

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SPORT AND POLITICS IN HUNGARY DURING THE 1980s AS REFLECTED IN THE SUMMER OLYMPIC GAMES

Ph.D thesis

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1. Introduction

Sport, due to its popularity in the twentieth century, was often used as a tool by political leaders, as it created an international meeting ground which was suitable for fighting political battles. Functionaries in the political sphere recognized the values inherent in sport, and they started to use them as strategic weapons, supporting different ideologies and solving international conflicts with them.

In founding of the International Olympic Committee, Pierre de Coubertin revived the series of ancient Olympic contests for the modern era, which, apart from being religious events in Greece, included aspects such as the ensuring of fair-play, noble fighting, and peace for the city-states. Even in ancient times the ideal of the Olympic truce could never entirely become reality, but Baron Coubertin believed that the modern Olympic Movement could be able to create at least, from time to time, an understanding and joy of the game through international contests. Nevertheless, the men of the twentieth century could not seize the opportunity, especially as their noble aims appeared on the eve of a thunderous historical era, and its warlike, social, ideological, economic, and political conflicts restricted the fulfillment of the Coubertin principles. New ideological trends of the twentieth century determined political processes as well.

In the cold war of the twentieth century, the impact of politics and ideology on sport was important, especially in regards to the Summer Games. Hungary was also deeply involved in Olympic-related political conflicts, thanks to its important Olympic history and its unfortunate position in the socialist block.

2. Aims

The main aim of this dissertation is to research the relationship between two important social sub-systems, sport and politics, during the 1980s in Hungary. As politics in the Eastern block dominated all organizations, as well as the activities and targets of sport and all other social sub-systems, during the Cold War sport became a truly important source of political capital.

My aim is to reveal the roles played by the Hungarian political elite, the ruling Hungarian Social Workers' Party (MSZMP), the Hungarian Olympic Committee, and the outstanding representatives of Hungarian sport, and to show how they were connected to the political questions of the 1980s via the Hungarian boycott of three separate Olympic Games. Important questions include what the autonomy of the Hungarian Olympic Committee (MOB)

meant in the 1980s; what kind of political role was played by the National Office of Physical Education and Sport (OTSH); when and to what extent had the MSZMP been activated in sport questions, what kind of role was played by the Foreign and Home Affairs Ministry; and what was the role of the Hungarian press in regards to the Olympics? Dilemmas about the politics of the 1980, 1984, and 1988 Summer Olympic Games not only occurred in Hungary, but in many other countries as well, so Hungarian decisions, resolutions, and actions can be compared with other foreign examples. Hence, I further aim to contrast Hungarian decision-making with that of Great Britain in 1980 and Romania in 1984. With the system changes of 1989-90 a historical era ended, but the process of change deeply influenced sport and the Olympic Movement, especially the Games in Albertville and Barcelona; the study of these processes are also included in the dissertation.

Due to the historical nature of my research, the hypotheses are about the finetuning of facts from the past, and I attempt to verify them on the basis of archival documents. The following hypotheses were formulated:

1. Documents from the Hungarian Olympic Committee and the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party confirm that in the 1980s, despite trying to fulfill the IOC Olympic Charter, the Hungarian Olympic Committee's decisions, were centrally directed, and the organization was used as an executor of Soviet political strategy.
2. Political questions regarding the Summer Olympic Games were present consecutively between 1979 and 1986 on the presidential sessions agendas of the National Office of Physical Education and Sport, and therefore the organization paid less attention to mass sport and sport-promotion questions that time.
3. Official documents confirm that the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party's Central and Political Committees in the 1980s adjusted their resolutions to the Soviet state party's will, and then forwarded them to the executive sport organization.
4. Regarding the political question of the 1980s' Summer Games, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs played an important role in conciliation with other nations.
5. In the 1980s, the Hungarian state security organizations had a special intelligence function concerning the Olympics, which was a part of the socialist state security policy.
6. The Hungarian press of the 1980s reflected formal Hungarian positions and interests related to the 1980, 1984, and 1988 Games.
7. The 1984 Olympic Games became a serious breakpoint for Hungarian sport, which could be seen in poorer performance results and negative changes in the athletes' attitudes.

3. Methods

Due to the historical aspects of my dissertation, I primarily used qualitative research methods. On the one hand, Hungarian processes were reconstructed on the basis of state and sport organisations' official archival documents analysis, the study of the decade's Hungarian sport and political press, and on personal interviews. The documents were collected from the National Archives of Hungary, the Lausanne Olympic Museum Archives, and the Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security.

As far as the political organizations are concerned, I found sixteen pertinent documents regarding the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party's Political Committee- half of these were minutes of the sessions from the 1980s, and the other half were reports and proposals of the Agitation and Propaganda Department. I also found ten meetings' minutes from the MSZMP Central Committee's Secretariat sessions dealing with sport and Olympic questions in the period between 1979 and 1988. Documents of the Foreign Affairs Ministry were mainly reports from Hungarian diplomatic corporations about international events and decisions related to the Games. Seven pieces of these were about the Moscow Games' boycott, eighteen about the Los Angeles-Games-related socialist discussions and Eastern boycott decisions, and 76 were dealt with Seoul.

Although from 1973 the National Office of Physical Education and Sport directed sport in Hungary, its Olympic-related activity seemed to be minimal. There were only fifteen documents dealing with the political influence of the Olympics in this period. On the other hand, the Hungarian Olympic Committee, according to its statutes, even during the 1980s, was trying to concentrate on its general duties; preparation for the games, communicating with organizers, and organizing athletes' trips to the contests. The documents regarding the 1980 Moscow Games were reserved in seven folders and two publications; presumably some papers had disappeared. The Hungarian Olympic Committee had richer documentation regarding the Los Angeles Games, with 126 different pieces of correspondence letters, contracts, minutes, etc., in total, despite having its preparation time cut in the middle of May due to the boycott decision. Documents related to the Seoul Games had already appeared before the Los Angeles Games: the archived papers were mainly letters and documents about the establishment of Hungarian-South-Korean relations.

The files of the Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security were concerned with another aspect of the Olympic question: the monitoring and intelligence activity of the state security bodies. Due to the strategic role of socialist sport, the state security, following

the Soviet model, had duties in all Olympiads. There were twenty state security reports in reference to the Moscow Games, and eighty and eight respectively regarding the Los Angeles Olympiad Seoul Olympics. Most of these documents were Daily Operative Information Reports, written by delegated secret agents regarding their observations and recommendations. Apart from these, from time to time there were some special Home Affairs Reports, and in more complicated cases Work Files and Special Event Files were opened.

The decade's sport and political written press gave me a picture of the public information system and the type of information directed at newspaper-readers. The question of the political Olympics appeared in the daily sport papers, *Népsport* and *Képes Sport*, and also quite often in Hungarian political newspapers and journals, guarded in the OSA Archives. As for the 1992 Olympic Games, I basically used English, German, Spanish, and Italian press articles to reconstruct the political challenges which affected the Games.

Furthermore, I conducted twenty-four personal interviews with sport leaders (nine pieces) and athletes (fifteen pieces) from the 1980s with the target of getting to know their subjective opinion and feelings.

Boycott resolve was also quite strong in Great Britain in 1980, but the government could not succeed in persuading the British Olympic Association. These discussions between the autonomous political and sporting bodies about British participation were continuous in 1980. Official governmental and ministerial documents, correspondence, and minutes fully highlight dilemmas regarding British participation. Even the two Houses of Parliament circuitously discussed the question of Moscow. I obtained the minutes of three House of Commons' sessions and one of the House of Lords', and further documents about parliamentary remarks and letters from MPs.

For comparing the 1984 Hungarian non-participation decision with the Romanian participation decision, I used secondary sources, particularly the 1993 study of Harold E. Wilson, titled, *The golden opportunity: Romania's political manipulation of the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games*.

4. Results

The communist ideology of the Soviet Union after the Second World War expanded, among other countries, to Eastern Europe, which meant that sport gained a special role in the political strategy of all socialist countries. Sport functioned there as a supranational institution, similar to the Warsaw pact, in which they formulated common political objectives for the nations. Most of the Eastern European countries were strongly connected to the Soviet

Union, so the sport policy of the Soviet decision-makers was to be adopted obligatorily. However, the role of sport in these communist nations followed changes in domestic and foreign affairs politics, as well as the international situation.

In 1973, the National Office of Physical Education and Sport became the governing sport organization of Hungary, which also meant an even more centrally-directed sport leadership, and the presidential chair of the Hungarian Olympic Committee was also given to the same politically-appointed person. This director was Sándor Beckl, who held the position between 1969 and 1979, and he was followed by István Buda until 1987. István Buda was an under-secretary of the government, but in international relations he was treated as a minister, which allowed him to participate effectively in international sport diplomacy. Hungary had no sport institutions independent of political power, the government, or rather the state party, which could have possibly neglected political guidelines, or made autonomous decisions on the basis of their own interests, principles, and rules.

4.1. The political role of the Hungarian Olympic Committee in the 1980s

According to the 28th paragraph of the Olympic Charter, the Hungarian Olympic Committee, even in the 1980s, should have had the exclusive authority for the representation of Hungary at the Olympic Games.¹ In addition, the Charter obliged all NOCs to participate in the Games of the Olympiad by sending athletes, and to “*preserve their autonomy and resist all pressures of any kind, including but not limited to political, legal, religious, or economic pressures which may prevent them from complying with the Olympic Charter.*”² This was one of those mandates which seemed to be difficult to fulfill for many countries throughout Olympic History, especially during the Cold War.

The possible boycott of the Moscow Games first surfaced in the beginning of 1980, but the MOB documents suggested that the National Olympic Committee did not deal with the international political conflicts, or the potentially reduced number of participants for the games. The Moscow Games were considered especially important for the socialist world, so the MOB concentrated on the appropriate professional and political preparation of the Hungarian Olympic team before the contests. The presidency created one politically-inspired criterion in the principles of selection: that the athletes’ adequate public attitude would be regarded as well. Nevertheless, the top sport leaders could not neglect the development of the boycott, as they considered it a mockery of the Soviet nation. MOB director István Buda

¹ Olympic Charter 28.§ 3. www.olympic.org

² Olympic Charter 28.§ 6. www.olympic.org

explained that the socialist countries did not follow a coordinated strategy to handle the situation, but each NOC leader tried to use his personal relations to convince those nations, which were amenable, to boycott the Games.

By 1982, the MOB had started to actively deal with the Los Angeles Games. In March, István Buda negotiated with the Austrian NOC president and first secretary, then discussed with him the route of the Olympic flame, the pre-Olympic contests, and the required sports equipment, and also prepared contracts for press representatives and continuously assessed the Los Angeles Olympic news. The MOB documents suggested that the Hungarian IOC was unequivocally preparing for the Olympic participation right until its 1984 May 16 general assembly declaration regarding solidarity with the Soviets. The first time the MOB officially dealt with the question of the endangered Olympics was on the 13th of April, but in the same session it decided to send the Hungarian kayak-canoe selection to the American town Kirkwood for a two-week training camp before the Games; and the advance payment for it was also transferred on the 8th of May. Some time around the end of April or beginning of May the Olympic uniforms were ready, and the MOB ordered suitcases for the athletes, despite the fact that days later, on the 16th of May, according to an MSZMP order, the session reached the verdict about non-participation. István Buda sent a letter to the IOC president about the decision straightaway, but also mentioned that the IOC could have worked harder to ensure adequate circumstances for the participation for all countries.

Communication with South Korea was very circumspect at the beginning of preparation for the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games, In 1985-86 there were some drawn-out authorization processes, for example, regarding the reception of the Olympic Organizing Committee's delegation, and even the journey of László Nádori to the Seoul Congress of Sport Sciences. Nevertheless, in September 1986, the Hungarian Olympic Committee, in an assembly resolution, expressed its commitment to participate in the Seoul Summer Games; the determination becoming definite with the acceptance of the Olympic invitation letter on the 21st of December, 1987.

4.2. The political role of the National Office of Physical Education and Sport

The political activity of the National Office of Physical Education and Sport can be ascertained from the minutes of its presidential and vice-presidential sessions. The OTSH was assigned to formulate and evaluate the results of the guidelines regarding Hungarian sport-diplomacy each year, to determine the requirements regarding sport officials and follow up on

their actions, and to deal with the annual reports of various sport federations. Surprisingly, the question of boycott-related ambitions and political conflicts related to the Moscow Games did not appear in the OTSH presidential sessions. The word *boycott* only turned up once in the minutes of the OTSH presidential sessions, on the 29th of February 1980, when the members discussed the congresses of the International Sport Federations, *“fearing that the boycott might influence the organization of these meetings.”*³

The question of preparation for the Los Angeles Games was already being discussed in January of 1981 in the OTSH, where the general targets and expectations about those Olympic results were formulated. From then on, the OTSH participated in socialist discussions regarding Los Angeles, and later about preparation for the Friendship Games. After the summer sport events, the OTSH tried to justify the correctness of the boycott-decision and the value of and results of the Friendship Games: *“The [Friendship Games] events had outstanding significance from a political point of view as well. The competence of socialist countries to organize “A”-category level competitions was demonstrated.”*⁴

As Seoul was to host of the following summer games, the OTSH expressed some guidelines about the allowed extent of communication with the Koreans, and it was clear that the socialist countries continuously consulted about a common Seoul policy. In November 1987, the sport leaders of the socialist countries met in Berlin. In regard to North-Korean boycott-demands, and seeing the negotiations among the two Koreas and the IOC about the joint hosting, the socialist meeting did not result in a common resolution about attendance in Seoul, but the participants of the session *“jointly expressed their sincere trust, that the IOC and their Korean comrades would support a realistic standpoint, and that such a decision would result which would favor the interests of the whole sport world and the unity of the Olympic Movement.”*⁵ Not long after almost all NOCs replied positively to their Olympic invitation letters.

4.3. The Influence of the Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party on sport

The political system in Hungary, after the Second World War, was shaped to follow the Soviet model, and power was put into the hands of the state party, which was the Hungarian Socialist Worker’s Party from 1956. The main decisions were made in the Central and the Political Committees between entire sessions of the Party Congress. As the successful

³ OTSH presidential session, 29th February, 1980. MOL-XIX-J-14-b-1980. év. (69.d.)

⁴ OTSH presidential session, 8th October, 1984. MOL-XIX-J-14-b-1984. év. (76.d.)

⁵ Report on the XXXVth meeting of the socialist sport leaders. MOL-KÜM-XIX-J-1-k- szocialista országok-215-7t.-330/1987. (76.d.)

participation in international sport competitions, especially the Olympic Games, was a strategic question for the whole socialist area, the Party considered the monitoring and control of Olympic preparation to be of primary importance. As the Olympic Games were celebrated in Moscow in 1980, the Party continuously consulted with Soviet authorities, including the organizing of the political coaching of the athletes. The Moscow Olympics had special significance; however, the leaders of the Party did not consider the boycott to be a tragedy, because as they explained, with the absence of important nations there was a chance to achieve better results in the games. After the Games, the Party officially expressed the common socialist opinion that the western boycott was unsuccessful, and the Moscow Games were organized at a very high standard.

In April 1984, the Political and Central Committees first started to talk about security questions regarding the Los Angeles Games, and they decided to express Hungarian disapproval of the American organizers because of their hostile, anti-socialist behavior. Before April the agenda of the Central Committee's Secretariat twice contained Olympic-related topics: on the 5th of March the reception of the IOC president was discussed, and on the 19th of March Mihály Korom proposed to postpone the day of the Olympic Oath. The reason for the postponement did not appear in the document, but most probably was related to the international political situation. The Political Committee subsequently only dealt with Olympic-related tasks after the Soviet non-participation decision, when, on the 11th of May, 1984, all socialist party leaders were invited to Moscow to discuss the Los Angeles Games, and the Soviet Communist Party asked for support for its non-participation decision. The Political Committee of the MSZMP took cognizance of its duty, and on the 14th of May it passed a resolution saying they "*recommend that the Hungarian Olympic Committee take the position of non-participation of the athletes at the XXIII Summer Olympic Games.*"⁶ Consequently, the Political Committee had to prepare the decision of the MOB, and based on the situation it had to assign the tasks of the press and the State Security Organization.

The Baden-Baden decision regarding the 1988 Olympic host signified a strong challenge for the ideologically-divided world. The conflict between North and South Korea and the actions of the IOC were monitored by the MSZMP as well, and consultation with the other socialist states' parties was continuous. As the Soviet Union quiet early expressed its commitment to participation, this became the model for the other socialist countries.

⁶ Session of the Political Committee, 14th May, 1984. MOL-M-KS-288f.5.csoport.910.ő.e.

4.4. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Olympics of the 1980s

The main Olympics-related task of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Peoples' Republic of Hungary was the collection of information and the fulfillment of international diplomatic activities. On the 28th of January 1980, Károly Fendler, from the Department of Foreign Policy Planning and Analysis, suggested responding to American boycott efforts with a diplomatic action in the developed capitalist and third world countries by lobbying in favor of the Moscow Olympic Games, but the results are undocumented. After this the main foreign activity was the evaluation of the Embassies' reports about the Moscow boycott.

Ferenc Esztergályos, the Hungarian Ambassador delegated to the United States, reported on the 26th November 1980, that he entered into official relations with the Los Angeles Olympics Organizing Committee, and in January 1982 an Olympic Attaché was appointed as well. In the first few months of 1984, the Foreign Ministry dealt with emigration questions and the propaganda opportunities of the Los Angeles Games. The idea was to resolve the monitoring of California-based Hungarian emigrants through an autonomous Hungarian "Corporation" created in Los Angeles under secret political control, but as non-participation was decided, these efforts became unnecessary. The only task which remained was the collection of foreign reports, and the reception of American foreign councilor K. Smith, who wanted to lobby for the Los Angeles Games.

As far as the Seoul Olympic Games were concerned, the Foreign Ministry had to follow the changes in the international situation. In 1985, the stance towards Seoul was quite precarious. There were three unfriendly ministerial decisions; the outward journey of a Hungarian Pentathlon coach was rejected, the South-Koreans weren't allowed to participate in the Gránit Cup, and Tamás Aján could only receive the South-Korean delegation as the first secretary of the International Weightlifting Federation. Nevertheless, beginning in 1986 the development of a partnership with South Korea was no longer impeded, and the Foreign Affairs Ministry put the target of diplomatic relations with South-Korea on its agenda, which became reality on the 1st of February 1989.

4.5. The activity of the Home Affairs Ministry in the 1980s

The Home Affairs Ministry of the Hungarian Peoples' Republic in the socialist era functioned as a security organization of the state. Its special Third Chief Directorate was to serve as a state security organ, with the following tasks: intelligence, counter-espionage, counter-inside-reaction activity, military prevention, and passport-related matters.

The small Cold War atmosphere of the 1980s necessitated the continuous attention of the security bodies, so these bodies also concentrated on sporting events. Before the 1979 Soviet invasion into Afghanistan, five different Olympic-related reports were sent to the Third Chief Directorate, four of which were about international threats to the Olympics, and the fifth was, with disquietude, that *“our athletes, who are in regular contact with the Western world, are not adequately prepared against the possible political impacts.”*⁷

Following the 1979 Afghanistan invasion, the Intelligence Directorate of the State Security collected information about foreign opinions and reactions, and it used a lot of energy to supervise Hungarian athletes, trainers, and tourists who were to travel to Moscow.

As the Los Angeles Games approached, the activities of the State Security became more multi-faceted. By March 1982, agents of the III/III. Counter-Inside Reaction Service had been reporting that in international sport and press spheres, people were talking about the speech of the Soviet sport minister in Mexico, in which he allegedly stated that the Soviet Union would boycott the Los Angeles Games. Nevertheless, this report did not appear later in the Home Affairs Executive Summary. At the time, the Hungarian State Security was busy with plans for Hungarian emigrants who were arranging opportunities for those Hungarian athletes who wanted to emigrate after the Games. In May, the non-participation of most socialist countries was made manifest, so the foreign and Hungarian public reception of the boycott had to be observed. The Ministry of Home Affairs created three reports for the Party leaders about Western reactions. The dissatisfaction within Hungarian society was so intense that the Secretariat of the Third Chief Directorate received reports almost every day about various public actions: the organization of demonstrations, graffiti, signature collection, the spreading of stickers and fly sheets, etc.

The 1984 Olympic boycott was a tremendous disruption for Hungarian sports and a sport-crazed Hungarian society, but with time the topic of Los Angeles even disappeared from private discussions. The public and athletes prepared themselves for the next great competition in Seoul. The Seoul Olympics appeared in the daily operative reports of the Third Chief Directorate from 1986, which mainly concentrated on the North-Korean endeavor; but as Hungarian participation was decided quite early, the state security had no special tasks related to these Games.

⁷ 266th Daily Operative Information Report, 15th November, 1979. ÁBTL 2.7.1. NOIJ, III/III. 243-266/11/1979

4.6. The role of the press in the 1980s concerning the Olympic Games

The place and role of the press in the Kádár era was determined by Party resolutions; editorial offices had to take into account political instructions, as well as proposals from MSZMP KB's departments, the Department of Agitation and Propaganda, and the Department of Science, Culture and Public Education. Chief editors were gathered from time to time to be criticized for certain publications and to be given new instructions.

Before the Afghanistan invasion, the press concentrated on the positive aspects of the Moscow Games' preparations, but in January 1980, when the boycott plan appeared, the press started to comment negatively on these boycott aspirations, and reported on the IOC's stance in favor of the Moscow Games. Naturally, the sport press also published articles about Hungarian chances for medal success and after the Games: not only was the performance of the athletes discussed, but the press also used the most positive attributes in evaluating the host city.

Articles about the Los Angeles Games started to appear in political newspapers in February 1982 in reaction to the Sessions of the Hungarian Olympic Committee, and in 1984 all sport newspapers launched a series of special Olympic-related articles. The first writing, with an anxious tone, appeared on the 5th of February 1984 in the newspaper *Magyarország*, with the title "*The voice*". Beginning in March, the papers started to strongly criticize American security measures and the commercialization of the Los Angeles Games as well. The emphasis on the Los Angeles Games political aspects, the errors of the LAOOC, and the dangers of the host city were highlighted in all of the newspapers. In the weeks after the decision the number of Olympic news articles suddenly dropped; the main aim of the articles was to prove the justness of non-participation, and the official opinions published from western reactions also emphasized the non-participation arguments. The Political Committee was urged to make a new press plan because of the boycott decision, which was adopted on the 5th of July. At the same time, the official coverage of the Olympic Games was appropriate, the public was informed about all important events and results - but the press didn't fail to report on any mistakes. After the closing of the Los Angeles Games, the attention of the newspapers turned to the Friendship Games, in which only positive adjectives were used to describe these competitions.

In the November issue of the *Magyar Hírlap*, the question "*What will happen in four years time?*" was asked. The articles followed the negotiations of the two Koreas, but as the MOB had decided on Hungarian participation in 1987, the topic of the articles changed, and

journalists started writing about the preparation, the chances, and the history of the Olympic Games.

4.7. Dilemmas about Olympic participation abroad in the 1980s: Great Britain in 1980 and Romania in 1984

Until the May 24 closing day for entries for the Moscow Olympic Games, there were serious battles between the British political, sport, and Olympic organizations. Generally, the outcome of such conflicts was determined due to the autonomous nature of the democratic institutional system and NGOs. Although the directors of the Prime Minister's Secretariat agreed that it would be non-participation that would offend the Soviets the most, they knew that the only organization that could keep the British athletes away from the Games was the British Olympic Association (BOA). The BOA in 1980 proved its real autonomy when it defended the inviolability of the Olympic spirit and supported the participation of Great Britain in the Moscow Games. The discussion regarding Olympic participation divided press representatives and the two Houses of Parliament as well. On the 17th of March 1980, the House of Commons conducted the longest-ever sport-related discussion, and with 315 votes against 147, it condemned the Afghanistan intervention and expressed its standpoint that Great Britain should not participate in the Summer Games in 1980. Nevertheless, this political standpoint was not enough to convince the British Olympic Association to change their position.

Four years later it was Romania, which acted contrary to socialist expectations and entered the Los Angeles Games. The reason in this case was not the independence of the Romanian Olympic Committee, but that official Romanian policy required participation, especially as Romanian dictator Ceausescu wanted to demonstrate that his country had independent decision-making authority from the Soviets. However, both the Soviet Union and the United States needed one socialist country that would be a bridgehead between the two antagonist blocks to open economic channels for them. It was Ceausescu who recognized this position first, so Romania could become the clasp between East and West, and could participate without any reprehension in the Los Angeles Summer Olympics.

5. Consequences

During this time period of political conflicts, sport could have been the only sphere in the arena of international relations which, based on the Olympic truce, would have assured

peaceful comradery and sportsmanlike competition - but political will in the 1980s proved to be stronger. My hypotheses were formed to finetune this statement.

My first hypothesis, which predicated that official archival documents would confirm that the Hungarian Olympic Committee's decisions were politically-orientated, was validated.

In researching my second hypothesis, I thought that I would find detailed and regular OTSH reports about the development of the three boycotts, but the presidential and vice-presidential OTSH minutes did not deal with this question, and even in the annual assessment of the 1984 Olympic year the circumstances of the boycott were not discussed, it only dealt with the organization and results of the Friendship Games.

My third hypothesis, which stated that the Political and Central Committees of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party made decisions in compliance with the Soviet Communist Party in questions related to sport was validated. Before the Olympic Games, the sport and political leaders of the socialist parties met on several occasions to work up a common policy in relation to the competitions, and the sessions of the Political Committee, where the final decisions were made, were always held right after these meetings.

My fourth hypothesis, which stated that the main role of the Foreign Affairs Ministry of the Hungarian Peoples' Republic was to negotiate with other countries on Olympic questions, proved invalid. Although the Foreign Affairs Ministry and the Hungarian Embassies were active in information collection and evaluating IOC member states' strategies (which they forwarded to the MSZMP), concrete negotiations were in the hands of party functionaries and OTSH and MOB representatives.

My fifth hypothesis was validated through the documentation - the Hungarian state security organizations indeed carried out outstanding intelligence and monitoring tasks, which were a part of a harmonized socialist security policy.

In my sixth hypothesis I postulated that the Olympic-related publications of the Hungarian press in 1980, 1984, and 1988 followed the international political events from a common socialistic view. From the official press the changes in the international political arena and the Soviet rhetoric could have indeed been detected; alternative opinions only appeared in some clandestine publications.

In my final hypothesis I postulated that the 1984 Hungarian non-participation had important consequences regarding Hungarian sporting results, and Hungarian athletes' attitude towards elite sport. In the following two Olympic Games after Los Angeles, the number of Hungarian medals was more than in Moscow (Seoul: 11-6-6, Barcelona: 11-12-7 medals), which allow me to reject the hypothesis, but the interviews with the athletes

suggested that many athletes gave up their sport careers due to their frustration - this affected the development chances of the younger generations.

6. List of publications

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