq protested against the Suez crisis, other nations (Spain, Nederland and Suede) had, as a motive, the soviet troop entry in Hungary. The Republic of China did not participate to the Olympic Games (Ştirbu C., 2006, 66). A series of events held between 1960 and 1980 shadowed the competitions, and therefore the Olympic Games.

At the IOC Session in Baden Baden (October 16 to 20, 1963), Mexico City was selected to host the 19th Olympic Games (Brewster C., Brewster K., 2006, 104). In 1968, during the OG in Mexico, the African athletes had a remarkable performance: Kipchoge Keino, Naftali Temu, Amos Biwott (Kenya), Mamo Wolde (Ethiopia) and Mahomed Gammoudi (Tunisia).

In a country with a poor economy and lack of social projects and programs, the huge costs of OG led to controversies in society, especially among students and radical politicians. One week after the start of OG, the situation degenerated leading to violent confrontations between police and students. The culminating point was the Tlatelolco massacre, when 250 students were killed, according to the numbers provided by the authorities and opposition, an incident that had a huge national and international impact.

Another incident, before the OG debut, had as the main factor, Harry Edwards, an American activist, a defender of the civil rights, who tried to determine the black athletes to join him to boycott the competition. His efforts to get the international politics attention regarding the civil rights and the socio-economic situation of the black population did not have the expected results, because of their unanimous support (Levinson D., Christensen K., 1999, 281).

The Afro-American athletes boycotted the USA lot in sign of dissatisfaction for the bad social-economic conditions of the black population. Even if the boycott didn't happen, the athletes Tommy Smith and Jon Carlos, gold and bronze medalists in the 200 m flat, showed their dissatisfaction for the American government during the national hymn, by bowing their head and lifting up their fists toward the sky: The "Black Power" greeting (Crego R., 2003, 170; Ştirbu C., 2006, 62sq).

The Middle East was another area where the postwar conflict between East and West was conducted through interposed countries. The Arab and Israeli dispute has experienced several episodes after 1948, among which intersected also the extremist Palestinian wing (Black September) which committed the massacre in Munich and other air piracy acts.

One of the most serious, most infamous and mourning incident in OG history is the one which took place in Munich (Ştirbu C., 2006, 64; Bere C-tin, 2008, 148; Ackermann et alii 2008, 326; Aust St., 2011, 306sq; Schmidt D. A., 1974, 187), when a Palestinian commando broke into the Olympic village and took hostages the Israel's wrestling team. In exchange for the wrestling team, the terrorist asked the release of 200 Palestinian prisoners held in prisons in Israel (Levinson D., Christensen K., 1999, 282).

Among hostages there were athletes and coaches, some of them killed in the rooms of the Olympic village, but most of them died in the gunfight between "Black September" group and the German special troops, on the Fürstenfeldbruck airport, near Munich.

The Jewish lot members were: Mark Slavin (fighter), Eliezer Halfin (fighter), David Mark Berger (weightlifter), Zeev Friedman (weightlifter), Yossef Romano (weightlifter), Andre Spitzer (fencing coach), Moshe Weinberg (fighting coach), Amitzur Shapira (coach), Yossef Gutfreund (fight arbiter), Yacov Springer (arbiter/ judge for weightlifting), and Kehat Shorr (Mallon B., Heijmans J., 2011, 259).

By "Law of return" (1950), the Israeli law permitted the return in Israel of all the Jews outside the country and the confirmation of their citizenship. In that moment, an important part of the Jewish "diaspora" returns to Israel. Among the emigrants were some of the members of the Jewish lot killed by the terrorists. David Mark Berger, the son of a doctor, grew up in Cleveland (Ohio), in the Shaker

Heights suburbs. He studied and got licensed in law at Tulane, Louisiana and Colombia, New York (Marcovitz H., 2002, 38). He arrives in Israel, for the first time, in 1969, representing the USA lot at Macabee Games, where he wins the gold medal for the middleweight category. A year later, invoking the law of 1950, he returns in the country and joins the Israeli weightlifters' lot. Mark Slavin emigrated from USSR a few months before the Olympic Games, and became the favorite of Coach Moshe Weinberg, who named him "Little Mark". Eliezer Halfin also emigrated from USSR in 1968 and established in Tel Aviv, where he worked as a mechanic at a garage.

Weightlifter Zeev Friedman left Poland in 1960 and worked as a sport teacher in one of the suburbs of Haifa. Yossef Romano was born in Libya and emigrated in Israel, becoming a member of the Olympic lot. He had to give up the competition, because of his injured leg, that was scheduled to be operated at his return in the country.

The coach of the team, Amitzur Shapira was a sport teacher in Israel, and when the terrorist attack begun, he accompanied Esther Shahamorov at the semifinals. Kehat Shorr, the shooting coach, emigrated from Romania and worked in Israel inside the Ministry of Defense within a civil agency which supervised the army.

In 1964, Andre Spitzer, the fencing coach, also emigrated from Romania to Israel. The weightlifting coach, Yacov Springer, emigrated in Israel from Poland and tough sports in a school near Tel Aviv. The wrestling coach, Yossef Gutfreund was a merchant in Jerusalem (Marcovitz H., 2002, 39sq).

After failing the hijacking of the Sabena Airlines airplane, in May 1972, when the members of "Black September" group involved were captured or killed on the Tel Aviv airport, the group planned another strike meant to release the Palestinian prisoners from the Israel's prisons.

The refuse of the IOC for the Palestinian team to participate to OG in Munich, forced three of the group members, Abu Daoud, Fakhri al Umari and Abu Yiad, to plan in Rome (August 15, 1972), the kidnapping of the Hebrew athletes. The leader of the commando operation was Luttfif Afif („Issa"), raised and educated in Germany, helped by Yusuf Nazzal („Tony"), plus other six members recruited from the refugee camps in the Middle East. Before the start of the OG, the leaders of the commando team have infiltrated as workers in the Olympic village and planned the capture operation.

The Jewish lot was accommodated in four apartments on 31 Connolly Street, named after the American gold medalist athlete, James B. Connolly (Marcovitz H., 2002, 30sq). Based on the information from the Israel's Secret Services, behind this mission was Hassan Salameh (Abu Hassan), who, in 1970 supervised the training of the terrorist group called "Baader-Meinhof". The echo of this action, considered by Ulrike Meinhof as exemplary, is found in the work written in Koln, in Ossendorf prison, called "The Black September Action in Munich: Regarding the Strategy for Anti-imperialist Struggle" (Aust St., 2011, 307).

At 4 a.m. on September 5th, the members of the organization disguised in sport costumes and with weapons hidden in sport bags, have infiltrated in the Olympic village. They escalated the fences and mixed among a group of athletes returning from a party, fact considered unusual by the six German workers in the area. A half hour later, they entered the building no. 31, where the athletes stayed in 4 apartments from the total of 24, and in the rest of the apartments were accommodated athletes from Hong Kong and Uruguay. One of the terrorist, Jamal Al-Gashei, was left to supervise the lobby (Marcovitz H., 2002, 33sq).

In the first apartment were Amitzur Shapira, Kehat Shorr, Andre Spitzer, Tuvia Sokolovsky, Yacov Springer and Yossef Gutfreund. Seeing the imminent danger, Gutfreund tried to alert his colleagues (Havatistalku! / Take cover boys!). Except Sokolovsky, who managed to escape on the window, six Hebrew athletes were captured by the terrorists. Weinberg was hurt during his attempt to fight back Issa and then taken to show them where his other colleagues are. In front of the next apartment, Weinberg saved other 5 athletes, explaining the terrorists that there were the members of the Uruguay lot. In the third apartment with three bedrooms, were three Hebrew fighters and three weightlifters, whose personality was known by Weinberg since he trained them. A while ago, during a competition in Athens, they confronted a group of Arab sailors, but they were outnumbered.

The incident in Greece ended with the injury of the Arab sailors by the Jews. With the help of some keys, the terrorists entered the apartment, and Weinberg, who was badly bleeding, couldn't alert his colleagues.

In the first bedroom there were the weightlifters Yossef Romano and Zeev Friedman, in the second one, the weightlifter David Berger and the wrestler Gad Tsabari and in the last one, the fighters Mark Slavin and Eliezer Halfin. While Tsabari was trying to escape, Weinberg chooses to fight back losing his life (Marcovitz H., 2002, 35-38).

The members of this Palestinian commando didn't consider themselves terrorists, but „fedaini”(fighters for freedom) and even more, they weren't all of them Moslems. For instance, Issa was born in The Saint Town of Nazareth from a Christian father and a Jewish mother. With the help of his father, a successful businessman, Issa could study civil engineering in Germany (1958). From 1966, he entered in Al Fatah-The Army Organization of Palestine Liberation, and in 1970 fought against the armies of King Hussein in Jordan. After the war he returned to Germany where he got married. He had three brothers, all of them members of “Black September” Group, and two of them ended up in Israelis' detention. Because of the noise made by the gunshots fired after Tsabari and Weinberg, the commando gave up the capture of the other members of Israeli team. Five of the athletes captured in the lobby were taken to the apartment where the other five were, moment when Romano gave up his crutches and fought back, being killed. The strength of Israeli athletes endangered the mission, fact that was acknowledged even by Jamal Al-Gashei (Marcovitz H., 2002, 43sq).

The nine hostages still alive were bounded in the bedroom. At 4:50 a.m., the first German policeman arrived at place, a woman who was heading to work when she heard the gunshots, alerting the security office of the Olympic village. Arriving next to the building, she noticed a door that was opened for a few seconds, and saw an armed terrorist wearing a ski mask. Manfred Schreiber, the chief of Munich Police, was alerted at 5 a.m. He gave immediately the first orders to enter the device, informing Bruno Merck, the Bavarian official that was supervising the police. The events were brought to the attention of the German chancellor, Willie Brandt and the Israel's government represented by Prime Minister, Golda Meir (Marcovitz H., 2002, 49sq).

At 5:10 a.m., a police officer having his hands up came in front of the building, waiting for the requirements of the attackers, written on two pieces of paper and thrown out the window from the second floor. They asked the release of 234 Palestinian captives from the Israeli prisons and of two German terrorists, Andreas Baader and Ulrike Meinhof, the leaders of a German gang which had links with the „Black September” group.

The deadline for the requirements established by the terrorists was 9 a.m.; otherwise, Germany and Israel are warned with the execution of the hostages. Moshe Weinberg's body was thrown out the window, the German authorities not knowing about the second dead man, Yossef Romano. The chief of police decided to open a communication channel with the terrorists in order to solve the crisis, and instructed a 42 years old policewoman (Marcovitz H., 2002, 50sq), Annaliese Graes with this job. After the negotiations, Issa accepted an extension of the grace period for the Israeli authorities until lunch.

If during the discussions between the two governments, the German chancellor expressed his opinion for some of the concessions made to calm the spirits, the Israeli premier remained firm, refusing the negotiation and the giving in to the terrorists' blackmail. At 9 a.m., Yusuf Nazzal threw out for the German policewoman another piece of paper with another request: the agreement of the Federal Republic of Germany to transfer the Israeli prisoners in any situation established by the members of the commando, providing three airplanes that will takeoff one after the other to locations established by the attackers. The ultimatum expired in three hours, and any attempt to sabotage the action, will lead to the killing of the hostages, the whole blame being of R.F.G. (Marcovitz H., 2002, 55sq).

The Interior Minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher took over the negotiations with Issa, showing that the Germans would pay for releasing the hostages, even giving himself and other German officials to be hostages in exchange of the Israeli lot, thing that was refused by the commando leader. The German official convinced Issa to allow him to make a short visit to the hostages, in order to ensure that they are alive, being a good occasion to extend the ultimatum (Marcovitz H., 2002, 60sq). Golda

Meir and the members of Israeli cabinet did not accept the terrorist requirements, but took into consideration the movement of a rescue team at Munich, led by the young commander Ehud Barak, think that was refused by the German chancellor, which emphasized the fact that, the Olympic Games' security is the responsibility of the German authorities. If Brandt and Genscher were hoping to defuse the crisis and to avoid any bloodshed, the new deadline established by the Palestinians was getting closer - 5 p.m.

Accompanied by other German officials, Genscher had a new discussion with Issa in which he told him that the Israeli government needs more time to release the prisoners. Issa accused them of lying and had a new demand: an airplane to transport the fedaini and the hostages to Cairo, extending the ultimatum until 7 o'clock, in the evening (Marcovitz H., 2002, 63sq).

Willie Brandt doesn't accept this demand, considering that the German government is responsible for the prisoners' fate. The Ministry of Interior's officials, listening to Genscher's description, give up the building assault and decide an attack on their way to the airport or even there, before boarding. Before 7 o'clock, Genscher announces Issa that he accepts the demands, but asks for the extension of the deadline, which will be accepted until 10 p.m. The fact that Issa suspected Genscher is proved by his bet on 20 German marks, that he will be attacked and he will lose his life. The German authorities' plan anticipated the opening of the fire by the snipers placed in the airport, at the moment of the landing of the two helicopters, the main target being Issa, followed by the surrender of the rest, otherwise they would be killed. Issa suspected an ambush at Fürstenfeldbruck in the moment of transferring the hostages from the helicopters into the airplane and informed the other Palestinians (Marcovitz H., 2002, 65sq).

They have chosen a transfer in groups, so, in case of an attack, they would be in control of other hostages. Before 10 o'clock, a bus driven by a volunteer driver, parked in the 31 building's garage, next to the entrance that led upstairs, and at 22:30, the hostages were embarked. In the moment when the bus reached outside the Olympic village, Issa inspected the helicopters.

The police already discovered, in the abandoned apartment, the second sportsman that was killed - Yossef Romano.

On the airfield, there was waiting a 727 Boeing borrowed from Lufthansa Airlines, and Issa announced the Germans that, he will examine it with another member of the commando. The plan was to kill the two of them when they would return to the helicopters, hoping for the surrender of the others. At the airport were trained five snipers, equal in number with the terrorists based on information given by Germans, which noticed only at 22:30 that they were eight. The snipers from the airport were not informed regarding this extremely important fact (Marcovitz H., 2002, 67sq).

Another plan that was abandoned by the authorities, consisted in disguising some of the policemen in 727 crew members, but the very narrow cabin would have been a deadly trap in a shootout with the terrorists. After the landing of the helicopters, 500 m near the plane, Issa and Tony left to inspect it, and the three members of the group went out next to the helicopters. The lack of the flight crew convinced Issa that it is a trap and got out running to the helicopters. At the midway of the distance, the snipers opened the fire wounding Tony and killing another terrorist, but followed the destroying of the reflectors leaving the battle field into the dark. Jamal Al-Gashei was shot in the hand, another terrorist in the chest and Issa survived fighting back from under a helicopter, and after an hour, the gunfire decreased in intensity (Marcovitz H., 2002, 69sq).

After midnight, four armored vehicles arrived and stand near the helicopters, a moment that hastened the hostages' tragedy. One of the terrorists shot inside the helicopter Halfin, Sprienger, Friedman and Berger, then jumped down and threw the grenade which produces the explosion of the aircraft.

Issa got out from under the helicopter and shot down by one of the snipers from the roof, and the terrorist that blew the helicopter up, was killed in the shootout.

Inside the second helicopter were killed by a terrorist the other five Israeli athletes: Gutfreund, Shorr, Slavin, Spitzer and Shapira. After taking down Khalid Jawad and another terrorist by the German snipers, the last three were captured. The shotguns ended on September 6th at 12:30 a.m. Two survivors were hidden in the burned helicopter's wreck and the third one, between the deceased's bodies (Marcovitz H., 2002, 70sq). The killing of the Israeli athletes was considered a tragedy for the

competition and the German government, and for Israel was an "open wound". After years, in his memories, the German chancellor, Brandt, highlighted the tragedy of this incident and also the grief that the international reputation of Germany was negatively affected, and the counter measures have failed. Including the giving the chancellor's son as a hostage next to other officials, proves that, the German authorities searched for all the possible ways to solve the crisis (Christopher Y., 2006, 118).

The Israel's respond (Schmidt D. A., 1974, 189) was extremely fast and was called: "The God's Anger Operation". During the September 8th 1972's afternoon, the Israeli's airplanes attacked El Hameh, a camp at the suburbs of Damask, where the general headquarters of Al Fatah was situated, the military organization of PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization). After a short time, a military official declared for the reporters: "I hope that the Fatah and Black September movement got the message".

In the same day, the Israeli forces attacked ten camps from Syria and Lebanon causing massive losses: 3 Syrian devices and 200 Palestinians. Eight days later, the Israeli tanks entered the south of Lebanon making a real force demonstration (Marcovitz H., 2002, 75). On September 6th 1972, on the Olympic stadium in Munich took place a religious service, at which 80.000 people attended (Marcovitz H., 2002, 66sq).

Four years later, at OG in Montreal (1976), a number of 22 (32) African nations, at which joined Hungary and Sweden, tried to stop the racial politics in South Africa. These nations boycotted the competition, as a protest towards New Zealand participation, considered guilty for the hosting the South-African rugby team (Ştirbu C., 2006, 67). After the Munich episode, the OG costs were much higher and a special attention was given to security (1 million dollars, plus 16.000 security agents). The rugby team (All-Blacks), had a match with the South African team, breaking a IOC interdiction against this country. The Africans complain was rejected under the motive that the rules apply only in case of Olympic Games and not in the case of rugby (Levinson D., Christensen K., 1999, 283; Crego R., 2003, 170).

The soviet invasion in Afghanistan (Duroselle J.-B., Kaspi, A., 2006, 268sq) represented another moment of international tension, which affected OG in Moscow (1980).

After removing Zahir Shah (July 17, 1973), the republic was established in Afghanistan led by Mohammad Daoud, which maintained stability through force. His government is overturned five years later by PDPA (The Popular Democratic Party from Afghanistan) headed by Taraki, which signs with U.S.S.R. a cooperation agreement, which allows the intervention of the last one. After Taraki's assassination (September 1979), the soviet troops (75.000-80.000 soldiers) invaded Afghanistan, installing a communist government. Until the withdrawal of the last soviet troops (February 1989), a number of 1 million Afghans lost their lives, while 5-6 million emigrated in Pakistan and Iran (Roux J.-P., 2007, 277; Vallaud D., 2008, 17; Ackermann et alii 2008, 1sq).

The American president, Jimmy Carter asked for immediate withdrawal of soviet troops and imposed severe economic sanctions: embargo on 17 million tons of wheat, a sever control on the high-tech trade, the restriction of soviet fishing in U.S.A territorial waters (January 20, 1980). In his televised speech, Carted declared among others that "...the aggression, without opposition, becomes a contagious disease". The Afghanistan invasion was perceived like a step to control the global oil supply. The Olympic committee was sent a notification and highlighted the fact that they won't sustain the presence of American Olympic team in Moscow. Carter asked the people to boycott the OG, except the case in which the soviet troops were to withdraw from Afghanistan on February 20, at 12:01am (Caraccioli et alia 2008, 57-60). In Jimmy Carter's perception, this intervention was "the most serious danger for peace since 1945" (McCauley M., 1999, 95).

The crisis from the Olympic world degenerated affecting OG, at which 84 countries announced their participation, while 36, among them China and Israel, decided to be pro boycott.

From the total of 143 countries, members of the Olympic movement, the rest did not take a decision until IOC's announcement from May 24, 1980. Afterwards, 10 of the participating countries did not attend the official opening ceremony, and participated to the competitions without displaying their national flag during the Olympic Games and on the boards carried with the occasion of the opening parade, only the names of National Olympic Committee were written (Ştirbu C., 2006, 85).

Then followed, in Colorado Springs, a briefings, meetings and discussions period between Carter Administration and the other 341 members of USA's OC with voting right, to decide the voting for or against OG in Moscow.

On April 12, 1980 at Antlers Plaza Hotel in Colorado Springs, in front of numerous sportsmen, officials, the vice-president Walter F. Mondale addressed himself to the delegates submitted by one of the most important votes from the Olympic movement of USA. In his speech, Mondale reviewed the measures taken by American administration, showing that, in ONU's General Meeting, a series of states joined the idea of unconditionally leaving Afghanistan by the soviet troops. The participation would represent a devaluation of the boycott and a complicity in the soviet propaganda. He spoke about everybody's sacrifice (farmers, IT companies that suffer because of the embargo, the workers from export industry, the sailors from the Indian Ocean, of American families which through their taxes support the defense budget, of Afghan athletes who instead of facing the Russians in Moscow, they face them in Kabul), and asks the sportsmen to make the same sacrifice. The Committee's vote was final: pro boycott.

"Above all, the decision that will be made today is not a choice between a sport problem and a national security problem. For the President and the Congress, the Olympic boycott is a genuine response element of America regarding the Afghanistan invasion... History seldom offers a second chance." (Caraccioli et alia 2008, 106-114) said Walter F. Mondale.

The opposition considered that the measures taken by Carter were inefficient and ineffective, and the OG boycott represented an opportunity for the sportsmen from the communists' countries to win numerous medals. More than that, the measures did not have to pass on over the businessmen, the farmers and American sportsmen (Bennett G. H., 2004, 239).

The OG in Los Angeles (1984), headed by U.S.S.R (17 countries), were boycotted by the Eastern bloc, as an answer to the American behavior four years earlier. In absence of Eastern sportsmen, the American Olympians won 174 medals. After this episode, IOC had a harsh attitude towards these kinds of events that had nothing to do with the Olympic spirit, so the protests and boycotts were more rarely and the effect was never the one expected (Crego R., 2003, 171). A violation of the Eastern boycott was only in the case of Romania (McCauley M., 1999, 96).

The political interests were defeated by the sportsmen who did not give up the years of training and the chance to become Olympians. Through the sportive boycotts are brought long-term detrimental in various fields, especially economic, for the organizing or participating countries. The negative print of that country cannot be erased, and some sensitive problems will influence the international public opinion (The massacre in Mexico generated by social and economic problems, the fight for civil rights of African-American people- "The Black Power" greeting, the apartheid politics, and so on).

## REFERENCES

- Ackermann M. E., Schroeder M. J., Terry J. J., Lo Upshur J.-H., Whitters M.F., (2008), Encyclopedia of world History. The Contemporary World 1950 to the present, volume VI, USA.
- Aust St., (2011), Complexul Baader-Meinhof, Editura Rao, București.
- Bennett G. H., (2004), Președinții americani 1945-2004, Editura Științelor Sociale și Politice, Editura Luceafărul, București.
- Bere Constantin, (2008), Fundamentalismul de la autoritarism la terorism. Autoritarismul- categorie psihologică esențială a gândirii de tip fundamentalist, Casa Editorială Demiurg, Iași.
- Brewster Claire, Brewster Keith, (2006), Mexico City 1968. Sombreros and Skyscrapers, în: Tomlison A., Christopher Y., National Identity and global sports events. Culture, politics and spectacle in the olympics and the football world cup, State University of New York Press, Albany, USA, p. 99-116.
- Caraccioli T., Caraccioli J., (2008), Boycott: Stolen Dreams of the 1980 Moscow Olympic Games, New Chapter Press, USA.
- Christopher Y., (2006), Munich 1972. Re-presenting the Nation, în: Tomlison A., Christopher Y., National Identity and global sports events. Culture, politics and spectacle in the olympics and the football world cup, State University of New York Press, Albany, USA, 2006, p. 117-132.
- Crego R, (2003), Sport and Games of the 18 th and 19 th centuries, Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut. London.
- Duroselle J.-B., Kaspi, A., (2006), Istoria relațiilor internaționale 1948-până în zilele noastre, vol. II, Editura Științelor Sociale și Politice, București.
- Guttmann A., (2006), Berlin 1936. The Most Controversial Olympics, în: National Identity and global sports events. Culture, politics and spectacle in the olympics and the football world cup, State University of New York Press, Albany, USA, 2006, p. 65-81.
- Levinson D, Christensen K (ed.), (1999), Encyclopedia of World Sport from ancient times to the present, Oxford University Press, New York, Oxford.

Mallon Bill, Heijmans Jeroen, Historical Dictionary of the Olympic Movement. Fourth Edition, The Scarecrow Press, Inc., Lanham-Toronto-Plymouth, 2011.

Marcovitz Hal, (2002), The Munich Olympics (Great disasters, reforms and ramifications), Chelsea House Publishers, Philadelphia, USA.

McCauley M., (2007), Rusia, America și războiul rece, 1949-1991, Editura Polirom, Iași, 1999.

Roux J.-P., (2007), Istoria războiului dintre islam și creștinătate (622-2007). Un conflict teribil, Editura Artemis, București.

Schmidt D. A., Armageddon in the Middle East, The New York Times Company, USA, 1974.

Știrbu C., (2006), Jocurile Olimpice mijloc de manipulare și represiune politică, Editura Performantica, Iași.

Vallaud D., (2008), Dicționar istoric, Editura Artemis, București.