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Los Angeles and the 1984 Olympic Games: Cultural Commodification, Corporate
Sponsorship, and the Cold War

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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The 1984 Olympics offer an unprecedented opportunity to consider the way that sports were used as cultural and ideological warfare or soft power in the late stages of the Cold War era. Despite the Soviet Union's decision to boycott the Olympics in Los Angeles in 1984, the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics were a claimed "victory" by President Ronald Reagan in the Cultural Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. Los Angeles won the right to host the games, and was a politically prudent choice for the United States within the context of the Cultural Cold War. The complicated history of Los Angeles and its constructed post-WWII identity are important elements to the choice of Los Angeles as host city. The Soviet boycott of the 1984 Olympic Games by the Soviet Union is central to the buildup to 1984, but due to the financial success of the Games the Soviet absence was not the crisis that many predicted. This fact was largely due to how the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee utilized corporate

sponsorship to make the most financially successful Olympic Games of all time while simultaneously creating a “look” for the Games that would present the United States and the city of Los Angeles in an idealized manner that appeared bereft of hyper-nationalism. The economic success of the Games was the greatest weapon the United States had in the cultural battle it fought in 1984. The cultural legacy of the 1984 Games also hinged on the 1984 Olympic Arts Festival which was organized by the LAOOC. The Olympic Arts Festival, like the Games, was an opportunity for the United States to create international influence and legitimacy while simultaneously claiming the position of diplomatic host nation. Through the exploration of these avenues, the 1984 Los Angeles Games are evidence of the significance of sports in the Cultural Cold War, the corporatization of sports, and the commodification of both sports and the Olympics through modern means of spectacle and profit motives.

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Introduction

The 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games

The Olympic Games of the modern era are far more than international sporting events. The transnational competitions between athletes have been at varying moments in world history a metaphor for clashes between nations, cultures, religions, and political ideologies. With their visible nationalistic elements (flags, uniforms) and the opportunities they provide propagandists, commentators, and audiences to interpret individual or team accomplishments as tests of national character, will, and achievements, such sporting events provide a showcase for leaders or advocates of causes who compete for world attention.¹ Thus, the Games have been a showcase for ideology and systemic vitality. The international influence and projected power of a state can be displayed at the Games. From the start, the modern Olympic Games, which began as the brain child of a French nobleman, the Baron Pierre de Coubertin, were fraught with political intrigues, antagonisms, and conflicts.² In 1936, the world observed as the Berlin Olympics were remade as a presentation of the Third Reich's introduction of a supposedly revived Germany to the international community. The 1936 games served as a lynchpin in a new form of politicization of the Olympic Games. After the end of World War II, the growing conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States would factor

¹ Jarol B. Manheim, "Rites of Passage: The 1988 Seoul Olympics as Public Diplomacy," *The Western Political Quarterly* 43, no. 2 (June 1990): 279.

² Alfred E. Senn, *Power, Politics, and the Olympic Games: A History of the Power Brokers, Events, and Controversies that Shaped the Games* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics Press, 1999), 2.

heavily in world events. The Olympics were no exception, and became expressions of soft power.³ The Soviet Union sent Olympic Teams to participate in 1952 and 1956, and gained much momentum in their results. In 1956, the Soviet Union finished ahead of the United States in total medals won, and created international controversy by crushing the Hungarian Revolution that same year – leading to a boycott by several nations including France and Spain. In 1960, Rome hosted an Olympic Games that placed the growing international Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union at front and center, as the Soviet Union again finished ahead of the United States for the first time in the total medal count – one year before the Berlin Wall was completed.⁴ *Pravda*, the leading political newspaper of the Soviet Union, claimed that there were thirty million athletes trying to make the 1960 Soviet Olympic team.⁵ This propaganda piece demonstrated the growth of the political meaning of sport to the Soviet Union along with the official state support of athletics. International competitiveness fostered a surge of growth in state-run advanced training methods, as well as other structural aspects of sports institutions, and created a situation that made it very difficult for smaller nations to find a global voice by competing in or hosting the Olympic Games.⁶ Two interlinked elements that underlie the Soviet sports system were the “Ready for Labor and Defense” mass fitness program and the Uniform Rankings system for proficient athletes in

³ For a discussion of the term “soft power” see: Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004).

⁴ Medal count has long been used to determine the overall success of a participating nation in the Olympic Games. In this case, *winning* the medal count is the ultimate validation.

⁵ David Maraniss, *Rome 1960 : The Olympics That Changed the World* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008).

⁶ Philip D’Agati, *The Cold War and the 1984 Olympic Games: A Soviet-American Surrogate War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 3.

individual sports. Both were intended to serve the twin aims of all-around ability in a number of sports and a whole set of qualifying standards, rankings, and titles in individual sports intended to stimulate the best performers to aim for certain graduated standards. At the top of the rankings systems are two sports titles: “Master of Sport of the USSR, International Class” and “Master of Sport of the USSR.”⁷ The emphasis placed on Olympic sports grew quickly within the Soviet Union, and the political relevance of athletic performance was the core reason the state directed this change. From the 1960 Games until the end of the Cold War in 1991 when the Berlin Wall came down and the Soviet Union was dismantled, international athletic competitions were hotly contested by the United States and the Soviet Union at nearly every turn due to their political and ideological meaning.

The Olympic Games offer two distinct avenues for nations to demonstrate importance. Developing powers often seek to host the Olympic Games and have continually utilized the Olympic Games in the modern era to announce cultural, economic, and ideological significance to the international community. Nations or political organizations who do not host the games often utilize the event as an opportunity to make a statement through competitive success or otherwise. The amount of money spent on these spectacles has been staggering. Japan, the nation whose leaders had hoped that hosting the Olympic Games would crown its rise to Pacific hegemony and global superpower status had its dreams of hosting in 1940 supplanted by the self-determined

⁷ Richard Riordan, “Soviet Sport and Soviet Foreign Policy,” *Soviet Studies* 26, 3 (July 1974): 324.

advent of World War II.⁸ Tokyo's grand plans for a massive Olympic complex had been incinerated, along with the rest of the Japanese capital due to its leader's aggressive pursuit of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere and eventual attack of the United States at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The leadership of Japan was not content to wait for the Olympics to announce their arrival as a world power, instead choosing military action to do so. However, after the rebuilding of Japan following World War II, the 1964 Tokyo Games introduced Japan as a major world *economic* power, and the city's ten year development plan was incorporated into the preparations at the cost of \$2.7 billion.⁹

In 1968 at the Summer Games in Mexico City, \$200 million was transferred from the social services budget to the city improvements projects in order to demonstrate the modernization of Mexico to the world. Mexico's efforts were not delayed in the same way as Japan's, since no world war interrupted the 1968 Games. The Winter Games, celebrated at Grenoble, France were somewhat free of political overtones. This temporary break in Cold War posturing was short lived. However, 1968 was a watershed year in the area of global social strife and international conflict. The optimism generated in Czechoslovakia by a somewhat more liberal Communist regime turned to despair as the tanks of the Warsaw Pact rumbled into Prague and crushed the possibility, for another twenty years, of socialism with a human face.¹⁰ The Tet Offensive in South Vietnam changed the tenor of the ongoing Vietnam Conflict and sent the United States'

⁸ Cesar R. Torres and Mark Dyreson, "The Cold War Games," in *Global Olympics: Historical and Sociological Studies of the Modern Games*, Kevin Young & Kevin B. Wamsley, eds. (San Diego: Elsevier, Ltd., 2005), 59.

⁹ S. Essex and B. Chalkley, "Olympic Games: Catalyst of Urban Change," *Leisure Studies* 17, no. 3 (1998): 187.

¹⁰ Allen Guttman, *The Olympics: A History of the Modern Games* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 128.

international prestige reeling. Mexico, too, was in the midst of domestic turmoil – social unrest, led by students angry at what they saw as the betrayal of the Mexican Revolution by an entrenched bureaucratic party, intensified.¹¹ Less than a month before the Olympic Games were scheduled to begin, the Mexican army moved against the protesters; a number of demonstrators were killed in the Plaza of Three Cultures.¹² Later deemed by the press as the Tlatelolco Massacre, the unofficial estimates of the death toll ranged from 150 to 325. However, the official body count was just 20 dead, and the government said its soldiers had been provoked by terrorist snipers. With newspaper and magazine editors in the pockets of the government, any journalist wanting to write more was given short shrift. “There’s an order,” one was told by her editor. “We’re going to concentrate on the Olympic Games.”¹³ Regardless, 1968 appeared ripe for intentional political expression by many attendees.

Amidst such immense international turmoil, political expressions by individuals overshadowed the planned political expressions of the host nation of Mexico. The two forms of expression were consistently sent internationally through the Olympics since the Games in 1936, which marked the use of full-fledged mass media, public relations, and spectacularization of the Games, with only a few exceptions. In 1968, individuals like American sprinters Tommie Smith and John Carlos, the gold and bronze medalists in the men’s 200 meter race received their medals during the medal ceremony wearing black socks without shoes and civil rights badges (which were forbidden by the IOC), lowered

¹¹ Jacqueline E. Bixler, “Re-Membering the Past: Memory-Theatre and Tlatelolco,” *Latin American Research Review* 37, 2, 2002, 125; Kris Lane and Matthew Restall, *The Riddle of Latin America* (New York: Cengage Learning, 2012), 293.

¹² Guttman, 129.

¹³ “The Ghosts of Mexico 1968,” *The Economist* (April 24, 2008), 27.

their heads and each defiantly raised a black-gloved fist as the Star Spangled Banner was played in the salute of the Black Power movement in the United States. The role that visual power played in the choices of Smith and Carlos set a precedent that would be learned by demonstrators in future Games. Both men were members of the Olympic Project for Human Rights, an international group designed to protest segregation the United States and the rest of the world, including South Africa. Peter Norman, an Australian sprinter and Martin Jellinghaus a German sprinter also wore Olympic Project for Human Rights badges at the games to show support. 1968 marked a shift in political expression through the Olympics to include not only host nation dominance, but also individual participant's politics.

In Munich in 1972, the Olympic Games returned to the homeland of the last of the old autocratic aggressors of World War II. Organizers hoped that the 1972 Games would signal the emergence of a new Germany.¹⁴ However, eleven Israeli athletes were taken hostage and eventually murdered by Palestinian terrorists from a group known as Black September.¹⁵ This event was widely considered to have launched a new era of international terrorism, and led to soaring security costs at future Olympic Games.¹⁶ Individual expression gave way to expressions by groups vying for power, and the era shifted quickly to the Olympics as an avenue for political action by not only host nations and participants, but also by groups of attendees vying for power who did not represent

¹⁴ Torres and Dyreson, "Cold War Games," 75.

¹⁵ David Clay Large, *Munich 1972: Tragedy, Terror, and Triumph at the Olympic Games* (New York, Roman and Littlefield, 2012), 232

¹⁶ Jon Coaffee and Peter Fussey, "Olympic Security," in Jon R. Gold and Margaret M. Gold, eds., *Olympic Cities: City Agendas, Planning, and the World's Games, 1896-2016* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 168

the nation-state. These acts of terrorism and rebellion challenged notions of nationalism that dominated the twentieth century up to that point. During the 1970s, it became obvious that the political benefits of the Olympics were opportunities for an elite list of states whose wealth and development provided necessary means to exploit the Games.¹⁷ The Games became a literal stage for the performance of politics as a result.

The transitional arc of the Olympics of the 20th century was one that began when Hitler changed the meaning of the Olympics to one of international political expression. The Games were converted into an occurrence of mass spectacle. It then continued to allow host nations to similarly demonstrate their arrival on the international political stage. Beginning in 1968, individual participant's expression of political views manifested along with continued host-nation politicking. After 1972, the international audiences of the Games became participants in the political expression inherent in the Olympic Games of the modern era. It is no coincidence that during the 1960s and 1970s, the Olympic Games mushroomed into supercharged showcases pitting the US and its allies against the Soviet Union and its affiliates amidst these hyper-politicized Games. The intense political currents swirling around Olympic spectacles made them a growing element of Cold War culture.¹⁸ As the Olympic movement expanded, the superpowers and the smaller nations began to use the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in their political missions and intrigues. Among the favored tactics were threats of boycotts and demands for expulsion of various nations for various reasons.

¹⁷ D'Agati, 2.

¹⁸ Torres and Dyreson, "Cold War Games," 71.

During what turned out to be the closing years of the Cold War, the 1980 and 1984 Summer Games were fundamentally rival Olympics, staged by two superpowers as competing indicators of the superiority of their ideological, economic, and political systems. Due to global economic strain during the waning years of the Cold War, Moscow and Los Angeles were the only candidates that sought to host the 1980 games. Moscow was awarded the 1980 bid. After the withdrawal of a half-hearted bid from Tehran, Iran for the right to host the next Games, Los Angeles was the sole formal bidder for 1984.¹⁹

In 1980 the U.S. led a boycott of the Moscow Olympic Games as part of a package of measures taken in response to the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. The Soviet-led boycott of the Los Angeles Games in 1984 was a consistent political response. While not the only boycotts in the history of the Olympic Games, they were the most significant due to factors of the numbers of participants and global political influence. These were late Cold War era political decisions, made during the revived tensions between the superpowers during the early 1980s (such as the 1983 Soviet downing of Korean Air Lines Flight 007 and the "Able Archer" NATO military exercises which led to a war scare between the United States and the Soviet Union). The decision to boycott only materialized in the final weeks before both of these Games and, therefore, had little effect on the plans made by the host cities for staging their respective Olympics. However, the international political meanings of these boycotts reverberated loudly. The

¹⁹ John R. Gold and Margaret M. Gold, "From A to B: The Summer Olympics, 1896-2008," in John R. Gold and Margaret M. Gold, eds., *Olympic Cities: City Agendas, Planning, and the World's Games, 1896-2016* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 41.

1984 Los Angeles Games were designed purposely to demonstrate to the Soviets and the rest of the world that the United States capitalist system was superior – and those who planned the games were determined to accommodate any Soviet requests that would ensure the participation of the Soviet teams.

Los Angeles, the location of the 1984 Summer Games, was especially significant as a potential late Cultural Cold War battleground. Issues of race in the United States had consistently been criticized by the Soviet Union, and Los Angeles had a long history of racial violence. The Soviet policy of internationalism had “officially” tried to eliminate racism and aggressively institute policies of equality throughout the empire. While this official position was not accurate, the government sponsored propaganda of the Soviet Union consistently reminded their population of the ongoing racial violence in America and the policies of de jure and de facto segregation. For example, in the Soviet state-sponsored magazine *Bezbozhnik*, a cartoon was printed showing a lynched African American hanging from the Statue of Liberty (see fig. 1).²⁰ Early in the Cultural Cold War, the Americans record on race was called into question by the Soviet Union as another tactic of soft power. Later, amid widespread international support for the Civil Rights Movement and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 in the United States by much of the international press, Soviet criticism of U.S. race-relations increased.²¹ The U.S. embassy in Moscow reported that “the newspaper *Sovietskaya Rossiya* has apparently entered into

²⁰ Staff, “And You Are Lynching Negroes,” *Bezbozhnik* (Soviet Union: 1930) retrieved from New York Public Library archive, June 29, 2014.

²¹ Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000), 210.

competition with the newspaper *Ixvestiya* recently to see which organ can get in the dirtiest digs at the United States.²²



Figure 2: Soviet published *Bezbozhnik* cartoon claims link between racism and Christianity in the U.S. (*Bezbozhnik*, 1930).

At the outset of the twentieth century, Los Angeles entertained a set of radicalized fantasies that depicted the region as a southwestern outpost of white supremacy.²³ The WWII years inaugurated Southern California’s “racial turn,” including African Americans fleeing the violence and racial segregation of the Jim Crow South in hopes of a better life in Southern California, Japanese Americans enduring the trauma of

²² Ibid.

²³ Eric Avila, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 20.

evacuation and incarcerations in internment camps, and Chicano youths arousing popular antipathy and public suspicion. Race acquired a renewed salience in the regional culture.²⁴ Los Angeles developed as an increasingly Jim Crow town throughout the 1920s and 1930s, due in part to an influx of Southerners into the city. African Americans found themselves banished from streetcar and construction jobs, snubbed at white department stores and restaurants, and kept in segregated schools.²⁵ Although racial tensions subsided somewhat during the war years, Los Angeles is a city that had a history of racial diversity and tension that was as prominent as any other metropolis in the United States after World War II.²⁶ However, southern California's significant populations of Mexican, Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos, and Jewish Americans and their relationship to black and whites shaped a different civil rights narrative from the black/white axis that engendered the southern and northern struggles for racial equality.²⁷ As the civil rights movement gathered steam and the challenge to racial segregation inserted African Americans and other nonwhite social groups into the public spaces of industrial urbanism, a fresh "new mass culture" took shape, one that reflected and reinforced the burgeoning racial order of the postwar urban region.²⁸ Los Angeles had certainly not resolved conditions that had led to the Watts Riots of 1965, including the community-based racial segregation patterns that developed.

²⁴ Ibid., 20, 31.

²⁵ Kevin Starr, *The Dream Endures: California Enters the 1940s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 178.

²⁶ Michelle M. Nickerson and Darren Dochuk, eds., *Sunbelt Rising: The Politics of Space, Place, and Region* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 144.

²⁷ Ibid., 143.

²⁸ Avila, 6.

The failures of 1960s social programs including the War on Poverty, the effects of the Vietnam War on poor and working-class youths, and the repressive policies of the Los Angeles Police Department all contributed to a growing political activism and cultural nationalism amongst non-whites in Los Angeles.²⁹ For example, on August 29, 1970, the Chicano community mobilized for a massive antiwar demonstration that expressed anger over many pent-up grievances and complaints. Taking their opposition to the war and their growing nationalism to the streets, demonstrators relied on their cultural traditions to give form to their protest activity.³⁰ As one participant chronicled the start of that day's events:

The boulevard was filled with *gente*. They were doing Latino chants and playing musica right in the streets. It started takin' on the atmosphere of a carnival. Some even danced.³¹

This demonstration involved an attempt to reclaim city streets as a terrain for culture, politics, and celebration. But its aggressive festivity provided a violent reaction from the authorities. Los Angeles police officers used force against the demonstrators; one officer shot and killed *Los Angeles Times* columnist Ruben Salazar. The Salazar killing outraged many people in the Mexican-American community and helped mobilize subsequent activism and demonstrations.³² The music of East Los Angeles was inspired by this event, and had significant influence on artists and audiences outside of the barrio. In

²⁹ George Lipsitz, "Land of a Thousand Dances," *Recasting America: Culture and Politics in the Age of Cold War*, ed., Lary May (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1989), 278.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Luis Rodriguez, "La Veintinueve," *Latino Experience in Literature and Art* (Los Angeles Latino Writers Association: Los Angeles, 1982), 9.

³² Ruben Guevara, "The View from the Sixth Street Bridge: The History of Chicano Rock," *Rock 'n' Roll Confidential Report*, ed. Dave Marsh (Pantheon: New York, 1985), 118.

1975, a mostly Afro-American jazz/funk ensemble from Long Beach calling themselves War recorded “Low Rider,” a tribute to Chicano car customers, cruisers, and musicians. More significantly, the song also reflected demographic trends in Los Angeles that encouraged black-Chicano cultural interaction.³³ In 1970, more than 50,000 Chicanos lived in the traditionally black south-central area of Los Angeles; by 1980 that figure had doubled, with Chicanos making up twenty-one percent of the total population of the south-central area.³⁴ The racial politics of Los Angeles brought historically segregated minorities together against the white establishment.

While the reality was very different, the advertised “new” Los Angeles of the second half of the twentieth century sought to be defined outwardly by urban renewal, suburbanization, highway construction, and the utopian aspirations of local and state politicians and promoters modeled at Disneyland.³⁵ The issues of racial tensions that persisted throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s were certainly not highlighted during the campaign for the right to host the 1984 Games. From a nationalist perspective as the host nation, 1984 offered an opportunity to demonstrate to the world how far the United States had come on issues of racial conflict without admitting that many of the difficulties remained in place.

The 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles became the most financially successful Olympic Games of the modern era. Both the 1980 and 1984 Summer Olympic Games were designed to operate on a responsible financial budget. The central concept that both

³³ Lipsitz, 279.

³⁴ Melvin Oliver and James Johnson, Jr., “Inter-Ethnic Conflict in an Urban Ghetto,” *Research in Social Movements: Conflict and Change* 6, 57-58.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 63.

organizing committees prescribed to was that the Games should not generate a financial loss for the host nation – thus the construction of new venues should be minimized. Yet the Soviets could not resist the urge to display their technological expertise in designing large structures, like the world’s largest indoor arena in north Moscow capable of seating 45,000 spectators.³⁶ While sport in the West is by no means free of politics or foreign policy aims, in centrally planned, Soviet-style planned societies, it occupied a more central position and its functions and interrelationship with the military, the economy, and the culture are more manifest than in Western societies generally.³⁷ Like the organizers of the 1984 Games in Los Angeles, those in Moscow were expecting their Cold War rivals to participate. Thus, the government of the Soviet Union invested heavily in the infrastructure and security surrounding the Moscow Olympic Games. The 1980 Moscow Olympic Games served as conclusive proof that sport and politics are connected, and that sport in fact *is* politics in many cases, and that major international competitions are major business enterprises.³⁸ However, the boycott severely hampered the investment made in Moscow by the Soviet government. Conversely, the operational costs were kept down in Los Angeles by avoiding this kind of publically financed expenditure. Instead, the financial costs were mostly paid by corporate sponsorships and a new model for successfully hosting the Olympics was born.

³⁶ Victor Promyslov, *Moscow: Past and Present* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1980), 236.

³⁷ James Riordan, *Sport and Soviet Society: Development of Sport and Physical Education in the USSR* (New York: University of Cambridge, 1977), 349; James Riordan, ed., *Sport Under Communism: The U.S.S.R., Czechoslovakia, the G.D.R., China, Cuba* (London: C. Hurst and Company, 1981), 49.

³⁸ Baruch A. Hazan, *Olympic Sports and Propaganda Games: Moscow, 1980* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1982), 203.

This dissertation shows that the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles marked an economic Cold War triumph of the United States capitalist system the likes of which the international community had not yet seen. From the perspective of the host nation, financial success, competitive dominance, and the multicultural diversity of Los Angeles and Southern California, with 83 different languages spoken and a population of more than seven million, made Los Angeles the perfect venue to demonstrate the racial diversity of the United States to the Soviets and their allies.³⁹ This idealized diversity was emphasized throughout the Games by the LAOOC. In the Olympic Arts Festival Host/Hostess training manual, under the subheading “Los Angeles History,” the following appeared:

The story of these 200 years is not that of a single city or region, but of many races, nations, and civilizations. Thus the history of LA directly reflects historical growth and change in the US and the Western Hemisphere, and its chapters offer a unique means of presenting much broader historical developments. From its beginnings, LA has been a multicultural community, and through the years members of most races and ethnic groups have been drawn to the area. Truly it is a “crossroads of the world.”⁴⁰

The pamphlet was designed to train the volunteer hosts and hostesses to emphasize the multicultural nature of Los Angeles when greeting visitors to the different venues of the Arts Festival. Within the context of the Cultural Cold War, it was critical to emphasize the multicultural nature of Los Angeles. The same copy was used for the hosts and hostesses of the events for the Games as well. The Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee (LAOOC), the United States Olympic Committee (USOC), and the United

³⁹ Robert Fitzpatrick, *Olympic Arts Festival Artists' Guide*, (LAOOC: June 1984), 2.

⁴⁰ The text was written by Judson Grenier, Ph.D. Professor of History at California State University, Dominguez Hills. LAOOC, *Olympic Arts Festival Host/Hostess Training Manual*, (LAOOC: 1984), Section IV:B, LAOOC Papers, Collection 1403, Box 157, Folder 12, UCLA.

States Government were all heavily invested in the economic and cultural success of the Games as well as in demonstrating power and supremacy in the ongoing conflict deemed by historians as the Cultural Cold War.⁴¹ In addition to the Games, the LAOOC sought to create the most significant simultaneous Olympic Arts Festival ever attempted in conjunction with the Olympic Games. This festival was aimed to demonstrate the preeminence of the American system if well attended and received by the international arts community, since the LAOOC sought to create a truly international cast of performers to bring the widest audience possible to Los Angeles. If the audience was truly global, then the festival and the Games would be validated while simultaneously demonstrating the corporate power of the United States.

The eventual financial success was even more significant than it might have been since it coincided with the boycott of the 1984 Games by the Soviet Union, much to the dismay of the United States and the LAOOC at the time. Although everyone involved feared what the boycott meant to the success of the Games and fought to avoid it desperately, due to the unique financial model that was created by the LAOOC and the international pressure exerted by the United States Government the prestige of the Games and the accompanying Arts Festival was not harmed inside the United States. Ironically, the opposite effect occurred within much of the international community as well. The Games were viewed as an unqualified success by much of the international community west of the iron curtain. The foreign press was especially complimentary in their

⁴¹ Frances Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* (New York: The New Press, 2013).

coverage due in large part to the aids provided by the LAOOC for their work. The 1984 Games offered a large number of Olympic firsts, of course: electronic mail, voice mail, use of cellular telephones, the first user-operated information retrieval and query system for athlete biographies and an astonishingly low number of new sports facilities.⁴² All of this made press coverage much easier than anticipated, which helped create a positive feeling amongst both domestic and foreign reporters along with an increased ease of pitching stories for consumption in mass media outlets.

Cultural Cold War in Historiography

Historians have documented in great detail the political, economic, and military aspects of the Cold War.⁴³ Behind the armed conflicts of the Cold War era raged an intellectual Cultural Cold War that has also been well recognized by some historians.⁴⁴ The Cultural Cold War was more than just an intellectual battlefield in traditional scholarly realms. From the late 1940s to the 1990s a war for political, economic, and cultural primacy in most of the world was fought, even if it was predominantly by proxy.

⁴² Rich Perelman, "Remembering a Revolution . . . in the Olympic Games," Perelman Pioneer & Company, July 28, 2011, <http://www.perelman-pioneer.com/?p=250> (accessed August 1, 2014).

⁴³ For example see: Stephen E. Ambrose, Caleb Carr, Thomas Fleming, Victor Hanson, Robert Cowley, *The Cold War: A Military History* (New York: Random House, 2009); John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York: Penguin, 2006) and *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *Khrushchev's Cold War: The Inside Story of an American Adversary* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2007); , (!!! INVALID CITATION !!!).

⁴⁴ See: Frances Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* (New York: The New Press, 2013); Yale Richmond, *Cultural Exchange & The Cold War: Raising the Iron Curtain* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003); Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991). Ibid.

Indeed, the struggle waged between the United States and the Soviet Union went far beyond the battlefields of these proxy wars around the globe.

As clarified by historian James Sparrow, World War II created a pattern that included a great majority of ordinary Americans in the financing of a significant portion of war expenditures, setting a pattern that would bolster the postwar fiscal regime and democratize the meaning of fiscal citizenship.⁴⁵ Citizenship grew from visualizing aiding the battlefield soldier into later visualizing the defeat of the Soviets by participating in America's consumer driven economy. Patriotism was fused with a sense of entitlement to an American standard of living—underwritten by government-managed economic growth. The concept of fiscal citizenship proved durable enough to last decades beyond the war and to help fund the explosive growth and reach of the postwar state.⁴⁶ Furthermore, the government produced a legacy that mixed private sector organizations (such as the Advertising Council) and public sector agencies (such as the State Department's US Information Agency) that would make "freedom" and the "American way of life" ideological calling cards for the United States in the Cold War.⁴⁷

By the 1950s, culture was a tool in the arsenal of both democracy and communism. Political scientist Joseph Nye calls cultural elements evidence of "soft power." Hard power, according to Nye, relies upon instruments of compulsion and control: occupying armies, trade embargoes, and payoffs for good behavior among allies

⁴⁵ James Sparrow, *Warfare State: World War II Americans and the Age of Big Government* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 121.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 49.

are examples. In contrast, soft power wields the force of attraction. Rather than coercing, soft power entices, enlisting support through intangibles like culture, values, beliefs, and perceived moral authority.⁴⁸ In the United States, a consumers' republic had developed; an economy, culture, and politics had been built around the promises of mass consumption.⁴⁹ While the Consumer's Republic began internally, it eventually was envied by much of the world. The consumption was enticing, making it a weapon of attraction wielded by the United States against the Soviets and their allies, both overtly and covertly.

The American effort in the Cultural Cold War soon included the weapon of American-style consumerism on a huge international stage. In 1951, sociologist David Riesman published a fictitious account of an American bombing campaign involving consumer goods rather than explosives. What US officials called "Operation Abundance" was dubbed "The Nylon War" by Riesman's imaginary reporters, following its opening barrage of the USSR with women's stockings. Operation Abundance was "both violently anti-Soviet and pro-peace," according to Riesman's Cold War parody, and entailed "recruitment of top-flight production and merchandising talent from civilian life."⁵⁰ Less than a decade after its publication, Riesman's lampoon came to seem

⁴⁸ Joseph S. Nye Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 5-7.

⁴⁹ Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Vintage Books, 2003), 7.

⁵⁰ David Riesman, "The Nylon War," *Abundance for What? And Other Essays* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1964), 67.

prophetic.⁵¹ The American consumers' republic was on full display at the American National Exhibition in Moscow in July 1959.

The American Exhibition presented Soviet citizens with a consumer goods extravaganza.⁵² Present were purposeful symbols of the yawning gulf between the capitalist United States and the communist Soviet Union: time-saving household appliances that represented the very latest in modern technology. The show provided a rare window on the American world of goods for Soviet citizens, and 3.2 million of them flocked there during the six-week run.⁵³ The event is most significant for what happened on opening day in the kitchen of the American model home: an unplanned and increasingly heated exchange of views between Nikita Khrushchev, the Soviet Premier, and his host, Richard M. Nixon, the US Vice-President. The "kitchen debate" was then quickly televised in the United States. The Soviets subsequently protested, as Nixon and Khrushchev had agreed that the debate should be broadcast simultaneously in America and the Soviet Union, with the Soviets even threatening to withhold the tape until they were ready to broadcast. The American networks, however, had felt that waiting would cause the news to lose its immediacy.⁵⁴ Two days later, on July 27, the debate was broadcast on Moscow television, albeit late at night and with Nixon's remarks only partially translated.⁵⁵

⁵¹ Greg Castillo, *Cold War on the Home Front: The Soft Power of Midcentury Design* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), vii.

⁵² *Ibid.*, ix.

⁵³ Richard H. Shepard. "Debate Goes on TV over Soviet Protest" *New York Times*, July 26th, 1959.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Associated Press, "Soviet TV Shows Tape of Debate," *New York Times*, July 28th, 1959.

These events in Moscow represent a microcosm of the larger relationship between consumer culture and the Cold War. Consumer products, art, film, television, music, fashion, and sports were all mediums for cultural competition between the US and the Soviets. Art, music, high culture, pop culture, and athletics were all arenas that the United States and the Soviet Union competed during the years of the Cold War. Like material culture, the role music played in the Cultural Cold War has been especially prominent in historical scholarship, and provides significant context for cultural transmission and competition.⁵⁶ Music was one of the most prominent cultural exports of the United States.

Much like music, international sport has a culturally competitive element at its core. Considering the Olympic Games as part of the Cultural Cold War is more historically akin to spectacles like world's fairs and international exhibitions. A few historians have acknowledged the role of international exhibitions centered on cultural exchange since the inception of the Marshall Plan (Officially the European Recovery Program) in 1947 through the 1980s.⁵⁷ However, they also have largely failed to address the politics of the Olympic Games as a central element of the Cultural Cold War that was fought outside the traditional avenues. Additionally, some scholars have acknowledged

⁵⁶ For examples, see: Stephen A. Crist, "Jazz as Democracy? Dave Brubeck and Cold War Politics," *The Journal of Musicology* 26, no. 2 (Spring 2009); Penny M. Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World* (Harvard University Press, 2009); Penny M. Von Eschen, "Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz, Race, and Empire During the Cold War," *Here, There, and Everywhere: The Foreign Politics of American Popular Culture*, Wagnleitner, R. and E.T. May, eds. (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2000): 163; Michael May, "Swingin' under Stalin: Russian Jazz during the Cold War and Beyond," *Ibid.*: 179; Thomas Fuchs, "Rock 'n' Roll in the German Democratic Republic, 1949-1961," *Ibid.*: 195-196.....

⁵⁷ See: Greg Castillo, "Domesticating the Cold War: Household Consumption as Propaganda in Marshall Plan Germany," *Journal of Contemporary History* 40, 2 (April 2005): 261; Jack Masey and Conway Lloyd Morgan, *Cold War Confrontations: US Exhibitions and their Role in the Cultural Cold War* (New York: Lars Muller Publishers, 2008).

that during the Cold War sport was a part of the political rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union.⁵⁸ While many intellectuals have implied the importance of analyzing athletics during the Cold War, they have yet to characterize the Cultural Cold War as a game *fought* in the athletic arena. Therefore, there is a critical gap in the historiography of the late Cultural Cold War and especially of the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics.

In 1984, the Cultural Cold War was fought in the international athletic arena in an unparalleled manner with stakes so high that involved governments became enmeshed with athletic issues as never before. Even the select historians who have acknowledged the important political role of the Olympic Games in the Cold War have failed to acknowledge that it did not reach its apex until the early 1980s, after most of the armed proxy wars between the United States and the Soviet Union were over.⁵⁹ To this point, the importance on the 1980 and 1984 Olympic Games has remained understated.

The 1980 Winter and Summer Games, along with the 1984 Summer Games were the most politicized Games of the Cold War. The events of these athletic contests were the cultural high (or perhaps low) points to the Cultural Cold War, and created lasting,

⁵⁸ Some historians and political scientists who address the link between sports and politics are Alan Bairner, *Sport, Nationalism, and Globalization* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2001); Philip D'Agati, *The Cold War and the 1984 Olympic Games: A Soviet-American Surrogate War* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), Robert Edelman, *Serious Fun: A History of Spectator Sport in the USSR* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Robert Edelman, *Sparktak Moscow: A History of the Peoples' Team in the Workers State* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2009); Richard Riordan, "The Impact of Communism on Sport," *Historical Social Research* 32, 1 (2007): 110; .

⁵⁹ See: Alfred E. Senn, *Power, Politics, and the Olympic Games: A History of the Power Brokers, Events, and Controversies that Shaped the Games* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics Press, 1999); Allen Guttmann, *The Olympics: A History of the Modern Games* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002) and Allen Guttmann, "Sport, Politics, and the Engaged Historian," *Journal of Contemporary History* 38, no. 3 (July 2003): 363-375. Ibid. Ibid. Ibid. Ibid. Ibid. Ibid..

critical moments that summed up the rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union. The 1980s marked the height of the Cultural Cold War due to a renewed rivalry and a reversal of détente. Politically, the Cold War renewed with US and Soviet involvement in the Iranian Revolution and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. This political shift led to a renewed cultural rivalry which returned with the American defeat of the Soviet ice hockey team at Lake Placid in the winter of 1980, followed by the boycott of the 1980 Moscow Games ordered by President Jimmy Carter. By the time the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics occurred, the four-year span generated the most international controversy of any of the Cold War Olympic Games. The international pressure exerted by the United States and the Soviet Union on their allies to either participate or boycott, respectively was constant and unrelenting.

At the Olympic Games, the sports page would come to meet the front page. For years, the race for gold medals was as much a part of Cold War rivalry between the superpowers as the race for the moon.⁶⁰ Since national loyalty and patriotism are fostered through sports rituals and ceremonies linked to sport and nationalism, the foreign policy of the Soviet Union and the United States found one more conduit for political gamesmanship in athletic competition. The theater of the Olympic Games was a potential validation for each side's claim of cultural and systemic superiority. It was more powerful than simple rhetoric as a result. Although Soviet claims of representing international socialism are contrary to the strategy of using sport to foster loyalty and patriotism, the reality for the USSR was that their international position would be

⁶⁰ John Talbott, "Olympics: Down from Mountain," *The Los Angeles Times*, 29 July 1971, K11.

enhanced by achieving victory and creating athletic heroes.⁶¹ Political scientists and historians alike have linked athletic competition to politics, while politicians and perhaps, even athletes have exploited the connection.

The 1984 Olympic boycott by the Soviet Union is forever linked with the 1980 Olympic boycott by the United States. Historians have generally interpreted the modern Olympics as giving governments an excuse to use sport to achieve social and political objectives.⁶² The most prevalent example of the use of the Olympic Games as a stage for political propaganda is easily seen in the example of the 1936 Games in Berlin, often known as the “Hitler Olympics.”⁶³ The Cold War rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union as it played out in 1980 and 1984 is an analogous example of this tactic, though certainly less overt. The boycott of the 1984 Los Angeles Summer Olympic Games by the Soviet Union was a direct response to the American boycott of the 1980 Moscow Summer Olympic Games.⁶⁴ The reality of the modern Olympic Games is that participating nations have continually utilized them as a place for demonstrating power and articulation of international relationships.

More recent scholarship, such as that of historian Robert Edelman, has recognized the centrality of the Olympic Games to the larger Cultural Cold War. Edelman is struck

⁶¹ Christopher R. Hill, *Olympic Politics* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), 2

⁶² For examples see: Christopher R. Hill, *Olympic Politics* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), 2; Alfred E. Senn, *Power, Politics, and the Olympic Games: A History of the Power Brokers, Events, and Controversies that Shaped the Games* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics Press, 1999)

⁶³ For more on this instance see: Christopher Hilton, *Hitler's Olympics: The 1936 Olympic Games* (New York: The History Press, 2006); David Clay Large, *Nazi Games: The Olympics of 1936* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2007); Guy Walters, *Berlin Games: How the Nazis Stole the Olympic Dream* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2006).

⁶⁴ Ken Cosgrove, “Review: Untitled,” *International Affairs* 69, No. 2 (April 1993): 361.

by how significant and considerable an element of the Cultural Cold War sport turned out to be.⁶⁵ Edelman reasons that it was shrewd and clever of the Soviets to center on the Olympics as the centerpiece of the struggle with capitalism. By focusing on the Olympic Games as a whole, the USSR was able to pit its professionals (who were claimed amateurs) against capitalism's amateurs, given the limitations then placed on the talent pool available to the West.⁶⁶ These "shamateurs" enjoyed professional style training and pay from the Soviet state. In the West, many of the best athletes focused on professional sports, many of which were not Olympic Sports, and which made the athletes ineligible to compete. This gave Soviet athletes at the Games a distinct advantage that only grew as western professional sports became more and more ubiquitous. However, once the Iron Curtain was lifted it became apparent that the powerful sport system was actually designed to mask the communist system's many weaknesses. The reality of the system differed from the international perception when Soviet athletes finally came to compete with Western professionals at the end of the Cold War. It turned out they were roughly as good as their capitalist counterparts, but they did not dominate.⁶⁷

The 1980 Boycott and 1984 Boycott have been given uneven treatment by scholars thus far. The 1980 Olympic Boycott from the American perspective has been well documented by historians. Derick Hulme's *The Political Olympics: Moscow, Afghanistan, and the 1980 U.S. Boycott* argues that the movement of Soviet troops into Afghanistan on December 27, 1979, precipitated a chain of events that was ultimately to

⁶⁵ Robert Edelman, "Foreword," *East Plays West: Sport and the Cold War*, eds. Stephen Wagg and David L. Andrews (New York: Routledge, 2007), xi.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, xii.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, xii.

lead to the largest Olympic boycott in the history of the Games. After analyzing the documentation of the interplay between the President, Congress, and the United States Olympic Committee (USOC), Hulme concludes “that never before had the tool of sport been wielded on such a massive scale in order to politically punish an "offending" nation.”⁶⁸ His analysis also includes the viewpoint that the Carter administration sought to increase the political costs to be borne by Moscow as a result of the Soviets’ continued hostile actions, and that the determination of the United States to resist their aggression would be displayed to the rest of the world through the action of the boycott.⁶⁹

Similarly, *Boycott: Stolen Dreams of the 1980 Moscow Olympic Games*, written by Jerry and Tom Caraccioli documents the lives of American athletes denied the opportunity to compete in the 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow. The analysis presents the move as the result of geopolitical conditions surrounding the boycott of the Games led by President Jimmy Carter. The Caraccioli brothers chronicled the stories of eighteen elite American athletes who trained thousands of hours for their once-in-a-lifetime chance at Olympic glory in Moscow only to become pawns in a political Cold War chess match between superpowers. The book also emphasizes the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan as the primary reason for the boycott, the efforts by a group of athletes to overturn the boycott by legal means, and the entire 1980 team eventually receiving the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian award which is bestowed by the United States Congress. Vice President Walter F. Mondale, who spoke on behalf of the boycott

⁶⁸ Derick L. Hulme, *The Political Olympics: Moscow, Afghanistan, and the 1980 U.S. Boycott* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1990), ix.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 17.

prior to the USOC's April 12, 1980 vote to officially boycott the Games, wrote the Foreword to the book. Mondale apologized to all the athletes who were denied the opportunity to compete calling them, "warriors in our country's defense of freedom."⁷⁰ This blatant jingoism demonstrates the power of the Cold Warrior narrative that has been maintained even still by American authors. Much of the writing about the Games of 1980 and 1984 remains filled with patriotic tenor.

Historian Nicholas Evan Sarantakes views the 1980 boycott in the most sweeping international context. He asserts that Jimmy Carter's move to boycott was based on foreign policy assumptions that had fundamental flaws and reflected a superficial familiarity with the Olympic movement. These basic mistakes led to a campaign that failed to meet its basic mission objectives but did manage to insult the Soviets just enough to destroy détente and restart the Cold War.⁷¹ His significant contribution to the literature is located in the idea that it was President Carter instead of President Reagan who was responsible for reheating the Cold War on behalf of the American side. Carter began the process with American-led actions in Iran and Afghanistan, despite his reputation for peace-brokering such as the SALT II agreement. President Reagan simply continued down a path that Carter set in motion, although it arguably ended up going further than President Carter might have pursued it.

⁷⁰ Jerry and Tom Caraccioli, *Boycott: Stolen Dreams of the 1980 Moscow Olympic Games* (New York: New Chapter Press, 2008), 1.

⁷¹ Nicholas Evan Sarantakes, *Dropping the Torch: Jimmy Carter, the Olympic Boycott, and the Cold War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 261.

The central deep investigation into the political relationship between 1980 and 1984 was not completed until 2007. Evelyn Mertin draws on archival material obtained in Moscow to show how the successive boycotts of the Olympic Games in Moscow in 1980, when the United States and various satellite nations stayed away, and in Los Angeles in 1984, when the Soviet Union and her satellite nations reciprocated, were handled politically by the Soviet Union.⁷² Written using mostly evidence from the former Soviet Union, Mertin determines that the Soviets' decision not to attend the 1984 Olympic Games was not a foregone conclusion. This is a revolutionary break from the bulk of the historiography of the era. The reciprocal boycott conclusion is a mainstay of nearly every scholarly analysis of the 1980 and 1984 Olympic Games. Her analysis of internal government memoranda and letters includes documents not previously accounted for in academic examination. According to Mertin, as late as April and May of 1984, ideological literature demonstrated that Soviet athletes would participate.⁷³ The main factors the Soviet government used in explaining the boycott and blaming the Americans were: missing guarantees for Soviet security, the threat of anti-Soviet and anti-Communist actions endangering the Soviet athletes and finally vague claims of the United States disregarding the Olympic Charter – the international agreement all Olympic member nations must abide by if they are to be participants.⁷⁴ The discontinuity of the reasons offered by the Soviet press suggests a lack of certainty and cohesiveness in governmental policy. Even still, for Mertin, politics had already determined supposed

⁷² Evelyn Mertin, "The Soviet Union and the Olympic Games of 1980 and 1984: Explaining the Boycotts to Their Own People," *East Plays West: Sport and the Cold War*, eds. Stephen Wagg and David L. Andrews (New York: Routledge, 2007), 235.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 246.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 246.

winner and loser before the Olympic flame had reached the host city – depriving athletes from both blocs of competing in perhaps the most important competition of the Cold War era.

American and Soviet Sports Cultures

In order to understand the critical role of sport and international athletic competition within the framework of the Cultural Cold War, an overview of the American and Soviet perspectives on the role of sport is crucial. The Olympic Games of 1980 and 1984 provided an arena in which certain Americans and Soviets could invent and popularize symbols of their political and sporting culture by linking athletic prowess to national mythology.⁷⁵ Winning became synonymous with both America and the Soviet Union by the 1980s; both populations believed their athletic prowess to be superior. For example, when the US Hockey Team defeated the Soviets in 1980 at the Winter Games in Lake Placid, New York, it afforded politicians, journalists, and the American public an opportunity to claim supremacy in the political arena.⁷⁶ Similarly, the Soviet authorities came to recognize that defeating their ideological opponents would boost Soviet prestige and foster nationalism at home.⁷⁷ Boycotting the Games was another form of “winning” to the political leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union, although it was a different type of “win.” This victory was designed to

⁷⁵ S.W. Pope, *Patriotic Games: Sporting Traditions in the American Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 40.

⁷⁶ Donald E. Abelson, “Politics on Ice: The United States, the Soviet Union, and a Hockey Game in Lake Placid,” *Canadian Review of American Studies* 40 (2010): 64.

⁷⁷ Riordan, *Soviet Sport and Soviet Foreign Policy*, 329.

demonstrate taking a nationalistic high ground, but in reality it was intended to hurt the financial results of the Games and to undermine the resultant athletic victories.

Early in the Cold War, the United States quickly asserted excellence in international competition in dozens of sports, and the media in the United States sought to popularize American athletes “winning” the games and a desire to lead the medal counts at the conclusion of an Olympic competition. Imperial Russia failed to compete in any Olympiad until the London Games of 1908. Prior to 1952, the only times Russian athletes brought home medals were at the 1908 London games and the 1912 Stockholm Games. They won a single gold and two silver medals in London, and two silver and three bronze medals in Stockholm. The Stockholm Olympics were the last with Russian competitors until after World War II. The Soviets’ absence from the Olympics during the interwar period was largely due to ideological differences between the IOC and the Soviets. It was not considered a boycott officially, and in reality the Soviets were hesitant during the period to compete in events that they would not be successful in. Thus, they hesitantly participated in soccer internationally during the same years while usually not participating in the Olympic Games.⁷⁸

In the immediate postwar years, Soviet sports were in disarray. Soviet athletes were not yet ready to enter the international sport scene as full-fledged members of the international sports community. They would not be able to perform at a level required by

⁷⁸ D’Agati, 59.

both the party and the state.⁷⁹ This quickly changed as Soviet authorities did not miss an opportunity to point out the success of athletes from socialist states in international competitions. In fact, Soviet officials went even further and drew conclusions which would lead one to believe in the superiority of the social system existing in most European countries.⁸⁰

Simultaneously the United States thought itself athletically superior to the rest of the world. Due to international successes, Americans were confident in this belief. Unlike its Soviet counterpart, the American sport scene had the greatest financial investment, and many of the best athletes concentrated in baseball and American football (at both the amateur and professional levels), neither of which were Olympic sports. Because track and field and swimming, based on strong programs in American colleges and universities, stood on a high enough competitive level to collect honors internationally, most American observers, particularly the journalists, believed that American domination of these “major” sports more than compensated for the weak showing of the Americans in “minor” sports.⁸¹ Of course, this reasoning was simply a coping mechanism for the growing excellence of the Soviet teams.

With the entry of the Soviets into the Olympic family in 1951, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) became a Cold War arena in which the superpowers

⁷⁹ Norman N. Shneidman, *The Soviet Road to Olympus: Theory and Practice of Physical Culture and Sport* (Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1978), 24.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁸¹ “Minor” sports were usually viewed in the United States as those unfamiliar to most Americans; See: Senn, 101.

competed directly.⁸² The IOC is a Swiss non-profit, non-governmental organization created by the founder of the modern Olympic Games, Pierre Baron de Coubertain in 1894. Once a year, the IOC meets with all member nations in attendance. Each member has one vote, and chooses the IOC Executive Board, which consists of twelve members. In 1951, the IOC voted to admit the Soviet Union as a full member. When American dominance in winning medals at the Games began to slip at the hands of the Soviets, accusations that the Soviet athletes were professionals drew calls for allowing American professional athletes to compete in what was traditionally an amateur competition.⁸³ The Olympic Charter clearly stated that “only persons who are amateurs within the definition laid down in article 26 of these Rules may compete in the Olympic Games.”⁸⁴ Article 26 laid out the following criteria in definition of amateurism:

An amateur is one who participates and always has participated in sport as an avocation without material gain of any kind. He does not qualify: a) If he has not a basic occupation designed to insure his present and future livelihood; b) If he receives or has received remuneration for participation in sport; c) If he does not comply with the Rules of the International Federation concerned, and the official interpretations of this rule.⁸⁵

So deep seated was this issue that even long after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the clash between professionalism and amateurism in the Olympic Games would remain controversial in the United States. National debates amongst intellectuals consistently

⁸² Senn, *Power, Politics, and the Olympic Games*, 98.

⁸³ C. L. Sulzberger, “Foreign Affairs,” *The New York Times*, July 1, 1959, 30.

⁸⁴ International Olympic Committee, “Eligibility Rules of the International Olympic Committee,” *The Olympic Charter* (1951), http://www.olympic.org/Documents/Olympic%20Charter/Olympic_Charter_through_time/1951-Olympic_Charter_Eligibility_Rules_of_the_IOC.pdf (accessed July 20, 2014), 1.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 1

contested this issue even as the Soviet Union's viability came to an end.⁸⁶ Later in Cold War chronology, steroid and human growth hormone accusations against the Soviet athletes became prevalent.

The American desire for athletic dominance and the need to best the Soviets became so ingrained in American culture that the issue of Soviet athletes' professional status was highlighted as soon as Americans perceived that the US was 'slipping,' or falling behind the Soviets in athletic dominance and medal counts. The competitive nature of American and Soviet coexistence brought the issue of the so-called amateurs of the Soviet Union into the public discourse. When it was learned that they were by American definition actually professionals, calls rang out that they needed to be met with the best the US had to offer.⁸⁷ Throughout the Cold War era, American amateurs would meet defeat at the hand of Soviet athletes who were members of the military, many of whom would receive promotions and additional pay when they achieved great international victories.⁸⁸ Although some American athletes were eventually allowed corporate endorsements and sponsorships, they never received the same level of governmental support (or demands) as the Soviet athletes. From the US perspective (and there is every indication that the USSR countered in similarly polarizing fashion), the Cold War became a compelling and authoritative rhetoric, a struggle between the forces

⁸⁶ William. F. Buckley Jr., "On the Right: Olympic Talk," *National Review* 48, 16 (September 2, 1996): 102-103.

⁸⁷ For example, see C.L. Sulzberger, "Foreign Affairs: Untying the Hand Behind Our Back," *The New York Times*, 1 Jul. 1959, 30.

⁸⁸ Dr. J. Nelson Washburn, "Blowing the Whistle," *The New York Times*, 22 Apr. 1973, 187.

of good and evil, capitalism and communism, and rationality and barbarism.⁸⁹ What better strategy to employ than to play it all out in the Games?

When the 1980 Olympic Games concluded, the Soviet Union stood as the ‘winner’ (in medal count) of every Olympics, summer and winter, for which it had entered, with the exception of Helsinki in 1952 and Tokyo in 1968.⁹⁰ The success demonstrated by Soviet athletes led much of the rest of the world to mimic their programs, especially in the Soviet bloc countries. Communist China, all the states of Eastern Europe, and other socialist countries and developing states in Africa, Asia, and Latin America sought Soviet assistance in their sports programs in the 1960s and 1970s.⁹¹ The result was an international sporting alliance that mirrored the Cold War political alliances globally.

In Moscow, Victor and Jennifer Louis, Russian journalists who purveyed information the Soviet government wanted to appear in the Western press, published a small handbook in 1964 called *Sport in the Soviet Union*. Full of cartoons, photographs, and stories about great Soviet sportsmen and sportswomen, the publication was designed to export an extremely positive overview of the Soviet sporting system. “Sport for Children,” the second chapter in the book, outlines how secondary schools oversaw physical education.

⁸⁹ Ban Wang, “The Cold War, Imperial Aesthetics, and Area Studies, *Social Text* 20, no. 3 (2002): 45-65.

⁹⁰ There is no official winner of the Olympic Games based on medal count, but it was widely held as an important measure of success—especially by the United States and the Soviet Union.

⁹¹ James Riordan, *Soviet Sport: Background to the Olympics* (New York: New York University Press, 1980), 1.

In all secondary schools, including boarding schools, compulsory physical training is supervised by a special member of the staff, who is responsible mainly for the sports items on the curriculum, but who also superintends other activities, including the morning exercises and the games played during the long break. This teacher is in regular touch with the school doctor and is assisted in his work by the *Pioneer* and *Komosol* organizations. Inspectors from the local education authorities make regular visits to all schools to ensure the maintenance of good standards. Inter-class and inter-school competitions are organized, with a variety of awards and prizes.⁹²

How a society educates its children is indicative of the importance it places on individual ideas, beliefs, and in this case, exercises. Since the publication was designed for a western audience largely unaware of the Soviet governmental structure and internal corruption, the overview of sport for children must have sounded wonderful.

In the United States, the President's Council on Youth Fitness was founded in 1955 by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, after a 1953 study authored by Dr. Kraus and Dr. Sonja Weber indicated that American youths were less physically fit than European children was published in the *Journal of the American Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation*.⁹³ Paralleling the Cold War, the program grew with each successive presidency. In 1963, President Kennedy changed the council's name to the President's Council on Physical Fitness to reflect its role to serve all Americans. An awards program was developed under President Johnson, and the name was again changed to President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports to emphasize the

⁹² Victory and Jennifer Louis, *Sport in the Soviet Union* (London, Great Britain: Pergamon Press, 1964), 7. The *Pioneer* and *Komosol* were youth organizations set up by the Soviet government to indoctrinate young men and women respectively in Communist party teachings.

⁹³ "Our History," President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition, <http://www.fitness.gov/about-pcfsn/our-history/> (accessed June 29, 2014).

importance of sports in life.⁹⁴ The program continued throughout the entirety of the Cold War and beyond to the present. However, during the administration of Presidents Carter and Reagan, the program garnered more national attention than it had in its initial years.

According to Soviet theory of physical education, not all educational components are of equal importance in the formation of the communist individual. The Soviets claimed that the most important aspect of a communist upbringing is ethical education, which should be carried out in the spirit of communist morality. All other facets of the educational process should be subordinated to the objectives of ethical education. Ethical education is accorded such an important place in the Soviet theory of physical education because it is suggested that a physically well-developed man can be as useful to society as he can be harmful, and the more fit he is the more use or harm he can bring.⁹⁵ In this case, the Soviet structure keeps the fit man from being harmful. Soviet physical education is preparation for future physical training, and a way of guaranteeing internal societal order.

Sport in modernizing societies like the Soviet Union is a serious business, with serious functions to perform: it is associated with health, hygiene, defense, patriotism, integration, productivity, international recognition, even nation-building. It is apparent that in Soviet sport there was a philosophy—notably of physical culture—that differs fundamentally from that which the West normally associates with competitive sport, or recreation, or physical education.⁹⁶ Sport was given the role of a vehicle of social change

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Shneidman, , 7.

⁹⁶ Riordan, 3-4.

in the USSR. The Soviet use of physical culture was similar to that purported by Adolf Hitler in Nazi Germany during the 1930s. High achievement in sport was considered equal to high achievements in art, ballet, opera, or technology (kul'tumost'). This element of the Soviet sport system was not all that different from that found in the United States. Since the 1920s, American sports heroes were celebrated at least on par with experts in artistic and technological fields. In the Soviet context, physical culture was very broad in scope and refers to the total program, encompassing both physical education and sport.⁹⁷

Since nearly everything in the Soviet Union was administered centrally, the presence of a well-organized professional training for sport was logical. Coaches, athletes, and administrators were all employed by the government. Coaches especially were given lengthy special training, the possibility of status and material awards, and were able to receive special honors if successful. The official debut of the USSR at the Olympics occurred at Helsinki in 1952.⁹⁸ The extent of Soviet preparation was evident from the fact that Soviet athletes contested all events in the Olympic program, with the exception of field hockey.⁹⁹ In fact, the Soviet sport system was structured entirely around the Olympic program of athletic competition, an entirely different approach from their capitalist competitors.

⁹⁷ Reet Howell, "The USSR: Sport and Politics Intertwined," *Comparative Education* Vol. 11, No. 2 (Jun., 1975): 137.

⁹⁸ Previously, they had not been allowed to compete in the Olympics as a team and had been given no recognition by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), although some individuals had been allowed under special exception.

⁹⁹ Howell., 146.

With so much invested in Olympic success, the Soviet Union became one of the most virulent opponents of any attempt to remove patriotic meaning (flags, medal tables, etc.) from the games. Although most nations favored the display of national flags, many opposed the medal tables since it detracted from individual triumphs and favored larger nations, as medal tables were published comparisons of national medal counts in each Games. Soviet sports culture ultimately achieved a certain type of victory, far surpassing all competitors. As such, it is understandable why such importance was placed on the symbols of success at the Games. The capacity of the Soviet sports system to produce athletes, like its capacity to produce weapons, cannot be doubted; it became far and away the greatest medal winner in the Olympics, leading the table at every game except Helsinki (1952), Tokyo (1964), and during the Soviet boycott of Los Angeles (1984).¹⁰⁰ With rare exception, once the Soviet sports machine gained momentum it was dominant. The unofficial professionalization of Olympic athletes in the Soviet Union made their teams more competitive than anyone in the west could have imagined.

1984 in Context

A detailed historiography of the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles is largely absent from the historiography of the Cultural Cold War. As evidenced by all of the political, cultural, and economic maneuvering by the United States Presidency, the State Department, and the LAOOC leading up to the Games, the Soviet Union chose to boycott

¹⁰⁰ Lincoln Allison, "The Olympic Movement and the End of the Cold War," *World Affairs* Vol. 157, No. 2 (Fall 1994): 94.

the 1984 Olympics. While most likely a drawn-out response to the 1980 boycott by the United States and its allies led by President Jimmy Carter of the United States, the political link to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan allowed the US government to pressure a large group of significant nations (including Japan, China, West Germany, etc) to boycott the Moscow 1980 Games. Several other nations supported the boycott, but allowed a small number of athletes to compete (including Great Britain, France, Australia, etc.). While the Soviets dominated the Games and won 195 medals, they were not as widely celebrated as expected due to a lack of television viewership globally. This was directly related to the US led boycott, as many of the potentially highest television viewing nations did not participate.

Conversely, the Soviet Union's boycott of the 1984 Los Angeles Games was not as successful at damaging the financial outcome of the Olympics or creating political pressure for the American government to change its foreign policies. Los Angeles as host city offered a unique opportunity for the United States to demonstrate to the world a new vision of the United States. Racially diverse, geographically massive, and economically powerful – Los Angeles was a new kind of megalopolis. The 1984 Olympics included more participating nations than ever before in the modern era. Despite the efforts of the Soviet Union to discourage participation, the Los Angeles Games established a new economic model for host nations and demonstrated the viability of the capitalist endeavor of reliance on corporate sponsorships to a large majority of the nations of the world. The Games were so successful financially that the IOC eventually changed the rules to ensure that some of the corporate dollars and sponsorship money

were earmarked for their operations. In the Games since Los Angeles, no host has been able to replicate the success – largely due to the inability of host cities to avoid major construction. The absence of the Soviets only made the American effort that much more successful. American athletes won 174 medals, dominating the competition much like the Soviets had in 1980 due to their rivals’ absence. The Soviet boycott did not have the same effect on participation and thus television viewership globally, so the absence of the Soviets (and noticeably, the East German team) did not hurt the apparent legitimacy of the Games in the same way as in 1980. More nations participated in 1984, more viewers watched, and the appearance of legitimacy combined with the financial boon to generate a very memorable Games.

Despite the boycott, the Games and the Olympic Arts Festival were an overwhelming economic, cultural, and athletic success. Without the Soviet (and allied) teams present to compete, the American team dominated the medal count in addition to creating the most financially successful Games of the modern era. These were the first privately run and paid for Games in the modern era. A resounding wave of American patriotism swept over the United States in 1984 – victory in the athletic arena coupled with the demonstration of economic prowess by the LAOOC’s ability to host an economically viable Olympic Games. The presidential reelection campaign of Ronald Reagan in 1984 echoed the sentiments that came from the outcome of the Games by claiming it was, “Morning Again in America.”¹⁰¹ Not surprisingly, Ronald Reagan was

¹⁰¹ George Raine, “Creating Reagan's Image: S.F. ad man Riney helped secure him a second term,” *San Francisco Gate* (9 June, 2004), <http://www.sfgate.com/business/article/Creating-Reagan-s-image-S-F-ad-man-Riney-2715098.php> (accessed August 26, 2013).

the first US President to attend the opening ceremonies of the Olympic Games. During a two-day trip to the US Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Co. (paid for by his re-election campaign), the President, a former college swimmer, assured the American team that the Soviets “don’t want to be embarrassed by having revered athletes in their country come to this country and stay.”¹⁰² Like Reagan’s campaign slogan suggested, the Games helped announce a perceived era of economic development in the United States achieved through a partnership between the government, corporate America, and the engaged citizen. Unwittingly, the Soviet’s decision to boycott created the appearance of a stronger, more economically and socially viable America easier to imagine to the American audience than it might have been had the Soviet team competed in 1984.

This dissertation is a reconsideration of the Cultural Cold War with the Olympics as central to the experience. The 1984 Olympics offer an under-examined opportunity to consider the way that sports were used as ideological warfare or soft power in the late stages of the Cold War era. The question that led to this study was simple: How did the United States use the 1984 Olympics as a cultural and ideological weapon in the Cultural Cold War, despite the Soviet Union’s decision to boycott the Olympics in Los Angeles. The bulk of the historiography regarding 1984 focuses on the question of why did the Soviets boycott? The assumed answer by most scholars has been that it was a simple retaliation for the US led boycott in 1984. However, as political scientists such as Thomas Schelling have suggested, international relations are not always a zero-sum

¹⁰² Olivia B. Waxman, “A Brief History of U.S. Presidents and the Olympics,” *Time* (24 July, 2012), <http://swampland.time.com/2012/07/27/a-brief-history-of-u-s-presidents-and-the-olympics/slide/ronald-reagan> (accessed August 26, 2013).

game.¹⁰³ Philip D'Agati's excellent recent study of why the Soviets boycotted the Games relies on a belief that international sports can serve as a form of surrogate war.¹⁰⁴ These theories are key to my study, as I believe that not only the Soviets were active in the surrogate war. In fact, the organizers of the 1984 Games prepared for the possibility of the Soviets coming to Los Angeles and their boycott. In either possible outcome, the 1984 Los Angeles Games were constructed to demonstrate the superiority of the American capitalist system to the Soviets and the world in a new form of ideological warfare or soft power. The Cultural Cold War of 1984 hinged on this moment.

Each chapter of this dissertation explores an element of the 1984 Los Angeles Games that contributed to the "victory" that the Olympics became in the Cultural Cold War. Chapter one is an exploration of how Los Angeles won the right to host the games and why the city was a politically prudent choice for the United States within the context of the Cultural Cold War. The complicated history of Los Angeles and its constructed post-WWII identity are important elements to the choice of Los Angeles as host city. Chapter two examines the boycott of the 1984 Olympic Games by the Soviet Union, how attempts were made to prevent their absence, and how plans were laid to host with or without the Soviet team's participation. The boycott is central to the buildup to 1984, but due to the financial success of the Games the Soviet absence was not the crisis that many predicted. Chapter three explores how the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee

¹⁰³ See: Thomas C. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1981).

¹⁰⁴ D'Agati, 16. Surrogate war in this context is a conflict between two or more states that features a direct competition between representatives of those states but does not feature as an expected outcome property damage or sever personal injury, including loss of life.

utilized corporate sponsorship to make the most financially successful Olympic Games of all time while simultaneously creating a “look” for the Games that would present the United States and the city of Los Angeles in an idealized manner that appeared bereft of hyper-nationalism (but in reality was not). The economic success of the Games was the greatest weapon the United States had in the cultural battle it fought in 1984. Chapter four is an analysis of the cultural legacy of the 1984 Games through a recounting of the 1984 Olympic Arts Festival which was organized by the LAOOC. The Olympic Arts Festival, like the Games, was an opportunity for the United States to create international influence and legitimacy while simultaneously claiming the position of diplomatic host nation.

Through the exploration of these avenues, the 1984 Los Angeles Games are demonstrably central to the end of the Cultural Cold War. The United States and the Soviet Union attempted to use the Games as an avenue of soft power. Due to the absence of the Soviet Union, the United States reaped immense financial and political successes that strengthened the international position of the Reagan Administration and the United States. Looking back, the Soviet boycott of the 1984 Olympics became one of the last major public denouncements of the United States by the Soviet government. Soviet leader Konstantin Chernenko died in early March of 1985 and Mikhail Gorbachev became General Secretary a few days later on March 11. Mikhail Gorbachev became the last leader of the Soviet Union and spent the remainder of the 1980s reducing Cold War tensions with the United States. Thus, the 1984 Olympics offered a final opportunity for Cold War soft-power expression by the Americans and the Soviets in the Olympic arena.

Chapter One

Bringing the Games to Los Angeles

Los Angeles was not always the metropolis that it became in the twentieth century. Its urban development came later than cities like Boston, New York, and Chicago. Even San Francisco surpassed Los Angeles in population and influence for much of the twentieth century. Like all cities, Los Angeles maintains a distinct identity that materialized under a unique set of political, economic, social, and geographic circumstances.¹⁰⁵ Los Angeles before the 1930s was a new and unknown city to much of the rest of the world and even in the United States, though for decades prior city leaders had been promoting it as the epitome of the American “good life.”¹⁰⁶ After World War II, Los Angeles and Southern California experienced a suburbanization boom promoted by the rise of a growing workforce that enjoyed the fruits of an expanding consumer society.¹⁰⁷ Ethnic diversity was prevalent in Los Angeles since its American beginnings, but in the post WWII years distinct racial groups could take shelter in their own suburban havens. At the metropolitan level, Los Angeles’s remarkable economic upsurge in the postwar era also set the stage for shifting class identities in two ways. First, Los Angeles was thriving as a center of new high-tech defense industries and as a destination of the plant relocations depleting older industrial cities like Detroit and Pittsburgh.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ Avila, xiv.

¹⁰⁶ Mike Davis, *City of Quartz* (New York: Verso Press, 1990), 6. a

¹⁰⁷ Avila, 17.

¹⁰⁸ Becky M. Nicolaides, *My Blue Heaven: Life and Politics in the Working-Class Suburbs of Los Angeles, 1925-1965* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 227.

As a result of this change after World War II combined with the already diverse population prior to the war, Southern California was one of the most racially diverse regions in the United States by the 1970s and 1980s. As a bridge between eras, the 1960s were a transitional moment in the difficult racial history of the city. Highlighted by the Watts Riot, which raged for six days and resulted in more than forty million dollars' worth of property damage, Watts was both the largest and costliest urban rebellion of the Civil Rights era. The riot spurred from an incident on August 11, 1965 when Marquette Frye, a young African American motorist, was pulled over and arrested by Lee W. Minikus, a white California Highway Patrolman, for suspicion of driving while intoxicated. As a crowd of onlookers gathered at the scene of Frye's arrest, strained tensions between police officers and the crowd erupted in a violent exchange. The outbreak of violence that followed Frye's arrest immediately touched off a large-scale riot centered in the commercial section of Watts, a deeply impoverished African American neighborhood in South Central Los Angeles. For several days, rioters overturned and burned automobiles and looted and damaged grocery stores, liquor stores, department stores, and pawnshops. Over the course of the six-day riot, over 14,000 California National Guard troops were mobilized in South Los Angeles and a curfew zone encompassing over forty-five square miles was established in an attempt to restore public order.

All told, the rioting claimed the lives of thirty-four people, resulted in more than one thousand reported injuries and almost four thousand arrests before order was restored on August 17. Throughout the crisis, public officials advanced the argument that the riot

was the work outside agitators; however, an official investigation, prompted by Governor Pat Brown, found that the riot was a result of the Watts community's longstanding grievances and growing discontentment with high unemployment rates, substandard housing, and inadequate schools. Despite the reported findings of the gubernatorial commission, following the riot, city leaders and state officials failed to implement measures to improve the social and economic conditions of African Americans living in the Watts neighborhood.¹⁰⁹

The 1970s and 1980s represented a shift in the political infrastructure of the city. Conservative mayor Sam Yorty lost in 1973 to the first (and to date only) African American mayor of Los Angeles, Tom Bradley. He won four consecutive terms before his retirement in 1993. By the 1980s, the United States had buried much of the racial strife of the 1960s in the past, and within the context of the Cultural Cold War eagerly sought to demonstrate the racial harmony that had replaced that discord. In fact, after the resignation of President Richard Nixon in 1974, the nation began a shift and by 1980 was a conservative state determined to refocus attention on the external threat of the Soviet Union once again rather than face domestic social issues like civil rights or racial inequality.¹¹⁰

The diverse but carefully constructed nature of Los Angeles made it the perfect locale for the United States Government and United States Olympic Committee to host a

¹⁰⁹ Civil Rights Digital Library, "Watts Riots," Civil Rights Digital Library (2013), http://crdl.usg.edu/events/watts_riots/?Welcome (accessed July 4, 2014).

¹¹⁰ Philip Jenkins, *Decade of Nightmares: The End of the Sixties and the Making of Eighties America* (New York: Oxford Press, 2006), 11.

Cold War Era event like the 1984 Olympics. Los Angeles was a pronounced opportunity to share the American vision of material prosperity and the *appearance* of racial harmony with the world in the later years of the Cold War, even if the racial harmony was not a reality.¹¹¹ By the 1970s and 1980s, deindustrialization hit Los Angeles, driven by the same forces of corporate profit seeking and global competition. Hit hardest were the southern industrial suburbs.¹¹² While white workers for the most part were able to retire or follow their jobs to the suburban periphery, non-whites were stranded in an economy that was suddenly minus 40,000 high-wage manufacturing and trucking jobs.¹¹³ It was no coincidence that the heart of the Olympic experience in 1984 was in South Los Angeles, the center of the postwar nonwhite working class neighborhoods that had been so disastrously hit. Mayor Bradley was also at the center of the transformation of downtown Los Angeles. He was properly criticized for allowing corporate land grabs and foreign payoffs, but was also able to smooth out the waves of social unrest in Los Angeles during the 1970s and 1980s. This enabled new concepts of an urban future to surface, and opened the space of the city to the fantasies of developers who had their eyes on the downtown prize.¹¹⁴

The 1984 “cleanup” of these neighborhoods was epitomized by a crackdown by local officials on the downtown homeless and the illegal practice of garage living by poor

¹¹¹ For further reading see: Shana Bernstein, *Bridges of Reform Interracial Civil Rights Activism in Twentieth-Century Los Angeles* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011) and Mark Brilliant, *The Color of America Has Changed: How Racial Diversity Shaped Civil Rights Reform in California 1941-1978* (New York: Oxford University Press, (2010).

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 329.

¹¹³ Mike Davis, “The New Industrial Peonage,” *Hermitage* (Summer 1991): 8.

¹¹⁴ Roger Keil, *Los Angeles: Globalization, Urbanization, and Social Struggles* (New York: J. Wiley, 1988), 82.

immigrants and families.¹¹⁵ The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) even added thirty horse-mounted officers downtown and stepped up their stopping and questioning of Skid Row homeless in an effort to clean up the city in time for the Olympics. “We have increased the intensity of everything we do,” said Captain Billy R. Wedgeworth, commander of the department’s central sector. “We’re trying to sanitize the area.”¹¹⁶ This kind of visible poverty did not mesh with the image of Los Angeles as a racially harmonious utopia. The increased law enforcement drew fire from attorneys who represented the transients, but the police continued undaunted. “We want to give the impression that we are omnipresent,” said Deputy Chief Lew Ritter.¹¹⁷ Many letters to the editor appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* criticizing the police actions. One phrase that was popularly used suggested that the city had “declared war on the homeless.”¹¹⁸ The LAPD moved into downtown on August 1, 1984 and cleared what they saw as trash – brown sacks and duffel bags – and tossed them into a truck bound for the dump. Gone were wallets, identification papers, and the possessions of the homeless who lived in the small park on Gladys Avenue, near Skid Row. Perry Fisher, a former city parks maintenance worker who lived in the park said the city workers ignored people who were yelling about their property “and then they just drove around the corner with smiles on their faces.”¹¹⁹ This kind of bad press was not what the United States Government, the LAOOC, or the LAPD wanted on the eve of the Games. Instead of following San

¹¹⁵ Nicolaides, 332.

¹¹⁶ Kevin Roderick, “L.A. Polishing Its Image for Olympic Visitors,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 21, 1984.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Valerie Flugge, “Police Action Against the Homeless,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 7, 1984.

¹¹⁹ Kevin Roderick, “It was Trash to Police—but Life’s Necessities to Derelicts,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 2, 1984.

Diego's example and hiring thousands of homeless to literally clean the streets for the city, Los Angeles chose this more aggressive approach.¹²⁰ Regardless, the controversy over the displacement of the homeless lost much of its momentum once the Games began and the competitions were underway.

Los Angeles community leaders and citizens began a long love affair with the Olympic Games in the early 20th century. As the City of Los Angeles began to grow in population, concerned community members began to seek to host the Olympics for the first time during World War I. During the 1920s and early 1930s the growth became even more pronounced. Contrary to the experience of its urban counterparts elsewhere, Los Angeles exhibited patterns of demographic and economic growth even throughout the Great Depression of the 1930s. In that decade, Los Angeles' population increased by six hundred thousand inhabitants, with more than 87 percent of that increase due to net migration. Also in contrast to the national pattern, industrial employment in Los Angeles rose sharply.¹²¹ William Mary Garland, one of southern California's biggest land speculators and the only two-term president of the industry's most powerful lobbying group, the National Association of Realtors, spearheaded Los Angeles' drive to win the Olympic Games for 1932.¹²² At the 1923 International Olympic Committee (IOC) Congress in Rome, President Baron de Coubertin announced Los Angeles as the host for the games of the Xth Olympiad. In 1932 the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing

¹²⁰ Kevin Clark, "Transients Turn Street Cleaners: Gaslamp Job Project Gets off to Sweeping Start," *Los Angeles Times*, May 5, 1984.

¹²¹ Avila, 25.

¹²² Mark Dyreson and Matthew Llewellyn, "Los Angeles is *the* Olympic City: Legacies of the 1932 and 1984 Olympic Games," *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 25, no. 14 (1994).

Committee (LAOOC) ran a financially profitable Olympics during the worst statistical year of the Great Depression. With the assistance of substantial subsidies for food and accommodation, 1500 athletes from thirty-four nations competed in Los Angeles in 1932 despite the poor international economy.¹²³ The \$1.5 million surplus helped create an image of Los Angeles as a uniquely vibrant, modern metropolis that could host a major event like the Olympics and help it to thrive. In reality, the Games were kept relatively small due to the global economic depression – making it easier to manage costs of all kinds. However, the key to encouraging participation in 1932 (and in Games thereafter) was the innovation of making the Games affordable to competitors by assisting travel and in constructing the first true Olympic Village, an innovation that combined economy with the spirit of Olympism.¹²⁴ The idea of Olympism centers on the camaraderie of the athletes from different nations and participants, and their living together in the Village during the games at an affordable cost ensured more participants would come than ever before. When the City of Los Angeles sought to host the 1984 Olympics, the image created in 1932 would be the main ammunition that organizers thought they would need for winning the bid. Los Angeles turned out to be the only bidder, but early in the process this constructed identity of Olympism translated through the globalism of the 1970s and 1980s helped to get Los Angeles through the early portions of the process.

¹²³ John R. Gold and Margaret M. Gold, “From A to B: the Summer Olympics, 1896-2008,” in John R. Gold and Margaret M. Gold, eds., *Olympic Cities: City Agendas, Planning, and the World’s Games, 1896-2016* (Routledge: London and New York, 2011), 32.

¹²⁴ Tenth Olympic Committee of the Games of Los Angeles, *Tenth Olympiad: Los Angeles 1932 Official Report* (TOC: Los Angeles, 1932), 235.

The 1932 Olympics introduced the nation and the world to the California lifestyle and to the many products consumers could purchase in the quest to acquire the modern ideal. California clothing companies used the Olympics to push their new leisure and sportswear designs. Swimming, tennis, and golf costumes invaded everyday fashion, as did a new palette of bright “California” colors.¹²⁵ The 1932 Games’ financial survival rested on the city issuing bonds and capitalizing on connections with the private sector, most notably the film industry, which actively promoted the Olympics. Los Angeles arrived on the international scene in large part due to the 1932 Olympic experience combined with the growing film industry of Hollywood. This purposeful marriage between the Olympic Games, Hollywood, and corporate manufactures in 1932 was the template for the ultimate reliance upon corporate sponsorship by the LAOOC that would make the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles the most profitable in history.

The Olympic Games had developed into a financially disastrous undertaking for the host nations during the second half of the twentieth century. The financial success of the 1932 Los Angeles Games was only a distant memory for most, but not to those community leaders who dreamed of hosting another Games in Los Angeles. After 1932, the city bid to host every Summer Games that was to occur. After being awarded the 1984 Games, in June of 1978 the negotiations IOC and the City Council of Los Angeles began to break down over a provision in the contract that required the municipality to assume financial liability for the Games. Mayor Bradley announced that he would ask the City Council to withdraw the bid for the games if this provision was to be enforced,

¹²⁵ Kevin Starr, *The Dream Endures: California Enters the 1940s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 18-19.

leading to the rebirth of the private Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee.¹²⁶ The committee then assumed the financial risks associated with hosting the Olympic Games. In previous Olympics, the host city was forced to take out bonds in order to pay for construction and other preparations with the hope that the profits and in some cases television contracts from the Games would be enough to recover their costs – this was not the case in any Olympics between the 1932 and 1984 Olympic Games, both in Los Angeles.

The organization of the Los Angeles Games took place against a background of financial and political crises in recent Olympics. Just a year before the Los Angeles Olympic bid began moving forward in 1977, the Montreal Games – plagued by corruption and unexpected cost overruns due in part to the exorbitant demands of international sports authorities – had sustained a \$1 billion deficit. Montreal in 1976 also had severe political problems, including a boycott by many African countries. The Summer Olympics prior, in Munich, saw one of the most notorious terrorist attacks of the postwar era, the fatal Palestinian assault on Israeli athletes. The Olympics before that, in Mexico City in 1968, had seen a massacre of student protestors. Two years after Los Angeles was awarded the 1984 Games, the planning was disrupted by the American-led boycott of the 1980 Moscow Games. Sixty-five national Olympic committees did not send teams to Moscow. The Olympics had become both a financial and political endeavor of sizeable risk, one that the City of Los Angeles would not be willing to

¹²⁶ Kenneth Reich, *Making it Happen: Peter Ueberroth and the 1984 Olympics* (Santa Barbara: Capra Press, 1986), 24.

gamble on by itself. The political stakes were high for everyone involved – at the national level as part of the Cultural Cold War – and at the local level where elected officials could not afford to be affiliated with a potentially financially disastrous undertaking.

Planning to host the Summer Olympics in 1984 remained a dream of the many in Los Angeles since the hosting of the 1932 Games. In 1939, the Southern California Olympic Organizing Committee (SCOOG) was formed, mostly from members of the 1932 LAOOC and Olympic Memorial Committee.¹²⁷ This group comprised the first bureaucracy designed specifically to promote legacy in the history of the Olympic movement. The members from Southern California valued the hosting of the Games more than most of their contemporaries since they had already hosted the Games successfully and then immediately saw the political potential that was available. Although the expression of power unlocked by Hitler and Germany in 1936, by 1980 and 1984 the expression of power was shrouded in a thin veneer of internationalism. The SCOOG's main goal was to bring the Olympics back to Los Angeles.¹²⁸ Proposals were made to the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) for every single Olympic Games during the four decades between 1932 and 1984, the only city in the world to persevere in this way. Unwilling to give up, the SCOOG determined the 1976 Olympics were a strong possibility and focused attention on the possibility of a bicentennial celebration

¹²⁷ Staff, "Opening of the Olympics to Be Re-enacted Here," *Los Angeles Times*, July 30, 1936.

¹²⁸ Mark Dyreson and Matthew Llewellyn, 2000.

combined with the Summer Games.¹²⁹ Mistaken that the IOC would favor the United States site because of the bicentennial, Montreal was deemed the host city, much to the chagrin of the SCOOG. Los Angeles tried again in 1980, this time the IOC chose Moscow.¹³⁰ The SCOOG was not to be deterred.

In 1978 the only other city to mount a bid effort for 1984 was Tehran, Iran. However, Tehran pulled out of the race as the 1979 Iranian Revolution loomed on the horizon and Los Angeles' bid became the only option for the IOC.¹³¹ By the 1980s, Los Angeles had become the third largest city in the United States, behind New York and Chicago. With an eye on the involvement of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan and the larger Cold War, President Jimmy Carter extended an official invitation to the IOC to award the Olympics to Los Angeles and the United States. In his letter, he explained, "as site of the 1932 Olympic Games, and as one of the most dynamic cities in the United States, Los Angeles possesses the tradition and the human and physical resources which will insure an exemplary staging of the Olympic Games in 1984."¹³² With the city's social complexity from sight, a precedent for athletic competition within a sanitized, regimented environment suitable for "family entertainment" was already in place at Dodger Stadium.¹³³ Dodger Stadium was a very visible potential venue for sporting

¹²⁹ Bob Oates, "Spirit of '76: L.A.'s Fight to Stage the Olympics," *Los Angeles Times*, April 2, 1970.

¹³⁰ Erwin Baker, "L.A. Opens Battle to Host Olympics in 1980," *Los Angeles Times*, September 22, 1974," "Moscow Voted Site of 1980 Olympics," *Los Angeles Times*, October 24, 1974.

¹³¹ Tom Bradley, "Letter to the City Council," April 17, 1974, Tom Bradley Papers, Collection 239, Box 874, Folder 5, UCLA; Kenneth Reich, "It's Official: L.A. Is Only Candidate for Olympics," *Los Angeles Times*, November 2, 1977.

¹³² Jimmy Carter, "Letter to Lord Michael Killanin," April 7, 1978, Tom Bradley Papers, Collection 239, Box 148, Folder 4, UCLA.

¹³³ Avila, 224.

events like the demonstration event of baseball during the Games, and a strong example of the already-in-place infrastructure of Los Angeles. Having lost the 1980 bid previously to Moscow, the United States sought to regain international prestige by hosting in 1984.¹³⁴ The failed bid for the 1980 Olympics, with promises of immense profits, had not convinced the IOC that Los Angeles was ready to host another Olympic Games.¹³⁵ This was especially disappointing for the United States while the bid was underway in the 1970s amidst the disappointments of Watergate, the Nixon resignation, and the final withdrawal from Vietnam. American international power appeared weaker than it had ever been since before World War II.

Ironically, the United States would boycott the Moscow Games in 1980 at the behest of President Carter a few short years after his invitation to the IOC to consider Los Angeles. The invitation was nevertheless successful, and Los Angeles won the right to host the 1984 Olympics. The 1984 Summer Olympic Games were officially awarded to Los Angeles by the IOC on May 17, 1978.¹³⁶ This award was depicted by many in the press as the beginning of a return by the United States to a position of international strength, another demonstration of soft power. Before the United States boycotted Moscow, the plan to host in 1984 was in place. Even though within the context of the Cultural Cold War hosting the Games was an immense opportunity to demonstrate the

¹³⁴ Tom Bradley, "Letter to the City Council," April 17, 1974, Tom Bradley Papers, Collection 239, Box 874, Folder 5, UCLA.

¹³⁵ Erwin Baker, "L.A. Opens Battle to Host Olympics in 1980," *Los Angeles Times*, September 22, 1974; Erwin Baker, "Bradley Names 9 for Vienna Trip to Seek '80 Olympics for L.A.," *Los Angeles Times*, October 23, 1974; "Moscow Voted Site of 1980 Olympics," *Los Angeles Times*, October 23, 1974.

¹³⁶ Tom Bradley, "Agreement between the IOC and the City of Los Angeles," October 27, 1978, Tom Bradley Papers, Collection 239, Box 203, Folder 5, UCLA.

power of the United States (in the Games immediately following those of the Soviet Union), Los Angeles sought economy in staging the games due to the financial disasters that had occurred elsewhere. What remained to be seen was how the financing of the undertaking would be put into place.

Paying for 1984

The dual driving forces in Los Angeles to host the 1984 Games were the Southern California Committee for the Olympic Games (SCCOG) and City of Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley. Following the unsuccessful bid for the 1980 Games, they both campaigned openly for the right to host the 1984 Summer Games. The public response in Los Angeles was not all positive. Thousands of letters were sent to the office of Mayor Bradley asking him not to pursue the Olympics due to the costs associated, and some even asked for the right to vote as a city on the issue. “It is not reasonable to affect my taxes to pay for games unless the majority of voters would approve,” stated resident Dorothy Hobson in her letter to Mayor Bradley in November of 1977.¹³⁷ Others, like resident Ray McKnight, feared the scope of hosting such an event without public approval. McKnight argued, “...the 1984 Olympic Games is an event of such magnitude involving thousands of people, it will take the cooperation of a majority of the citizens of

¹³⁷ Dorothy Hobson, “Letter to Mayor Bradley,” November 30, 1977, Tom Bradley Papers, Collection 239, Box 4746, Folder 3, UCLA.

Los Angeles. For this reason I feel the voters have a right to decide whether to undertake this task or not.”¹³⁸ Mr. McKnight’s estimate was actually woefully low, it involved millions. Varying levels of alarm were present in these letters. While many were interested in hosting the Olympics, the recurring theme in the majority of the letters was taxpayer concern for cost overruns and excesses based on the financial failures of the Games held in the recent past. The public of Los Angeles continually reacted as if this was a public undertaking, which was the norm in most host cities up until 1984. As Jennie Blackadar stated:

’I’m alarmed!’ The IOC seems to be acting like a spoiled, poor little rich kid who is used to having everything it asks for, with no regard to what the cost may be. I think the stand you have been making is good for all concerned. Los Angeles would love to host the games, but we should only do it, if we (LA) can hold firmly the reins on money expenditures [sic]. If LA cannot keep a very tight hold of the whole situation at NO COST to the taxpayers, I think we should bow out, and let the IOC convince someone else to host the games (at a loss!).¹³⁹

The letters expressed an overwhelming concern for taxpayer costs. As a result of this public pressure, later in 1979 the City of Los Angeles City Council adopted Ordinance No. 150,796 and the residents of the City later voted in favor of charter Section 436, both severely restricting the use of city funds or the incurring of city costs in connection with the Games.¹⁴⁰ The public was not willing to foot the bill for 1984. As a result, the City of Los Angeles adopted an official stance regarding the hosting of the 1984 Olympic Games early on and reiterated it consistently throughout the bidding process:

¹³⁸ Ray McKnight, “Letter to Mayor Bradley,” November 26, 1977, Tom Bradley Papers, Collection 239, Box 4746, Folder 3, UCLA.

¹³⁹ Jennie Blackadar, “Letter to Mayor Bradley,” May 23, 1978, Tom Bradley Papers, Collection 239, Box 4746, Folder 3, UCLA.

¹⁴⁰ Ray Remy, “Olympic Facilities Improvement Program for Games of the XXIII Olympiad – 1984,” Tom Bradley Papers, Collection 239, Box 148, Folder 4, UCLA.

Arrangements are to be Spartan. The Games are to be financed from funds received in consequence of the staging of the games themselves. The funds used to stage the Games and for ultimate reimbursement to the City for advance appropriations pursuant to the staging of the Games, will come from such sources as other levels of government, other income-generating programs, private contributions, and from anticipated City revenues directly attributable to the 1984 Olympic Games. This policy dictates a significantly different approach as compared to other recent Games. Every reasonable effort will be made to accommodate the needs of the IOC. However, all final decisions must be reserved to the IOC and the local Organizing Committee pursuant to contractual agreements.¹⁴¹

The City of Los Angeles was not willing to assume any financial risk in order to host the Games. The taxpayers had spoken loudly, and amidst the financial uncertainties of the era associated with hosting the Olympics, wanted assurances that they would not be footing the bill. Additionally, because of these constraints, the City of Los Angeles was unable to advance construction funds for the proposed projects.

Since at least World War II, the United States consisted of an economy, culture, and political system built around the promises of mass consumption, both in terms of material life and the more idealistic goals of greater freedom, democracy and equality.¹⁴² A combined consumer/citizen/taxpayer/voter gained influence in a consumerized republic, where self-interested citizens increasingly viewed government policies like other market transactions, judging them according to how well served they were personally.¹⁴³ However, the system was flagging by the 1970s, an economic recession had grabbed hold of the United States, but the ideology of the nation was still very much

¹⁴¹ City Council of Los Angeles, "Policy for City of Los Angeles Bid for 1984 Olympic Games," June 19, 1978, Tom Bradley Papers, Collection 239, Box 874, Folder 4, UCLA.

¹⁴² Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Vintage Books, 2003), 7.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 9.

ties to the promises of a capitalist system driven by mass consumption. The Watergate Crisis had led to a crisis in confidence in the national government, the economy was struggling through a period of stagflation that was exacerbated by an oil embargo led by the OPEC nations against the United States, and the subsequent economic woes of the nation were slow to subside. The financial considerations for hosting the 1984 Games support this theory. Local residents did not feel that taking such a financial risk was worth it. However, private enterprises led by realtors and community investment associations decided that paying for the Games was a sound investment, one that their consumers would be attracted to. As a result, the economics of the 1984 Games revolutionized how the Olympics would be run in the future – since corporate sponsorship expectations and television rights became central sources of funding going forward.

As a result, the City, led by Mayor Bradley's office sought to involve a private non-profit organizing committee that would be the financially responsible entity for any cost overruns and to secure federal funding to aid in the costs of hosting the Games. However, the City would still be involved in the organizing of the Games. The recent financial overruns of the 1976 Summer Games in Montreal were fresh in the mind of the public as well as the elected officials in Los Angeles. The City Council was made aware of the hard numbers as early as 1977. The total costs of 1976 Games had been calculated at \$1.2 billion, while the net revenues were limited to \$359 million, setting up a deficit of

roughly \$850 million to be absorbed by the host city.¹⁴⁴ This was unacceptable to the City of Los Angeles, as reflected by the City Council's decision and the public sentiment expressed in letters to Mayor Bradley and the Council.

John Argue, President of the SCCOG, expressed in his meeting with Mayor Bradley on June 28, 1977 that if Los Angeles was awarded the Olympic Games that an organizing committee would be created and it would be the responsible economic entity.¹⁴⁵ Argue also estimated that hosting in Los Angeles would be very different from the previous experience in Montreal. Capital expenditures at Montreal amounted to \$1.068 billion, and \$800 million was spent on the Olympic Stadium. Argue explained that Montreal, "pretty much started from scratch with respect to the necessary venues, whereas Los Angeles could conduct a complete Olympics on short notice."¹⁴⁶ His vision for the Games in Los Angeles included reducing capital expenditures and increasing endorsement revenues, leading him to project planned expenditures at \$183.5 million and estimated revenues at \$534.25 million.¹⁴⁷ The projections from the very beginning in Los Angeles suggested that these Olympics might actually be profitable if managed correctly due to a plan centered on a lesser amount of new infrastructure construction than in prior Olympics.

¹⁴⁴ "Report from City Administrative Officer to the Council," May 2, 1977, Tom Bradley Papers, Collection 239, Box 203, Folder 5, UCLA.

¹⁴⁵ John Argue, "Letter from Southern California Committee for the Olympic Games to Thornton Bradshaw, Philip Hawley, & Paul Sullivan," July 18, 1977, Tom Bradley Papers, Collection 239, Box 203, Folder 5, UCLA.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

The precedent for federal aid in hosting the Olympic Games was set by Lake Placid, New York when it prepared to host the 1980 Winter Olympics. Passed by Congress, Public Law 94-427, “The Olympic Winter Games Authorization Act of 1976,” declared that, “it is desirable for Americans of present and future generations to be assured outdoor recreational resources,” and outlined the acceptability of federal funds being used for Olympic site development if facilities would later be available to the citizenry.¹⁴⁸ Seeking to capitalize on the precedent, Mayor Bradley and his advisors compiled and then transmitted a grant application for construction and rehabilitation of permanent facilities located within the City of Los Angeles which would be essential for the proper staging of the 1984 Games amounting to \$141 million.¹⁴⁹ He then went on to send letters to the President of the United States Jimmy Carter, the Speaker of the House of Representative of the United States, Thomas O’Neil, and the Senate of the United States Majority Leader Robert C. Byrd in July of 1979. In each he enclosed a copy of the proposal for federal funding assistance for capital facilities for the staging of the 1984 Olympic Games. He hoped to encourage these leaders to work with the members of the California Congressional delegation as they formally applied for federal funding.¹⁵⁰ Federal funds were sought that would create infrastructure that would function and benefit the communities they were constructed in long after the Games were over.

¹⁴⁸ Ray Remy, “Olympic Facilities Improvement Program for Games of the XXIII Olympiad – 1984,” Tom Bradley Papers, Collection 239, Box 148, Folder 4, UCLA.

¹⁴⁹ Tom Bradley, “Memo to the City Council,” May 21, 1979, Tom Bradley Papers, Collection 239, Box 874, Folder 3, UCLA.

¹⁵⁰ Tom Bradley, “Letter to the Speaker of the House, Thomas P. O’Neil,” July 6, 1979; Tom Bradley, “Letter to the Senate Majority Leader, Robert C. Byrd,” 6 July, 1979; Tom Bradley, “Letter to President Jimmy Carter,” July 6, 1979, Tom Bradley Papers, Collection 239, Box 203, Folder 4, UCLA.

The proposal sent by the City of Los Angeles sought similar Federal assistance as that which had been appropriated to Lake Placid. The organizers requested \$141.5 million dollars, but justified that the request was small in proportion to the amount of money appropriated for Lake Placid since the Winter Olympics involved less than one-fourth the number of participants of the Summer Olympics.¹⁵¹ The organizers also explained that Los Angeles was chosen partly because the city and adjacent communities had thirty-five existing sites already available, which would help to minimize the costs of hosting the Games.

Congress was not universally in support of funding the 1984 Los Angeles Games. In a letter from Charles Wilson of the House of Representatives (Hawthorne, CA) to other House of Representatives members a few days later, he outlined the financial pitfalls of this type of funding. He stated, “I don’t think anyone will disagree with me that hosting the Olympic Games has, in recent years, become a very expensive proposition. This is well documented in the case of the 1976 Montreal Games.”¹⁵² He went on to outline the cost overruns that Congress has absorbed from the 1980 Lake Placid Winter Olympics.

Congress originally authorized \$49.4 million for Lake Placid. This amount has long since been surpassed and, if the current trend is not reversed; Federal assistance for Lake Placid could easily exceed \$100 million. Coupled with this is a funding request submitted recently by the City of Los Angeles for \$141.5 million in Federal Assistance to host the 1984 Summer Games.¹⁵³

¹⁵¹ Ray Remy, “Olympic Facilities Improvement Program for Games of the XXIII Olympiad – 1984,” Tom Bradley Papers, Collection 239, Box 148, Folder 4, UCLA.

¹⁵² Charles H Wilson, “Letter to other House of Representatives Members,” July 16, 1979, Tom Bradley Papers, Collection 239, Box 203, Folder 4, UCLA.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

Representative Wilson then moved to put a cap on the amount of Federal tax dollars that went to host the Olympics. Congressman Wilson's estimates were actually lower than what the dollars amounted to in reality. The Congress appropriated \$53.9 million for the Lake Placid Winter Olympics. In addition, an Economic Development Administration Title I grant, under the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965, as amended, of \$1.6 million, was awarded to the State of NY to rehabilitate a spur railroad to accommodate rail passenger travel to the Games. Furthermore, \$11 million was appropriated to Lake Placid for completion of facilities construction, raising the Federal investment in the 1980 Olympic winter games to nearly \$67 million.¹⁵⁴

Representative Charles H. Wilson, at the time a nine-term Democratic congressman from Hawthorne, CA, became the vocal opponent to federal financial aid for the 1984 Games. He and LAOOC President Ueberroth battled in the press – Wilson even demanded that Ueberroth issue him a written apology for telling a student audience in his congressional district that it ought to put more pressure on Wilson to support federal funds for a proposed \$19.5 million Olympic swimming facility in the district.¹⁵⁵ Mayor Bradley hoped to enrich the neighborhoods that would get these facilities that were paid for by public or private funds.

A backlash developed against Los Angeles in Congress due to the financial overruns in Lake Placid and suspicions (suggested by Wilson in his Nov. 8 letter to President Carter) that the requested \$141.5 million for Los Angeles might be used to help

¹⁵⁴ Ray Remy, "Olympic Facilities Improvement Program for Games of the XXIII Olympiad – 1984," 1979, Tom Bradley Papers, Collection 239, Box 148, Folder 4, UCLA.

¹⁵⁵ Kenneth Reich, "Olympic Funding Squabble Intensifies; Apology Sought," *Los Angeles Times*, November 30, 1979.

lure a new National Football League (NFL) team to occupy the Coliseum.¹⁵⁶ This movement percolated up to the White House as well, where the office of President Jimmy Carter explained that while the 1984 Olympics were going to be held in Los Angeles, the President had recommended that the IOC and all nations join in supporting a permanent site for the Summer Olympic Games in Greece.¹⁵⁷ He went on to explain that, “the Federal Government would assist and support the City of Los Angeles and provide financial assistance where justified through regular economic development and construction programs, but that the majority of the financing for the conduct and support of the Games would, of course, have to be derived from non-federal sources.”¹⁵⁸ The White House reply to the request for funds by Los Angeles was directly in response to the Congressional backlash over the funds spent on Lake Placid. Mayor Bradley, undeterred, replied to Assistant Watson by pushing the issue and asking if the Economic Development Assistance funds for Los Angeles would be in kind with Lake Placid.¹⁵⁹

The battle between Mayor Bradley and Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs Jack Watson played out publicly in the press, much like that between Congressman Wilson and Peter Ueberroth. Many in Los Angeles assumed that all of the roadblocks put up by Watson meant that no federal financial aid would be awarded. An angry Bradley responded:

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Jack Watson, “Letter to Tom Bradley from Jack Watson, Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs,” January 29, 1980, Tom Bradley Papers, Collection 239, Box 203, Folder 2, UCLA.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Tom Bradley, “Letter to Jack Watson,” February 19, 1980, Tom Bradley Papers, Collection 239, Box 203, Folder 2, UCLA.

The same kind of crap was thrown out when we were trying to get the games. People were saying, “We’re not going to get the games.” But we did. And not it’s the same thing, people saying we won’t get any money. I’m convinced we’ll get the money...If nothing comes of this, you come down to City Hall, and I’ll eat the words.¹⁶⁰

The LAOOC abandoned the quest for federal assistance on January 29, 1980, but Mayor Bradley was still determined to get the federal funding he expected based on prior experiences. Later, the LAOOC would ask for federal assistance – but from a different President, and Mayor Bradley never had to eat his words since it was no longer his project.

Congressional reticence over the funding issue continued, and many still feared that the Games in Los Angeles would receive broad financial support from the Federal Government. Senator Hollings of South Carolina questioned the office of the President regarding the issue. The White House was quick to respond and Assistant Watson outlined that while the President supported the Los Angeles Olympic effort, at no time did his office suggest that the facilities for those Games would be funded in the same manner as the facilities for the 1980 Winter Games in Lake Placid. In fact, Assistant Watson explained that they had discussed with city officials the possible use of federal funds for the construction or refurbishment of some facilities, but pointed out that only where a facility was planned which had long-term economic or other community development benefits and where the project met all relevant federal program criteria might the City apply for funds, such as the eventual renovation of the Coliseum.¹⁶¹ The

¹⁶⁰ Kenneth Reich, “Bradley, Carter Aide Clash on Olympics Aid Question,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 26, 1980.

¹⁶¹ Jack Watson, “Letter to Senator Hollings,” March 21, 1980, Tom Bradley Papers, Collection 239, Box 203, Folder 2, UCLA.

federal funding question was finally resolved by this statement. It became the official policy when federal funding was requested by the City of Los Angeles and later the LAOOC.

Later the same day, when President Carter met with a group of US Olympic athletes and their representatives at the White House, he announced that the country would not be participating in the 1980 Olympic Summer Games due to Soviet aggression in Afghanistan. The president declared that no matter what other nations decided, “Ours will not go. ... The decision has been made.”¹⁶² The Olympic Games had been thrust into world politics once again, much like it had been in 1936 in Berlin or in 1972 in Munich. Though President Carter had made it quite clear that the United States would not be competing in Moscow, the US Olympic Committee (USOC) had to vote to make it official. After weeks of ongoing meetings between the President’s representatives and membership of the USOC and despite strong sentiment for voting against the boycott, on April 12, 1980 the USOC voted by a two to one margin to reject the invitation to participate in the Moscow Olympic Games.¹⁶³ Quickly, support for the 1984 Los Angeles Games found new supporters in the United States. Congressman Julian Dixon of California wrote to President Carter in support on April 17, 1980, “I am writing to commend you for your leadership and effectiveness in organizing an boycott of the 1980 Moscow Olympic Games.... I am convinced that the best means of overcoming the doubts about the future of the Olympics as a result of the 1980 boycott is to commit the

¹⁶² Caracciolo and Caraccioli, 82.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 114.

resources of the Federal government to the successful conduct of the 1984 Games.”¹⁶⁴

The Carter administration was quietly supportive of the Los Angeles bid for the 1984 Games. President Reagan made the Games into a symbol of American strength.

The Rebirth of the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee

On June 19, 1978, Mayor Bradley sent a committee of private citizens to meet with Lord Killanin of the IOC in Montreal. The members of the committee presented a proposal under which a private corporation called the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee (LAOOC) would in effect replace the City of Los Angeles as the applicant for the 1984 Games. They also presented a proposed contract between the new corporation and the IOC to which the city would be a party.¹⁶⁵ John Argue, the chairman of the LAOOC reaffirmed publicly that the 1984 Olympics would be conducted at no cost to the taxpayer of Los Angeles on June 28, 1978 before a general meeting of the City Council.¹⁶⁶ The suggestions from the LAOOC were studied by the IOC Executive Committee and its advisers and were determined to not meet with the provisions of IOC rules. Specifically, the IOC rejected the bid because it did not comply with Rule 4 of the IOC which states that “The national organizing committee and the city chosen shall be jointly and severally responsible for all commitments entered into and shall assume

¹⁶⁴ Julian Dixon, “Letter to President Carter,” April 17, 1980, Tom Bradley Papers, Collection 239, Box 203, Folder 2, UCLA.

¹⁶⁵ Lord Killanin, “Letter to Mayor Bradley,” July 18, 1978, Tom Bradley Papers, Collection 239, Box 874, Folder 2, UCLA.

¹⁶⁶ ICPR Public Relations, “Press Release” June 28, 1978, Tom Bradley Papers, Collection 239, Box 874, Folder 2, UCLA.

complete financial responsibility for the organization of the Games.”¹⁶⁷ The IOC counter-proposed for Los Angeles to sign the IOC agreement.¹⁶⁸ This impasse was troubling to the City of Los Angeles, which needed the LAOOC in order to abide by the newly passed city laws regarding the costs associated with hosting the Games. The LAOOC telexed the IOC on July 19, 1978 and requested an extension of the deadline for settlement from July 31 to August 31, 1978.¹⁶⁹

The President of the USOC, Bob Kane, responded to this new crisis by inviting Mayor Bradley and John Argue to meet with him at USOC headquarters in Colorado Springs. At the meeting, he presented a proposal which he believed would satisfy the IOC and at the same time comply with the financial conditions insisted upon by the City of Los Angeles.¹⁷⁰ Later that day, John Argue sent a Telex to Lord Killian requesting a face to face meeting in New York City and an official extension to the resolve to August 31.¹⁷¹ Word of the impasse spread to the media in Los Angeles, and the possibility of an Olympic pull out was discussed.¹⁷² If the new proposal was rejected, the Los Angeles Games might not ever occur.

Fears were allayed on August 31, 1978, the deadline agreed upon after the extension was granted by the IOC to the LAOOC. In a Telex from the IOC to Mayor

¹⁶⁷ ICPR Public Relations, “Press Release,” July 19, 1978, Lord Killanin, “Letter to Mayor Bradley,” 18 July, 1978, Tom Bradley Papers, Collection 239, Box 874, Folder 2, UCLA.

¹⁶⁸ Lord Killanin, “Letter to Mayor Bradley,” July 18, 1978, Tom Bradley Papers, Collection 239, Box 874, Folder 2, UCLA.

¹⁶⁹ ICPR Public Relations, “Press Release,” July 19, 1978, Lord Killanin, “Letter to Mayor Bradley,” 18 July, 1978, Tom Bradley Papers, Collection 239, Box 874, Folder 2, UCLA.

¹⁷⁰ Tom Bradley, “Memo to the City Council of Los Angeles,” July 31, 1978, Lord Killanin, “Letter to Mayor Bradley,” 18 July, 1978, Tom Bradley Papers, Collection 239, Box 874, Folder 2, UCLA.

¹⁷¹ John Argue, “Telex to Lord Killian,” July 18, 1978, Tom Bradley Papers, Collection 239, Box 874, Folder 2, UCLA.

¹⁷² Frank Oxarart, KFWB Radio 98 Editorial, “Olympic Pull Out,” July 18, 1978, Tom Bradley Papers, Collection 239, Box 874, Folder 2, UCLA.

Bradley, the agreement was explained. “Notwithstanding any other provisions to the contrary, the city of LA shall be neither responsible nor liable for any obligations incurred in the organization or conduct of the games in accordance with rules 51 and 52. The USOC and the LAOOC shall assume all obligations set forth in the agreements between the IOC and the City of Los Angeles agreements prior.”¹⁷³ The LAOOC would now assume all financial obligations under the agreement, and would directly run the planning and operations of the Games. The City would be included in a variety of planning and decision capacities, but the burden of success now rested with the LAOOC. The agreement was formally signed by the City Council of Los Angeles five days later.¹⁷⁴ The privatization of the Olympic Games was now a reality.

The LAOOC began a new life as the head of the Olympic movement in Los Angeles. On March 26, 1979, the LAOOC named Paul Ziffren, a prominent Los Angeles attorney and long-standing member of the LAOOC, its new Chairman. Ziffren was a Democratic Party leader in California during the 1950s and 1960s; he was heavily invested in promoting amateur athletics in the years after his political career came to an end. Ziffren appointed Peter Ueberroth President and Managing Director, who became the first full-time, salaried executive of the LAOOC. Ueberroth was Los Angeles area businessman who made his fortune in the travel industry. He became friends with Ziffren in Los Angeles, leading to his appointment to the LAOOC. His success with the Olympic Games led to his serving later as the Commissioner of Major League Baseball

¹⁷³ IOC, “Telex to Mayor Bradley: Agreement Between the City of LA and the IOC & Agreement Between the IOC and the LAOOC,” August 31, 1978, Tom Bradley Papers, Collection 239, Box 874, Folder 2, UCLA.

¹⁷⁴ Tom Bradley, “Memo to the City Council of Los Angeles,” September 5, 1978, Tom Bradley Papers, Collection 239, Box 874, Folder 2, UCLA.

and President of the USOC. He had the executive responsibility for the organization and operation of the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles.¹⁷⁵ John Argue was no longer the face or the man in charge of the LAOOC, but was a key backer of Ueberroth in the contest for the Olympic post.¹⁷⁶ The LAOOC announced in 1982 that according to economic models, the estimated economic benefits of staging the Games in Southern California would total more than \$3.3 billion.¹⁷⁷ The final accounting fell almost a billion dollars short of the projection, injecting an estimated \$2.4 billion into the Southern California economy. However, the influx was so large the shortfall was largely forgotten. Despite the extreme optimism, after the economically and sometimes politically disastrous Games of the 1970s, the act of being host to the Olympics was finally restored as the pinnacle of ambition for cities with global aspirations.¹⁷⁸ Within the larger context of the Cultural Cold War, the success of the Games was a clear victory for the American economic model of private enterprise over government run operations. The Games had never been privately managed before, and when they finally were they were more economically successful than ever before.

¹⁷⁵ ICPR Public Relations, "Press Release: LAOOC Names Ziffren Chairman and Ueberroth President and Managing Director," March 26, 1979, Tom Bradley Papers, Collection 239, Box 874, Folder 2, UCLA.

¹⁷⁶ Kenneth Reich, *Making it Happen: Peter Ueberroth and the 1984 Olympics* (Santa Barbara: Capra Press, 1986), 28.

¹⁷⁷ LAOOC, "LAOOC New Release," October 28, 1982, Tom Bradley Papers, Collection 239, Box 874, Folder 3, UCLA.

¹⁷⁸ Gold and Gold, "From A to B," 43.

Chapter Two

Negotiating “Games” – The Boycott of 1984

The unlikely hardline stance taken in 1980 by the Carter administration against the Soviets due to the invasion of Afghanistan led to the United States directed boycott of the 1980 Summer Olympic Games in Moscow. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) rebuffed US pressure to relocate or suspend the Moscow Games and urged the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) to defy government policy. While President Carter did not hold the power to force the USOC to endorse the boycott, Olympic bureaucrats surrendered to the politicians – over the strident objections of many American athletes.¹⁷⁹ US public opinion supported Carter and he moved to globalize the boycott.¹⁸⁰ The Soviets were once again an enemy of the United States after a long period of détente, which was largely opposed by the public all along.

During the 1980 presidential election, Carter consistently condemned Reagan for flip-flopping on the issue of the Olympics and the boycott, saying that he had “yielded to the temptation of weakness” in playing to the crowd for popularity and in doing so had underestimated the staunch patriotism of American athletes. “He doesn’t seem to know what to do with the Russians,” Carter told the Democratic National Convention during his nomination acceptance speech.¹⁸¹ A month later in a town hall meeting in Texas, he

¹⁷⁹ Senn., 181.

¹⁸⁰ Torres and Dyreson, “The Cold War Games,” 77.

¹⁸¹ President Jimmy Carter, “Remarks Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the 1980 Democratic National Convention,” August 14, 1980, quoted in: Sarantakes, *Dropping the Torch*, 244.

was even more direct: “He’s been on both sides of the Olympic boycott – first he was strongly for it, then later he was against it.”¹⁸² Reagan was affected little by these attacks. Reagan’s answer regarding domestic and foreign policy was to ask the nation a series of leading questions:

“Are you better off than you were four years ago? Is America as respected throughout the world as it was? Do you feel that our security is safe, that we’re as strong as we were four years ago?”¹⁸³

With those simple questions he had focused the campaign on Carter’s leadership, making it a referendum on the President’s ability and competency. For all practical purposes, this was enough to win him the election – most Americans answered no to these questions.¹⁸⁴

President Carter was a Wilsonian internationalist and idealist in his approach to foreign affairs. He took office believing strongly that the United States should speak out against nations that violated basic rights.¹⁸⁵ However, as Carter confronted the pressures of dealing with the Soviet Union and attempted to get the SALT II treaty passed in the Senate in 1979, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan and was found to have left a combat ready unit in Cuba. American hostages were also seized in Iran as the result of long term American involvement in governmental affairs there. These Cold War events forced Carter to shift his stance from détente to that of a hawk when he denounced the

¹⁸² “Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session at a Townhall Meeting,” September 15, 1980, quoted in: Sarantakes, *Dropping the Torch*, 244.

¹⁸³ “Presidential Debate in Cleveland between President Jimmy Carter and Governor Ronald Reagan,” October 28, 1980 in John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters, The American Presidency Project [online]. Santa Barbara, CA: University of California (hosted), Gerhard Peters (database). Available from World Wide Web: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=29408> (accessed September 7, 2013).

¹⁸⁴ Sarantakes, *Dropping the Torch*, 247.

¹⁸⁵ James T. Patterson, *Restless Giant: The United States From Watergate to Bush v. Gore* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 121.

invasion as “the most serious threat to peace since the Second World War.”¹⁸⁶ It was too late for Carter to salvage his hopes for a second term. The rise of a new conservative alliance propelled by the religious right and those who saw Carter as weak in the foreign policy arena led Regan to the Presidency in 1980. Concerning Carter’s earlier backing of détente, he quipped, “Détente: isn’t that what a farmer does with his turkey – until Thanksgiving Day?”¹⁸⁷

From the beginning of his presidency in 1981, President Ronald Reagan announced a “new toughness” toward the Soviet Union – although in many ways it was a continuation from the end of President Carter’s only term. Although the primacy of the Cold War in American foreign policy had mostly been in retreat since the end of the Vietnam Conflict, the President was determined to revive the conflict in order to support his goal of increased defense spending. As early as May of 1981, the President was consumed with outlining plans for a new defense strategy regarding the Soviet Union, and discussed plans with his cabinet and the Prime Minister of Britain, Margaret Thatcher.¹⁸⁸ During Reagan’s first term, defense outlays climbed from \$171 billion to \$229 billion, roughly a 34 percent increase when the figures are measured in real 1982 dollars.¹⁸⁹ Although the aggressiveness of his rhetoric increased over the arc of his first term in office this policy shift was clear from the outset. Unlike Carter, Reagan knew enough not to send a pile of big programs to Capitol Hill. Instead, he concentrated on the

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 123.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 146.

¹⁸⁸ Douglas Brinkley, ed., *The Reagan Diaries*, (Harper Perennial: New York, 2007), 18.

¹⁸⁹ Sean Wilentz, *The Age of Reagan* (New York: Harper-Perennial, 2008), 154.

most important issues of the campaign, especially increasing expenditures for the military.¹⁹⁰

In early 1981, the President demonstrated this policy shift at a key news conference. Sam Donaldson of ABC News posed a question regarding the long-range intentions of the Soviet Union. In response, President Reagan argued that, “so far Detente's been a one-way street that the Soviet Union has used to pursue its own aims.”¹⁹¹ This followed the path he laid out in the campaign of claiming that the United States was in danger due to the declining primacy of American security created by the previous administration. The President was on a confrontational path, one in which he sought to recover incorrect, but widely perceived lost American supremacy. However, it was not until later in his first term in office that the President made his remarks more openly hostile. “Winning” the Cold War in the 1980s meant revamping the rhetoric and conflict of the 1960s and early 1970s. The Cold War conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union would be reheated to once again emphasize politics, military spending, and cultural competitions.

Beginning in the summer of 1982, President Reagan began an official drive to convince the nations of Western Europe that the Cold War had returned despite the policies of Détente erected during the decade prior. He further strengthened this

¹⁹⁰ James T. Patterson, *Restless Giant: The United States from Watergate to Bush v. Gore* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 154.

¹⁹¹ President Reagan, “The President’s News Conference, January 29, 1981,” in John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters, *The American Presidency Project* [online]. Santa Barbara, CA: University of California (hosted), Gerhard Peters (database). Available from World Wide Web: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=44101> (accessed May 9, 2009) .

campaign when he addressed the House of Commons in Great Britain on June 8, 1982. While arguing for the expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Western Europe as a response to the Soviet-backed Polish government cracking down on Solidarity, a democratic apolitical trade union movement, Reagan referred to the Soviets as “evil.” He went on to proclaim, “What I am describing now is a plan and a hope for the long term -- the march of freedom and democracy which will leave Marxism-Leninism on the ash heap of history as it has left other tyrannies which stifle the freedom and muzzle the self-expression of the people.”¹⁹² President Reagan’s speech was an indication that the Soviet enemy was central to his administration’s foreign policy goals.

The rise of open hostility towards the Soviet Union crystallized when the President gave remarks at the Annual Convention of the National Association of Evangelicals in Orlando, Florida in March of 1983. Speaking to a core group of constituents as the 1984 election season loomed, he squarely placed the blame for the arms race and the larger Cold War on the “evil” Soviet Union. He plead, “... so, in your discussions of the nuclear freeze proposals, I urge you to beware the temptation of pride – the temptation of blithely declaring yourselves above it all and label both sides equally at fault, to ignore the facts of history and the aggressive impulses of an evil empire, to simply call the arms race a giant misunderstanding and thereby remove yourself from the struggle between right and wrong and good and evil.”¹⁹³ The “evil empire” reference

¹⁹² President Reagan, “Speech to the House of Commons, June 8, 1982,” in *Internet Modern History Sourcebook* [online], New York, Fordham University. Available from the World Wide Web: <http://www.fordham.edu/Halsall/mod/1982reagan1.asp> (accessed August 29, 2011), hereafter *Sourcebook*.

¹⁹³ Ronald Reagan, “The Evil Empire Speech: Remarks at the Annual Convention of the National Association of Evangelicals,” March 8, 1983, in *The Evil Empire Speech Memorial Foundation* [online].

was extremely aggressive, inflammatory, and best represents the antagonistic policy shift spearheaded by the Reagan White House. His rhetorical approach hinged on a good versus evil concept as if diplomacy was about personal misunderstanding. Although his speech was for the American evangelical audience, the larger American public was part of his target demographic for creating the personal political meaning to the Cultural Cold War.

Looming in the background of this escalation of inflammatory rhetoric were the negotiations over the Soviet teams' participation in the 1984 Summer Olympic Games in Los Angeles. Negotiations between the Americans and the Soviets began formally in 1982, and by early 1983 the situation had grown extremely tense. It is clearly evident that Reagan saved his most aggressive anti-Soviet rhetoric until after the negotiations with Soviets over their participation in Los Angeles began to falter. He then made their lack of commitment to the process another piece of evidence of the growing Soviet danger to the United States. The Soviet boycott was painted by Reagan as an undemocratic, purposeful attempt to harm the successes of the Los Angeles Games by delegitimizing the outcome of the Games, denying Soviet allies a chance to participate, and potentially harming the financial outcome of the Games.

The cultural components of the Cold War continued throughout the era of Détente, even before President Reagan reenergized the Cold War. In many ways, the cultural arenas of the Cold War were where the greatest conflicts continued on despite the

Washington, D.C. Available from the World Wide Web: <http://www.evilempirespeech.org/the-speech/> (accessed August 29, 2011), hereafter *Evil Empire*.

retreat of political confrontations after the end of the Vietnam Conflict. The 1950s and the 1960s had been the height of international competition for influence during the era of the Marshall Plan, the creation of NATO, and the Warsaw Pact. After Vietnam, much of the overt posturing had subsided. Intertwined with the ratcheting up of Cold War rhetoric by the White House was the issue of the upcoming 1984 Los Angeles Summer Olympics. Despite the US led boycott of the 1980 Summer Olympic Games in Moscow under President Jimmy Carter's administration, preparations in the United States for the Soviet team's participation in the 1984 Summer Olympic Games proceeded with the expectation that they would compete. As President Reagan said, "Sports in general and the Olympics in particular bring us together as nothing else."¹⁹⁴ These words during a speech given at a luncheon meeting of the United States Olympic Committee in Los Angeles on March 3, 1983 and other similar statements by President Ronald Reagan demonstrate that he was publicly very supportive of sports and especially affectionate of the Olympics as a culturally unifying force.

During the preparation, the Reagan White House and the Department of State debated the best course of action for preparing for the visit of the Soviet Olympic Delegation. President Reagan clearly wanted the Soviet Olympic Team to participate in the games – so that the United States might demonstrate athletic, cultural, and economic superiority over their communist competition. This support contradicted his openly

¹⁹⁴ Ronald Reagan, "Remarks at a Luncheon Meeting of the United States Olympic Committee in Los Angeles, California," March 3, 1983, in John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters, *The American Presidency Project* [online]. Santa Barbara, CA: University of California (hosted), Gerhard Peters (database). Available from World Wide Web: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=40995> (accessed May 9, 2009).

hostile rhetoric by early 1983, but the White House did a great deal to encourage Soviet participation publicly prior to 1983. However, when the Soviets announced their boycott he shrewdly used their announcement to accelerate his anti-Soviet Cold War rhetoric while simultaneously trying to negotiate their participation behind the scenes.

Negotiating With the Soviets

As the 1984 Olympics drew close, the Soviet Union and the United States negotiated at the national level over conditions which would need to be met in order for the Soviet teams to come to Los Angeles and participate in the competitions. The negotiations involved the Reagan White House and State Department, the LAOOC, the government of the Soviet Union, the Soviet Sport and Olympic Committees (SSOC), and the IOC. Within the pre-Olympic negotiations between the superpowers, two major points of contention arose. The LAOOC worked closely with the White House personnel to engage the Soviets and keep them invested in participating in the Games. President Reagan and his closest advisors took a central role in the negotiations and made the issue central to his foreign policy negotiations with the Soviet Union.¹⁹⁵ The LAOOC

¹⁹⁵ Memo from Joseph Canzeri to All Staff, July 13, 1981, Presidential Papers of Ronald Reagan, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, Simi Valley, CA, 2.

established Michael Deaver as a permanent high level liaison with the White House early in 1981 in order to keep the President informed of the negotiations.¹⁹⁶

The majority of the dialogues as the games approached ended up occurring between the Reagan White House and the SSOC. The SSOC started issuing demands that they be allowed special considerations due to hostile posturing between the United States and the Soviet Union. Early in the negotiations, the SSOC demanded that twenty-five special Aeroflot charter flights be allowed to land in Los Angeles for the purpose of transporting members of the Soviet “Olympic Family” and equipment necessary for their participation in the Summer Olympic Games. These were outside of the traditional accommodations required as outlined by the IOC. Additionally, the Soviets demanded that permissions be granted for the Soviet passenger ship “Gruzia” to dock in Los Angeles/Long Beach harbor for the entirety of the Games, including the allowance of a special Soviet Olympics Attaché resident in the Los Angeles area during the Olympics.¹⁹⁷ In early 1984, the man they wanted to appoint as resident was Oleg Yermishkin, known to be a KGB operative by the United States.¹⁹⁸ This tactic was common throughout the cultural exchanges of the era by both sides in the Cold War. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) recognized the value in using cultural exchanges for placing operatives

¹⁹⁶ Memo to Peter Ueberroth from David Simon, January 23, 1981, LAOOC Papers, Collection 1403, Box 63, UCLA.

¹⁹⁷ The Soviet ship “Gruzia” also appears spelled as “Gruziya” in various memos and letters.

¹⁹⁸ The KGB was the preeminent Soviet secret police and intelligence organization.

inside the Soviet Union along with the hope that the exchanges would eventually lead to a more relaxed “attitude” in the USSR towards the United States.¹⁹⁹

Many in the Reagan White House and the Department of State feared that Soviet intelligence agents would flood the west coast if these conditions were allowed.

Espionage by the Soviets in Southern California, the home of many defense contractors, worried the President and reflected the paranoia of the region regarding a significant Soviet presence.²⁰⁰ The Gruzia might function as a base of operations that could not be

boarded by American security forces. Concern was high at the White House over the potential influx of Soviet personnel into Los Angeles. However, the President was

committed to finding a way to make sure the Soviet team competed. Charles Hill,

Executive Secretary for the Department of State, wrote to Robert C. McFarlane, President

Reagan's National Security Adviser (NSA) from October 1983 to December 1985

regarding the preliminary two-week visit by a ten-member delegation from the USSR

Sport and Olympic Committees to the US beginning on November 30, 1983. Charles

Hill warned that the Soviets had been pressuring the Los Angeles Organizing Olympic

Committee (LAOOC) to obtain permission for a Soviet passenger ship to dock in Los

Angeles/Long Beach harbor as a “floating hotel” during the Games, and for Aeroflot

charter flights to bring Soviet Olympic participants and spectators to the US

Additionally, Hill urged Reagan’s NSA that the Aeroflot charter flights should be

¹⁹⁹ James McGrath, “The Scientific and Cultural Exchange,” *Studies Archive Indexes of the CIA* 7, 1 (1994), https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/kent-csi/vol7no1/html/v07i1a02p_0001.htm (accessed online July 21, 2014).

²⁰⁰ Memorandum for Robert C. McFarlane from Charles Hill, November 28, 1983, Presidential Papers of Ronald Reagan, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, Simi Valley, CA, 1.

allowed, but only to bring over members of the Soviet “Olympic family” and not tourists.²⁰¹ The implication of Hill’s assessments suggests that the Soviet Union might try to slip covert agents into the United States posing as tourists, although this could happen at any time without the Olympics as a cover. This was a revival of a Cold War fear from the earliest days of the conflict. The espionage possibilities in California were lush, and with so much activity going on around the Games there could not possibly be enough coverage by the CIA to deter such acts. According to Bob Gates, the CIA’s foremost Soviet analyst in the early 1980s, “we did not then grasp the growing desperation of the men in the Kremlin... how isolated, how paranoid, fearful they were.”²⁰²

Further complicating the issue, the Ban-the-Soviets Coalition, an active protest group in Los Angeles, claimed to have “infiltrated” the Olympic organization and promised to actively recruit defectors if the Soviet team was allowed to participate.²⁰³ The group, although small, was very active in the press and made their claims known to the Soviets in an effort to dissuade their participation. Despite all of these concerns and the escalation of Cold War rhetoric during the period, in the opinion of the LAOOC and the Reagan White House a Soviet boycott was not a foregone conclusion. The Reagan administration claimed they did everything in their power to accommodate the Soviet

²⁰¹ Memorandum from Charles Hill to Mr. Robert C. McFarlane, Department of State, “Visit of Soviet Olympic Delegation: Aeroflot Charter Flights,” November 28, 1983, Kenneth Hill Files, Box 7, Presidential Papers of Ronald Reagan, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, Simi Valley, CA (hereafter, Reagan Papers).

²⁰² Time Weiner, *Legacy of Ashes: the History of the CIA* (New York: Doubleday, 2007), 385.

²⁰³ Memorandum from John M. Ordway to File, “Trip to Los Angeles, March 19-22,” 1984, Presidential Papers of Ronald Reagan, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, Simi Valley, CA, 2.

requests short of sacrificing internal security in Los Angeles. From 1983 until May of 1984 the White House staff, the State Department, and other internal agencies prepared for negotiations and accommodations for the Soviets. The mass of internal memos generated by this singular issue is very substantial. Had the White House suspected that it was all a ploy, the dialogue would not have been taken so seriously. The LAOOC, the White House, and the IOC all made appeals to the Soviets asking them to reconsider after the announcement was made by the Soviets that they would not come.

During the year leading up to the Games, as was customary to other host cities, a number of athletic competitions would be held at the various sites in order to test out the facilities and build excitement for the following year's games. The LA'83 Summer Sports Festival consisted of events in seven sports: cycling, swimming, diving, synchronized swimming, gymnastics, canoeing, and rowing. Special attention was given to cycling events at the new Velodrome at California State University Dominguez Hills, and swimming and synchronized swimming at the new McDonald's Swim Stadium at the University of Southern California.²⁰⁴ The competitions took place in their respective 1984 Olympic venues and were held from July 8, 1983 to September 25, 1983.²⁰⁵ These competitions were a preview of the potential that the 1984 Olympics would bring to Los Angeles, and the Soviet teams did participate in these contests where they were expected throughout 1983 despite the uncertainty demonstrated in the negotiations over 1984. For example, the new \$4 million dollar McDonald's Olympic Swim Stadium on the campus

²⁰⁴ ABC, "'83 Events," 1983 (LAOOC), VHS, LAOOC Papers, Collection 1403, Box 616, Folder 2, UCLA.

²⁰⁵ Jeff Benjamin, "Ticketing and Operating Plan: LA 83 Events," June 14, 1984, 1; LAOOC Papers, Collection 1403, Box 38, Folder 5, UCLA.

of the University of Southern California, built for the 1984 Olympic Games and opened with a world-record performance during the McDonald's international Swim Meet on July 14-15, 1983, where Soviet world-record holder Vladimir Salnikov improved his mark in the 800 meter freestyle on the opening day. The 1983 events would provide “live” testing situations aimed at examining select facilities under demanding competitive conditions.²⁰⁶ Events such as these led the United States and the LAOOC to be hopeful that the Soviets would participate in the 1984 Olympic Games.

The 1984 Olympic Games offered a unique opportunity for the United States to demonstrate the power of American culture. Many in the United States were resolute in their desire for the Soviet Union to participate and not reciprocate the boycott of the 1980 Moscow Summer Olympics led by the United States President, Jimmy Carter. The presidential administration of Ronald Reagan and much of the leadership of the LAOOC determined that the participation of the Soviet Union was critical for a number of financial, political, and cultural reasons. While the absence of the Soviet Union due to the boycott by their athletic teams and cultural groups was dreaded by the American organizers, the LAOOC was creating a new reality for American corporations to reach global audiences through their use of corporate sponsorships to pay for much of the expense of putting on the festivities. These corporate advertisements were in place prior to the announcement of the Soviet boycott, possibly to bombard them with messages of American consumer culture superiority upon their arrival. If the Soviets boycotted, the

²⁰⁶ “1983 Sporting Events in Los Angeles,” *Olympic Review* 187 (May 1983): 276.

American team would be unchallenged and the corporate sponsors would lose some of their international audience.

It is clear that the men tasked with the US negotiations were committed to the appearance of being devoted to the process. Kenneth Hill, the State Foreign Service officer who was detailed to the White House in July 1983 to coordinate all Federal involvement in security for the 1984 Summer Olympic Games in Los Angeles made his stance clear when he said that the Soviet requests were too great a security risk. Despite the protestations of Hill, Michael Deaver, the Deputy Chief of Staff who was the Presidential liaison to the Olympics, Robert C. McFarlane, President Reagan's National Security Advisor, and Michael A. McManus, Jr., the Deputy Assistant to President Reagan, all pushed an agenda of accommodation – even as the President began more and more aggressive anti-Soviet campaigns in the press. Their internal memos all suggest that the Olympics were a priority for the White House, and that Soviet participation was worth some security risks. Each of the members of the President's staff had different motivations for their assessments. Men like McFarlane and McManus viewed the Olympics as a chance to cool political tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union through athletic competition. President Reagan was an avid sports fan with an athletic background and agreed with their recommendations, and simultaneously hoping to demonstrate American athletic prowess. In addition, President Reagan's politically inflammatory language and resuscitation of Cold War rhetoric made the potential symbolic victories over the Soviets even more critical.

The Soviets in official positions tasked to negotiate on behalf of the Soviet Union were also committed to the appearance of desiring Soviet participation in the Olympic Arts Festival as well as the Olympic Games. Contacted by the LAOOC and asked if the Soviet Union would support the invitation of Soviet performing arts groups such as the Rustaveli Theatre from Georgia or the Gorkey Theatre from Moscow, both Alexander P. Potemkin, Deputy Consul General of the USSR in San Francisco and Anatoly Dyuzhev, Cultural Attaché for the Soviet Embassy in Washington were clear in their correspondence with the LAOOC that they were in favor of Soviet involvement. This is typical of Soviet attaches throughout the Cold War; however the decisions were not made by these men. Only Moscow would make this type of decision.

The LAOOC was enormously interested in the actions of the White House regarding the early stages of these negotiations. Their stake in the participation of the Soviets was substantial; if the Soviets did not participate the LAOOC would have failed to stage a “true” inter-systemic international competition. Jay Moorehead of the LAOOC wrote to Michael A. McManus, Jr., the Deputy Assistant to President Reagan asking that special considerations be made when making decisions regarding the Soviet requests.

Moorehead stated:

- (1) The Soviet requests should be viewed as consistent with the Olympic Charter. Any country making a similar request to the U.S. government should be handled in the same way as the Soviet request.
- (2) U.S. Policy regarding the Olympics (including the Olympic family) and U.S. State Department policy regarding the Soviets, should be viewed as two distinct policies.

- (3) The Administration must take into consideration that any policy restricting the Soviet ship and airplanes will create a negative environment for the LAOOC and the U.S. government, creating the possibility of an Eastern Bloc boycott.²⁰⁷

The Soviet requests were also deemed as “typical” by Moorehead, and that the requests would be viewed by the Soviet Union and other nations as a test of US willingness to abide by the Olympic Charter and facilitate the logistical support of foreign Olympic teams. Furthermore, the Soviets were planning to make all of their requests directly to the LAOOC instead of the State Department.²⁰⁸ This strategy made the request seem less like a political tool and more about Olympic accommodation issues. In reality, this was more political maneuvering on the part of the Soviet Union which was not known to Americans at the time.

Ed Best, head of security operations for the LAOOC made it clear that there were many among senior personnel at the LAOOC that expressed their opinion that Yermishkin should be admitted as the Soviet Resident even if he was a KGB agent, that it was only reasonable to assume that they would want to send a security man over as the attaché and that as long as the State Department knew what they were dealing with, why not take him? However, when the Yermishkin appointment was denied in early 1984, Best was accepting of the State Department decision:

You and I and the average civilian out there can come to that conclusion. But there were things about him that were known at very high levels in our

²⁰⁷ Memorandum from Jay Moorehead to Michael A. McManus, Jr., Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee, “Background for Soviet Requests,” December 16, 1983, Kenneth Hill Files, Box 4, Reagan Papers.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 2.

government that were not shared with me that I was convinced were sound reasons why it was not wise to accept him. So I think we're going to have to accept that. Now, on the face of it, we can make the argument you're now making, it's a very reasonable one to make. How often do you get a so-called intelligence agent put into your hands? But frankly I have more confidence in our government structure and their ability to evaluate people and if they thought there were sound reasons why he shouldn't come, and there could have been many, then I think we have to accept that.²⁰⁹

Best's desire for Soviet participation did not outweigh his security background. He was willing to take the State Department's decision as a final ruling based on his belief that they knew more about his KGB status than he did. His explanation, "that there were things about him that were known ... that were not shared with me," suggests that something was shared with him but that he wasn't going to repeat it. Their evaluation was enough to change his mind about his initial assessment; he deferred to the State Department he deferred to the State Department as was protocol.

Kenneth Hill, a Department of State Foreign Service officer who was detailed to the White House in July 1983 to coordinate all Federal involvement in security for the 1984 Summer Olympic Games in Los Angeles, reported to Michael Deaver, the Deputy Chief of Staff who was the Presidential liaison to the Olympics. Kenneth Hill, writing to McManus, Jr. in December of 1983, voiced concern over the decision to filter all Soviet requests through the LAOOC, explaining that it was a break with standard protocol. The proposed Aeroflot flights were reasonable to Hill, but would require close monitoring by the US Government. More pointedly, Kenneth Hill showed great concern over the berthing of a Soviet ship in Long Beach for approximately six weeks, explaining that it

²⁰⁹ Ed Best interview by Kenneth Reich, April 2, 1985, 14. Transcript, v.1 Paul Ziffren Sports Resource Center, LA84 Foundation Sports Library, Los Angeles, CA

would be very difficult (but not impossible) to secure. The dock would be in close proximity to a sensitive US Navy installation in Long Beach, further complicating the intelligence security mission. Also, he was apprehensive because the ship would provide a very visible focal point for any anti-Soviet demonstrations, including those promised by the Ban the Soviets Coalition.²¹⁰ Some in the LAOOC suggested that the vessel would make keeping track of where the Soviet personnel were located during their visit nearly impossible; Kenneth Hill surmised that the negatives far outweighed the positives with regard to the birthing of the Soviet vessel. Kenneth Hill was one of the most outspoken critics in the White House of the Soviet demands for Los Angeles. Despite Hill's analysis, McManus Jr. and McFarlane eventually determined that his assessment of the threat presented by the Soviet ship was incorrect, and would likely cause the Soviets to decide against participation. Since security was not their responsibility, it was easier for them to take the risk by making this determination.

Shortly thereafter, McFarlane drafted a memorandum to President Reagan laying out the issue, offering a discussion of the different sides of the debate, and offering recommendations for the President. As he pointed out in his discussion for the President, the Soviets decision might hang in the balance of these key issues:

The Soviets have not yet formally accepted the Olympic invitation and it might be May (1984) before they would announce their decision. In the meantime, they are attempting to obtain assurance on as many points as possible regarding how they will be treated by U.S. authorities. While our intelligence community believes that the Soviets want to participate, there is a distinct risk that if we fail to suspend our sanctions and some of our normal restrictions on Soviet officials in

²¹⁰ Memorandum from Kenneth J. Hill for Michael McManus, Jr., The White House, "Soviet Requests to LAOOC," December 16, 1983, Kenneth Hill Files, Box 7, Reagan Papers.

order to permit them to support their team on a non-discriminatory basis, they will refuse to come and charge us with renegeing on commitments to deal with participants on an equal basis. Our decisions have the potential to create a major public stir if they are seen as handicapping Soviet participation and thus precipitating a Soviet refusal to attend.²¹¹

McFarlane recommended that President Reagan agree that the Olympic Games in Los Angeles be treated as a special event, for which every effort should be made to treat the Soviets on a non-discriminatory basis. Furthermore, he recommended that Aeroflot be allowed to operate special flights to support their Olympic team, but without the right to transport third-country nationals or to land at intermediate stops in the United States. On the key issue of the Soviet ship being allowed to enter the Los Angeles/Long Beach Harbor before and after the Olympics, McFarlane was undecided.²¹² Despite his lack of a recommendation, the National Security Adviser was clear on his assessment that the refusal of this condition would likely ensure a Soviet boycott.

The memo was sent to President Reagan on January 31, 1984. The President agreed with McFarlane's assessment that the Olympic Games in Los Angeles should be treated as a special event and that Aeroflot be allowed to operate special flights to support their Olympic team. The controversial issue of the Soviet ship being allowed to enter Los Angeles/Long Beach Harbor was answered by President Reagan after he received the memo. He agreed to allow the Soviet ship, subject to the establishment of all possible

²¹¹ Memorandum draft from Robert C. McFarlane to the President, The White House, "Soviet Olympic-Related Requests," January, 1984, Executive Secretariat, National Security Council: Records: Subject File Olympics, Vol. I, Reagan Papers.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 2.

measures designed to minimize “intelligence losses.”²¹³ The President was well aware of the security challenges this would present, but clearly wanted the accommodation made. The Olympic participation of the Soviets was important enough to outweigh the risks in this case. The rumblings of a possible boycott began to percolate in the American popular press shortly after this internal debate. It was picked up by the *Los Angeles Times* that State-run news agencies from Moscow like TASS and Pravda were reporting that the Soviet Olympic Committee were accusing the United States of violating the Olympic Charter and hinting at the possibility of a Soviet Bloc boycott of the Games.

Additionally, the Soviet’s suggested attaché resident in the Los Angeles area during the period from March to August of 1984 was under consideration by the President. President Reagan decided that this official would be granted, but would either have to be accredited only to the LAOOC, with no diplomatic status or immunity, or be attached to the Soviet Consulate General in San Francisco. Under the latter option, this official while serving in Los Angeles would retain the immunity that a consular officer normally would, with the proviso that quotas imposing limits on numbers of Soviet personnel must continue to be observed and that any person not currently in the United States would be required to submit a visa application to the US Embassy in the usual manner.²¹⁴ This element was a new issue for the White House to consider, and reflected the complexity of these ongoing negotiations. Ultimately, the plan put in place was designed to be as accommodating as possible while maintaining “internal security.”

²¹³ Memorandum from Robert C. McFarlane to the President, The White House, “Soviet Olympic-Related Requests,” January 31, 1984, 2-3, Reagan Papers.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*,

Even if the attaché was a known KGB operative, that would not keep President Reagan from making the accommodation. It was much easier to deal with than an “unknown” KGB operative.

Despite the agreement with McFarlane by the President, the issue was not fully resolved internally for months. In March, the White House sent Peter Ueberroth, the President of the LAOOC a letter assuring the complete commitment of the US government to the success of the 1984 Olympic Games.²¹⁵ However, in much the same way that the decision process began, the preparations for counterintelligence and security precautions concerning the Soviet conditions ensued. Richard Levine, who at the time was the Deputy Director of the National Security Council International Affairs Directorate, and Ken DeGraffenreid, the National Security Council Director of Intelligence Programs, outlined a plan for the National Security Decision Directive (NSDD) for McFarlane to review and send to President Reagan.²¹⁶ On March 26, the NSDD was presented to President Reagan by McFarlane. Included in his memo is the admission that his office had delayed announcing the approval of the Aeroflot flights to the public until the Soviet shoot down of Korean Air Lines Flight 007 of the previous

²¹⁵ Letter from Michael K. Deaver to Peter C. Ueberroth, The White House, March 15, 1984, Reagan Papers.

²¹⁶ Memorandum from Richard Levine and Ken DeGraffenreid to Robert C. McFarlane, National Security Council, “NSDD On Counterintelligence and Security Precautions Concerning Soviet Aeroflot Flight and Vessel Visit for the Olympics,” March 17, 1984, Executive Secretariat, NSC: Records: Subject File Olympics, Vol. I, Reagan Papers.

week could be condemned by the International Civil Aviation Organization.²¹⁷ The President then reviewed the plan outlined by the NSDD.

On March 27 National Security Decision Directive Number 135 was signed by President Ronald Reagan. The issues were clearly outlined for the President:

The Olympic Games, to be held in Los Angeles this summer, present a number of unique counterintelligence and security concerns. This Directive delineates the counterintelligence and security precautions the United States Government will take with regard to Soviet Aeroflot charter flights for the Soviet “Olympic Family” (i.e., those Soviets, including a reasonable number of spectators, directly involved in the Games) and the port visit of the Soviet vessel “Gruzia” at Long Beach Harbor for the duration of the Games.²¹⁸

The decision, some of which has been redacted, outlined a detailed plan for combating Soviet security risks. Soviet Aeroflot flights would be the responsibility of the Federal Aviation Administration under guidance from the Overflight Security Committee, the aircraft would be subject to boarding for Customs and other inspections as a condition for entry to the United States, and US Escort crews for each Aeroflot flight would be provided in accordance with existing arrangements and procedures. Preparations for port security were also clearly explained. The Port Security Committee would ensure the implementation of all actions required to ensure the implementation of the policies of NSDD 135, the “Gruzia” would be treated as a commercial, Soviet Special Interest Vessel, subject to boarding and searches at such times as necessary by the US Coast

²¹⁷ Memorandum from Robert C. McFarlane for the President, The White House, “NSDD Concerning Aeroflot Flights and Soviet Vessel Visit for the Olympics,” March 26, 1984, Executive Secretariat, NSC: Records: National Security Decision Directives (NSDDs) NSDD 135 [Los Angeles Olympic Games Counterintelligence and Security Precautions] Reagan Papers.

²¹⁸ National Security Decision Directive Number 135, The White House, “Los Angeles Olympic Games Counterintelligence and Security Precautions,” March 27, 1984, Executive Secretariat, NSC: Records: National Security Decision Directives (NSDDs) NSDD 135 [Los Angeles Olympic Games Counterintelligence and Security Precautions] 1, Reagan Papers.

Guard or other authorities, and radio transmissions from the “Gruzia” while it is berthed in Long Beach would not be permitted.²¹⁹ The “Gruzia” was designated for docking at pier two, berth fifty-three in Long Beach Harbor from July 15 until the conclusion of the Summer Olympic Games on or about August 15, 1984.²²⁰ This designation was strategic, and all relevant security agencies, including the US Coast Guard and the Port Authority of Long Beach, agreed that it would be the easiest place to monitor the ship. This decision diverged from the initial request by the Soviets, which maintained the special status of the ship as requiring special diplomatic status which would not allow boarding or searches unless decided upon by the Soviets.

Clearly the resolution was designed to accommodate the Soviet requests while ensuring the sovereignty of US authority over any potential security risks. The Soviet airplanes and vessel would not be granted diplomatic immunity, and could be boarded and searched by the designated authorities at any time. Additionally, the directive made clear that all military commands and agencies should consider the intelligence threat posed by the visit of the Soviet ship in planning for and conducting military exercises and weapons system tests in California, New Mexico, and Nevada during the period of the Soviet ship visit, and should take appropriate countermeasures.²²¹ Ultimately, the Reagan administration decided that the importance of the games trumped some security issues that might not be able to be contained, but were not willing to give the Soviets diplomatic immunity either.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 2.

²²⁰ Ibid., Attachment #2.

²²¹ Ibid., 3.

Once the decision to allow the modified Soviet requests was made, the White House began to make further preparations for the arrival of the Soviet delegation. For example, the “Gruzia” would not be allowed to make any radio transmissions.²²² On March 30, 1984 McFarlane sent a memorandum regarding the decision for the President to the heads of various departments including the Vice President, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, and the director of the CIA. Ironically building President Carter’s high level of oversight, the President had approved a Directive for Counterintelligence and Security measures to be taken for Soviet over flights and a ship visit by the “Gruzia” during the Olympic Games.²²³ By notifying all of these department heads, the White House clearly felt that the Soviets were coming. All of these preparations were cost prohibitive, but necessary in the eyes of the President. The Commandant of the United States Coast Guard, Admiral James S. Gracey, was officially notified in April of 1984 that the security of the “Gruzia” would be the responsibility of the Coast Guard during the visit. Additional personnel should be tasked as deemed necessary and supplemental funding would be secured by the Office of Management and Budget as needed.²²⁴

²²² Attachment to NSDD 135, “Memorandum on Discussions between the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee and representatives of the USSR National Olympic Committee,” March 27, 1984, Presidential Directives, Part II, Digital National Security Archive (accessed September 9, 2013).

²²³ Memorandum from Robert C. McFarlane for the Vice President, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Defense, the Attorney General, the Secretary of Transportation, the Director of Central Intelligence, the Deputy Chief of Staff to the President, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Chairman of the Civil Aeronautics Board, Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration, Director of the National Security Agency, Commandant of the United States Coast Guard, The White House, “Counterintelligence and Security Precautions for the Summer Olympic Games,” March 30, 1984, Reagan Papers.

²²⁴ Letter from Edward J. Derwinski to Admiral James S. Gracey, Department of State, April 19, 1984, Reagan Papers.

Public speculation in the United States about the possibility of a Soviet boycott began to gain peak momentum in late April, 1984 even though negotiations had been rocky since early in 1983. After a Soviet propaganda barrage against US handling of the Games, there was less certainty about the decision. Even Peter Ueberroth, president of the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee, thought the chances of Soviet participation had declined, dropping from ninety-five percent to seventy percent. After the US denied a visa to Oleg Yermishkin, Soviet newspapers denounced the "uncontrollable commercialization" of the Games and the "exorbitant" cost of the services to be provided to the teams in Los Angeles. They charged that there were "reactionary political, émigré and religious groups" in the US that were "teaming up on an anti-Olympic basis." Furthermore, the Soviet press said the Reagan Administration was "trying to use the Games for its selfish political ends."²²⁵

The Reagan Administration acted publicly as if it were caught off guard by the intensity of the barrage and was uncertain as to what it meant. Were the Soviets getting ready to boycott the Games? If so, their Eastern Bloc allies would almost certainly follow the leader, although some first-class teams, like East Germany's, would be dismayed at the prospect of forfeiting their virtually assured bushel of medals. Privately, some officials acknowledge that the US embassy in Moscow made a mistake in stating that Soviet athletes needed visas instead of identity cards, but they emphasize that the

²²⁵ Staff, "A Threat to the Olympics," *Time*, April 23, 1984, <<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,921680-2,00.html>> (accessed May 6, 2009).

matter could have been sorted out quickly and quietly.²²⁶ Additionally, the Soviets had a real concern over groups like the Ban the Soviets Coalition. It is presumably this group that Moscow had in mind when it expressed the fear that at the Games, "the civil rights of athletes may be infringed and their dignity outraged."²²⁷ As late as April 24th, the IOC president, Juan Antonio Samaranch, was able to announce, after meeting with Soviet and American officials in Lausanne, Switzerland: "We may say that the black clouds that accumulated in the Olympic sky have vanished or are very soon going to vanish."²²⁸ This optimistic assessment was not fulfilled, as the Soviet decision to boycott was announced less than two weeks later.

Finally, the Soviet boycott was publicly announced on May 8, 1984 after the Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union (TASS) cited, "chauvinistic sentiments and an anti-Soviet hysteria [were] being whipped up in the United States."²²⁹ May 8 is an especially significant day as it is the anniversary of the defeat of the Nazis in Europe during World War II, known as VE Day in the United States and Soviet Victory Day in the Soviet Union. TASS was controlled by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and officially acted as a mouthpiece for the party in the international press. After all of the negotiations and partial accommodations made by the United States and at least partially agreed upon by the Soviet Union, the world would again not have a true Olympics in 1984. Years of planning and negotiating by dozens of representatives from

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Allen Guttman, "The Cold War and the Olympics," *International Journal* 43, No. 4 Sport in World Politics (Autumn 1988); 14.

²²⁹ John F. Burns, "Moscow Will Keep Its Team From Los Angeles Olympics; Tass Cites Peril, U.S. Denies It; Protests Are Issue," *New York Times*, May 9, 1984.

governments and Olympic committees was rendered moot just months before the Games were to commence. The reasons given by the Soviets were hard for the American hosts to accept, despite the hard truth some of it held. The anticommunist hysteria in the United States played a large role in the outcome. The full official statement from TASS read as follows:

Chauvinistic sentiments and an anti-Soviet hysteria are being whipped up in the United States. Extremist organizations and groupings of all sorts, openly aiming to create “unbearable conditions” for the stay of the Soviet delegation and performance by Soviet athletes, have sharply stepped up their activities. Political demonstrations hostile to the USSR are being prepared; undisguised threats are made against the USSR National Olympic Committee, Soviet athletes and officials. Heads of anti-Soviet, anti-Socialist organizations are received by us administration officials. Their activity is widely publicized by the mass media ... Washington has made assurances of late of the readiness to observe rules of the Olympic charter. The practical deeds by the American side, however, show that it does not intend to ensure the security of all athletes, respect their rights and human dignity and create normal conditions for holding the games ... In these conditions; the National Olympic Committee of the USSR is compelled to declare that participation of Soviet sportsmen in the Games is impossible.²³⁰

No mention of the 1980 boycott was made in the TASS announcement, but many who had feared a boycott from the beginning were back to 1980 as a possible motivation for the announcement despite all of the apparent good-faith negotiations. The “chauvinistic sentiments” TASS referred to were likely a reference to the Reagan era rhetoric that had been prevalent up to that point, but the LAOOC was not thinking about that element of their negotiations.

Throughout the negotiations, LAOOC President Peter Ueberroth had remained unconvinced that the Soviet boycott was inevitable. “There were times in the four-year

²³⁰ Quoted in Kenneth Reich, *Making It Happen*, 208-9.

period between the Carter boycott of the Soviets and the Soviet boycott here when they were definitely coming to our Games,” he said. “They would not have paid money to us, entered into contracts. That’s not their style to do that as a ruse, to pay seven figures to us and rent apartments and do things, if they weren’t intent on coming.”²³¹ While his logic makes sense to him, he had no real knowledge of the high level decision makers in the Soviet Union. The death of Soviet leader Yuri Andropov in February 1984 was a key moment in the negotiations, when he died and Konstantin Chernenko came to power, the negotiations shifted in their tenor. Chernenko was the closest ally to Leonid Brezhnev, the Soviet Premier during the 1980 Moscow Olympics boycotted by the United States and a place holder in the office for the party. The LAOOC recognized this as having a major impact on the negotiations at the time as well as after the Games were over.²³² This shift in leadership signaled another rekindling of the Cold War. The LAOOC chairman, Paul Ziffren, clearly thought that it did.²³³ Ueberroth was also apprehensive, and was “beginning to smell a rat.”²³⁴ As with Carter in 1980, the Olympics could become an easy target for Chernenko to make himself look strong from his hospital bed. Brezhnev never forgave the United States for the 1980 boycott, and it seems that Chernenko held on to this grudge as well. As rumors of the impending boycott announcement swirled, IOC President Samaranch met with President Reagan at the White House on May 8, and took Ueberroth with him. Ueberroth suggested to the

²³¹ LA84 Foundation, “Amateur Athletic Foundation 20th Anniversary Report,” (Los Angeles, June 2004), 19.

²³² Harry Usher, interview by Kenneth Reich, April 14, 1985, 18. Transcript v.5, Paul Ziffren Sports Resource Center, LA84 Foundation Sports Library, Los Angeles, CA.

²³³ Allen Guttman, “The Cold War and the Olympics,” *International Journal* 43, no. 4 (Autumn 1988): 565.

²³⁴ Ueberroth, *Made in America*, 229.

President of the United States that he perhaps ought to invite Chernenko to attend the Games as his personal guest. It would be a marvelous gesture of statesmanship, whether he accepted or not, and might allay Soviet fears and criticism.”²³⁵ Later that day the announcement of the boycott came. President Reagan still considered Ueberroth’s idea, but finally dropped it three days later when his ambassador in Moscow told him that he would have no success in extending an invitation.²³⁶

Clearly, the boycott was a great disappointment to President Reagan. In an informal exchange with reporters, the President responded to an “unofficial” question asked regarding how he felt about the boycott.²³⁷ Although the Deputy Press Secretary, Larry M. Speakes had addressed the withdrawal on May 8, the President was reluctant to respond as he had not yet officially spoken about the decision. Speakes called the allegations made by the TASS, “totally unjustified.”²³⁸ However, the next day the President was extremely candid with these reporters:

I think I can't let that go by without saying that, like so many; I have a great feeling of disappointment. I'm sorry that they feel that way, and I think it's unfair to the young people that have been waiting for so long to participate in those games.

And it ought to be remembered by all of us that the games more than 2,000 years ago started as a means of bringing peace between the Greek city-states. And in

²³⁵ Ibid., 267.

²³⁶ Ronald Reagan, *The Reagan Diaries*, Douglas Brinkley, ed., (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2007), 220-221.

²³⁷ This exchange began at 2:05 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House as reporters observed the beginning of the President's meeting with members of an American team of observers of the Salvadoran Presidential election, which took place May 6, 1984.

²³⁸ Larry M. Speakes, “Statement by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Speakes on Soviet Withdrawal From the 1984 Summer Olympic Games,” May 8, 1984, in *Presidency Project* (accessed May 7, 2009).

those days, even if a war was going on, when Olympic year came, they called off the war in order to hold the games. I wish we were still as civilized.²³⁹

His reference to war was clearly no accident. He casually mentions the Greeks in an analogy to Cold War difficulties between the United States and the Soviet Union. He implicates that the conflict is mostly the Soviets fault by placing the Olympics as a time when war should be suspended. From his perspective, the Soviets had caused the war to revive – although this perspective was very one-sided. This did not make it any less effective for domestic constituents. Given the foreign policy moves the United States made leading up to the boycott, like the invasion of Grenada in 1983, the United States was at least equally culpable within this framework. President Reagan never held a press conference solely for the purpose of addressing the boycott. Instead, he chastised the Soviets and the other non-participants in speeches given to the US Olympic Team and the later medal winners.

At a White House press conference, President Reagan said that the suggestions by the Soviets that their team would not be safe in Los Angeles are “absolutely false.” “I don’t think there’s any action that I could take” to induce the Soviets to decide to come to the Games,” Reagan added. “No one in the history of the Olympics has ever done as much as we’re doing to ensure security for all athletes ... and we’ve given the Soviets chapter and verse on what we have done,” he said.²⁴⁰ The President was clearly agitated by the announcement and frustrated by the boycott. However, his claim that he didn’t

²³⁹ Ronald Reagan, “Informal Exchange with Reporters on Soviet Withdrawal From the 1984 Summer Olympic Games,” May 9, 1984, in *Presidency Project* (accessed May 7, 2009).

²⁴⁰ Kenneth Reich, “Dispute Over Soviet Boycott of Olympics Grows Bitter,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 15, 1984.

think there was any action he could take was simply not true. If it was as important as he claimed it was he certainly could have sought to personally appeal to the parties involved. He did not. The announcement by the President was surprising, and later he backed away from its voracity when a last ditch effort to get the Soviets to reverse their position was attempted jointly by the LAOOC and the IOC.

The Official Department of State Final Report on the 1984 Summer Olympics revealed that the negotiated accommodations were conveyed to the Soviets by the United States Government and the LAAOC in March and April of 1984. These Soviet officials were also invited to further discuss any specific questions or problems that the Soviet government might have about these arrangements. They expressed none. According to the US Department of State, the Soviet media maintained a steady stream of fabricated, misleading, and self-serving stories about US motives and security conditions in Los Angeles, both before and after their May 8 boycott announcement.²⁴¹ Scholarly analysis of the Soviet newspapers shows that there was no decisive or clearly set outline of approach from the propaganda unit leading up to the boycott decision.²⁴² The press coverage on the preparations of the 1984 Games changed after Premier Brezhnev died in November 1982. His successor Premier Andropov obviously viewed the Soviet participation in the Los Angeles Olympic with much more optimism. However, the pleasant tone changed radically following developments in American-Soviet diplomacy

²⁴¹ The Counselor, Department of State, "Department of State Final Report: 1984 Summer Olympic Games," December 13, 1984, 12, Reagan Papers.

²⁴² Evelyn Mertin, "The Soviet Union and the Olympic Games of 1980 and 1984: Explaining the Boycotts to Their Own People," *East Plays West: Sport and the Cold War*, eds. Stephen Wagg and David L. Andrews (New York: Routledge, 2007), 244.

after the shooting down of a South Korean KLA passenger plane in September 1983.²⁴³ Los Angeles was portrayed more and more critically, with references to anything from smog and ecological problems to fact such as that Los Angeles boasted the world record holder in “competitive smoking,” or that a murder was committed there every twenty four minutes.²⁴⁴ Los Angeles was portrayed as a chauvinist city and center of anti-Soviet organizations which would support the “U.S. politics of enhancing anti-Soviet hysteria.”²⁴⁵ After the announcement that the boycott was on, the propaganda campaign in the Soviet Union stiffened and was extended to underline the rightfulness of the decision.²⁴⁶ The final report was sent to the White House on December 13, 1984. The question of the Soviets and the 1984 Summer Olympics were, at least officially, resolved.

Prior to the Soviet announcement, the Executive Office of Management and Budget (OMB) determined that the total cost for the United States Government support given to the Olympics was a staggering \$87.6 million.²⁴⁷ This budget included, but was not limited to, items purchased by the agencies specifically for the Olympics, the pay of temporary employees hired specifically for the Olympics, and travel expenses and contractual efforts incurred specifically for the Olympics. The Olympics did cost the taxpayers of the nation, although the city of Los Angeles would not be the central financier of the Games. This estimate includes the salaries of FBI agents assigned to the

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Committee for Physical Culture and Sport of the USSR (1984), *Voprosj ideologitsheskoj bor'bj*, 5.

²⁴⁵ Staff, “Nothing Was Learned,” *Sovetskij Sport*, October 22, 1983, 4.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 246.

²⁴⁷ Memorandum from Joe Wright for Michael A. McManus, Executive Office of the President: Office of Management and Budget, “U.S. Olympics Status Report,” February 6, 1984, Kenneth Hill Files, Box 1, Reagan Papers.

Olympics, whose would be paid by the government even if they were not tasked to the Olympics – but their presence there was accounted for in the total. The estimate is the best the White House had at the time, and no other governmental cost analysis has been made available. Once the Soviets announced their boycott there was even less flexibility regarding expenditures over the estimate and the budget was tightened. The perceived security threat was largely staying home.

The Aftermath of the Announcement

The Soviet decision to boycott the 1984 Olympics stung the staff of the LAOOC. “It was like a body blow,” said David Simon, LAOOC Chair of Government Relations. “Everybody felt like they’d been punched in the stomach.”²⁴⁸ Morale plummeted, especially when other Eastern European Bloc countries announced their withdrawal. Peter Ueberroth was worried that the boycott would spread to African nations. He also was concerned that, if television ratings suffered, ABC-TV would withhold its final payment. In a time of crisis, the LAOOC pulled together to lobby other countries not to boycott. They also invited countries to send additional athletes. Ueberroth even flew to

²⁴⁸ David Simon, interview by Kenneth Reich, March 13, 1985, 23. Transcript v.4, Paul Ziffren Sports Resource Center, LA84 Foundation Sports Library, Los Angeles, CA.

Cuba to try and persuade Fidel Castro to send Cuba's team. "We had a phone bank going 24 hours a day," LAOOC Vice President Anita DeFrantz said.²⁴⁹

According to Harry Usher, Peter Ueberroth's number two in charge, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) quietly worked behind the scenes in order to try to control the damage.²⁵⁰ When Romania announced that it would send its team, the LAOOC breathed a massive sigh of relief. The addition of the People's Republic of China, absent from the summer Games since 1952, was another welcome sign. Eventually, sixteen countries, primarily from Eastern Europe, joined the Soviets boycott. This was a significant number, but the fear amongst the LAOOC and IOC was that the number would be much higher. And, after ABC-TV enjoyed extraordinary television ratings, the company made its final payment to the LAOOC.²⁵¹

The overall effect of the Soviet boycott has been debated by historians, economists, participants, and in the American press. Certainly, the absence of the Soviets, East Germans, and Cubans diminished the competition in several marquee sports, including track and field, boxing, and gymnastics. On the other hand, many LAOOC officials believe the boycott galvanized their effort. Said Don Matso, "If [the Soviets] had said, 'We're not coming because you guys didn't come in 1980,' everybody would have gone, it makes sense. But they didn't say that. They said, 'We're not coming because you guys aren't going to be friendly, and the smog's going to be bad, and it's

²⁴⁹ Anita DeFrantz, interview by Kenneth Reich, April 17, 1985, 6. Transcript v.1, Paul Ziffren Sports Resource Center, LA84 Foundation Sports Library, Los Angeles, CA.

²⁵⁰ Harry Usher, interview by Kenneth Reich, May 4, 1985, 22. Transcript v.5, Paul Ziffren Sports Resource Center, LA84 Foundation Sports Library, Los Angeles, CA.

²⁵¹ LA84 Foundation, "Amateur Athletic Foundation 20th Anniversary Report," 22.

going to be dangerous for us.’ They basically threw the gauntlet down and they challenged the people of Southern California, and it became unpatriotic to be unfriendly.” Matso’s explanation suggested that the Soviet boycott fashioned patriotism amongst Los Angelinos due to the criticisms the Soviet’s had about Los Angeles and their perceived reasons for boycotting the Games being an insult to the city. Mayor Bradley of Los Angeles stated, “There’s no doubt in my mind that their withdrawal from the Games helped rather than hurt.”²⁵² The statement by Bradley reveals much of what made the Games successful. The Americans dominated the Games in the absence of the Soviets and most of their allies, but maintained the appearance of legitimacy due to the large number of participants and a key few Communist nations. The rampant patriotism that resulted was certainly a political rallying point.

The day the Soviet Union announced the boycott was, probably not coincidentally, the same day that the Olympic torch relay began its transcontinental journey from New York City to Los Angeles. After the games were completed, LAOOC President Peter Ueberroth was ambivalent about his perception of what the boycott meant for the success of the Games. The LAOOC had attempted to work with the Soviets and the US Government on all of the accommodations the Soviets had demanded. His analysis was that it, “probably contributed and took away, but if I had my druthers I

²⁵² Ibid., 22-23.

would have had them there.”²⁵³ Anyone who cared about the spirit of the Olympics would have made the same argument.

Once the Soviet Union officially announced that they would not be coming to the Olympic Games in Los Angeles, some budgetary considerations shifted. For example, due to the Soviet withdrawal the US would not provide dockside security in Long Beach Harbor. However, many security experts believed that the lack of Communist bloc athletes might increase security risks because terrorists could stage attacks on athletes or athletic venues without fear of injuring Communist athletes or coaches.²⁵⁴ American law enforcement believed that terrorist organizations were more openly hostile to non-communist nations and their personnel than to those from communist nations. The primacy of the Soviet Union in the third world would possibly be on display in a violent way during the Games.

When the Soviets announced their boycott, Ed Best, head of security for the LAOOC did not feel that the security concerns would dramatically change. His assessment was not as clearly related to terrorist activity as the White House report, but instead focused on the possibility that the Soviets might instigate a problem surreptitiously from afar:

I think I was one of the early advocates of a kind of wash attitude. In some areas, the danger had increased, and in other areas it had decreased. I think the areas that it decreased was a lot of the genuine rabble-rousers in this country who

²⁵³ Peter Ueberroth, interview by Kenneth Reich, April 16, 1985, 19. Transcript v.1, Paul Ziffren Sports Resource Center, LA84 Foundation Sports Library, Los Angeles, CA.

²⁵⁴ Memorandum from David Sitrin for Joe Wright, Executive Office of the President: Office of Management and Budget, “U.S. Olympics Status Report,” May 25, 1984, Kenneth Hill Files, Box 1, Reagan Papers.

genuinely wanted to do something negative toward the Soviets; we had now taken that issue away. The other thing that was so dramatic though was that since they used security as one of the reasons they were not coming, and we all kind of pooh-poohed that as not being a genuine reason, then the concern was would they now use a surrogate to cause a problem so they could sit back and say, 'see, we told you so.' But I think, and I had discussions on this with Peter, ... make it clear to the Soviets that if it does occur, we are going to hold you responsible, we are going to look deeply behind the issue and if we find you behind it, we're going to tell the world about it, and so that was said to them. They were well aware that we had that concern.²⁵⁵

Despite these concerns, an increase in budget amounts above the levels previously agreed upon was not to be. It is likely that if the Soviets had attended, security budgets would have been flexible on an as needed basis. After the boycott, that was not the case. The only exception came when a request was made by the Department of Defense for two state-of-the-art Hadrian anti-terrorist robots to be tasked for use during the Olympics. The cost for two Hadrians was \$134,000, well over the budgeted \$100,000 allotment for non-personnel obligations.²⁵⁶ This budgetary exception demonstrated that the White House was still at least mildly concerned about terrorist threat, and since the cost of an extra \$34,000 was paltry, they agreed. Some suggested that due to the Soviet boycott, terrorists would feel more liberated to stage an attack at the Games. The security concerns regarding the Games after the Soviet withdrawal were certainly lessened, which demonstrates what concerned those involved most.

²⁵⁵ Ed Best interview by Kenneth Reich, April 2, 1985, 19. Transcript, v.1 Paul Ziffren Sports Resource Center, LA84 Foundation Sports Library, Los Angeles, CA.

²⁵⁶ Memorandum from David Sitrin for Joe Wright, Executive Office of the President: Office of Management and Budget, "Olympics – DOD Requests for Non-Personnel Obligation Over \$100,000," June 25, 1984, Kenneth Hill Files, Box 1, Reagan Papers.

The Press

Even before the TASS announcement of the boycott, the press in the United States caught wind of the possibility that the Soviets might not attend. As a result, *The Los Angeles Times* ran a flurry of stories covering the growing possibility. Many of these stories were reprinted nationwide, putting the *Times* at the center of a nationwide debate over the issue. On April 11, 1984, *The Los Angeles Times* reported that an informed Soviet source said that the Soviet Union was not planning to boycott the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles. “There will be no boycott,” the source said in a conversation held at his request. “The world would never excuse the Soviet Union for destroying the Olympic movement. The Soviet Union needs to go and it needs to win – but under good, hospitable circumstances.”²⁵⁷

Even the Soviet Union publicly remained conflicted about the 1984 Games, announcing that it would never boycott the Games but that it had not decided whether to attend. The chairman of the Soviet Olympic Committee, Marat V. Gramov, told a news conference repeatedly in response to reporters’ questions that, “We do not intend to boycott the Summer Games in Los Angeles in 1984.” But at the same time, he said that the Soviet Union would send a team only if it were satisfied that the United States was fully observing the Olympic Charter.²⁵⁸ Gramov’s attempt to draw a distinction between boycotting the Games and not attending them echoed the argument of the United States

²⁵⁷ Robert Gillette, “Hint of Soviet Boycott of Games Discounted,” *Los Angeles Times* April 11, 1984.

²⁵⁸ Robert Gillette, “Soviet Signals on Olympics Conflicting,” *Los Angeles Times* April 16, 1984.

Olympic Committee leaders when they boycotted the Moscow Games on April 12, 1980. At that time, USOC leaders contended that since they had never formally accepted the Soviet invitation to come to Moscow, they were simply deciding not to participate in the Games rather than boycotting them.²⁵⁹ This political gamesmanship reflects the shift back to an in-kind reply for the 1980 boycott engineered by President Carter. A guise of credibility was desired, and using the American differentiation against them was an added piece of soft power.

The initial American reaction to the May 8, 1984 boycott announcement was predictably hostile and skeptical, especially locally as reported in *The Los Angeles Times*. Kenneth Reich, who was the lead reporter covering the negotiations between the Soviets and the LAOOC, had the front page headline, “Soviets Boycott Olympics: Charge US Won’t Ensure Safety; (Mayor) Bradley Shocked.”²⁶⁰ Reich reiterated the text of the TASS announcement and pointed out the “coincidence” that the announcement came the same day as the kickoff of the torch relay in New York. Reporters scrambled for comments from Ueberroth and the LAOOC. However the LAOOC reacted by banning all reporters from their offices and forbade all staff members from commenting on the announcement.²⁶¹ The Southern California based Ban-the-Soviets Coalition was more than happy to comment, stating that they were “overjoyed” and that “they (the Soviets) pulled out because the US would not muzzle our coalition and agree to turn defectors

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Kenneth Reich, “Soviets Boycott Olympics,” *Los Angeles Times* May 8, 1984.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

back over to the KGB, which probably was the major reason they withdrew.”²⁶² This was certainly not the opinion of the LAOOC, which voiced great disdain for the organization and the seeming trouble they had caused. Ueberroth later stated that the coalition was such a small, inconsequential group and that “they could all get in a station wagon and drive south and it would be the end of it.”²⁶³

The following day’s headline screamed, “Slap from the Soviets.” Tom Petranoff, America’s gold medal hopeful in the javelin, wasted no time in reacting to the Soviet Union’s announced boycott of the Los Angeles Olympics. “What a joke,” he said, taking no pains to hide his disgust. “I think they’re trying to get more concessions,” he said. “They’ve got until June 2 to make up their minds. Why would they announce so early if they weren’t looking to be talked out of it?”²⁶⁴ Petranoff’s comments reflect the general disbelief amongst the American athletes who believed that the boycott would not stand up. American long jumper Carol Lewis said that an Eastern Bloc boycott would diminish these Olympics to the point that they’d be no more than a “big meet,” thereby robbing the American Olympians of the true Olympic experience.²⁶⁵

Reactions from athletes from other nations were less predictable. Meg Ritchie, a discus competitor from Scotland who finished eighth in Moscow in 1980 said, “To tell you the truth, when the whole thing got going, the Americans were forgotten. I think this

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Kenneth Reich, “Dispute Over Soviet Boycott of the Olympics Grows Bitter,” *Los Angeles Times* May 15, 1984.

²⁶⁴ Mike Littwin, “Reaction to Soviet Withdrawal Ranges from Disbelief to Disgust,” *Los Angeles Times* May 9, 1984.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

summer will be the same; in the heat of competition, you are worrying about yourself – not other people.”²⁶⁶ Ritchie’s response was emblematic of many of the other non-American participants. It was unfortunate, but not an earth-shattering tragedy. Buzz Reynolds, a Finnish competitor in the yachting competition said sarcastically, “at the least the Americans can’t boycott their own Olympics.”²⁶⁷

A coordinated lobbying effort to reverse the Soviet decision to boycott was launched by the LAOOC and the IOC in the aftermath of the TASS announcement. Peter Ueberroth publicly stated that he still believed that there was an “even chance” that the Soviets could be persuaded to participate, despite the forceful statement made by the Soviet National Olympic Committee.²⁶⁸ It was announced in Paris that the President of the IOC, Juan Antonio Samaranch and other IOC and international athletics officials would go to Moscow to seek resolution of the crisis. However, the meeting ultimately resulted in no change to the resolve of the Soviets.

Americans who were polled during this controversial moment largely saw the boycott as a political move of reprisal by the Soviet Union. According to a poll conducted by *Newsweek Magazine*, 59 percent of Americans believed that the Soviet Union pulled out of the Los Angeles Olympics to retaliate for the US boycott of the 1980 Moscow Games.²⁶⁹ Americans were largely aware of the ambivalent position the Soviets took regarding their attendance leading up to the Games, so many stories regarding the

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Evan Maxwell, “Drive to Dissuade Soviets Launched,” *Los Angeles Times* May 10, 1984; SD1.

²⁶⁹ Times Wire Services, “59% in Poll Think Soviets’ Boycott is Retaliation for ’80,” *Los Angeles Times* May 14, 1984; 14.

1980 boycott link ran in the American press concurrently. This undoubtedly helped shape public opinion as reflected in the survey. The magazine also said that 50 percent believed the action was intended to embarrass President Reagan; only 17 percent accepted the official Soviet explanation – that it was concerned about the safety of its athletes.²⁷⁰ The American public did not buy the official reasons given by the Soviets or that they were not boycotting but simply not accepting the invitation to attend. The general consensus was that the Soviets were returning the favor for the boycott in 1980 and all of the cited reasons were a smokescreen.

The boycott was not presented to the American public through the press as merely a “tit-for-tat” response to the 1980 boycott of the Moscow Olympics by the United States and 54 other nations.²⁷¹ Nor did everyone in the press construct carefully guarded commentaries in hopes of reversing the Soviet boycott in time for the Games. In fact, the opportunity to explain the differences in the international situation to the American people was seized by some reporters.

In 1980 the Soviet Union had just launched a full-scale military invasion of a small neighboring country, and attempt at military conquest that continues to this day with escalating ferocity and inhumanity. No rational person would argue that the United States is guilty of anything remotely as brutal. There is no validity to the Soviet complaint about security—except to the degree that their security concerns are the same as those that caused the construction of the Berlin Wall.²⁷²

It is abundantly clear that treating the Soviets with “kid gloves” was not a strategy that all reporters were willing to do. Also, American brutality like that committed during the

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ Jody Powell, “Too Bad About the Soviets, but Let’s Not Overdo It,” *Los Angeles Times* May 14, 1984.

²⁷² Ibid.

invasion of Grenada was not mentioned by these members of the press. More anger was soon to follow in the press from both sides. The salvos would continue for some time.

By May 15, the dispute turned ugly in the press between the Americans and the Soviets. Marat Gramov called the Soviet boycott decision irrevocable at a Moscow press conference, stating the US security agencies had been plotting to give Soviet athletes mind-altering drugs at the Games.²⁷³ The claims grew even more outlandish and confrontational as Gramov went on. “We have faced subversive elements and provocations guided by the US, but never before has the anti-Soviet campaign been so extensive. It threatens not just the tranquility and health of our athletes, but their very lives.”²⁷⁴ Gramov’s claims were not well received in the United States. At a White House press conference, President Reagan said that the suggestions by the Soviets that their team would not be safe in Los Angeles were, “absolutely false.” “I don’t think that there’s any action I could take to convince the Soviets to decide to come to the Games,” the President added.²⁷⁵ President Reagan finally was resigned to the fact that the Soviets were not going to attend the Games. Perhaps Gramov’s most aggressive claims finally brought the President to this position. At the Moscow news conference he said:

U.S. security services have infiltrated members of terrorist and extremist groups into the organizing committee of the Olympics. Methods had been devised for the abduction of Soviet people, for compelling them not to return to their motherland. The U.S. plans on treating them with special drugs, including psychotropic preparations which destroy the nervous system.

²⁷³ Kenneth Reich, “Dispute Over Soviet Boycott of the Olympics Grows Bitter,” *Los Angeles Times* May 15, 1984.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

The Soviets rhetoric took the strongest turn to date at this point. Gramov's rhetoric is a clear return to the old Cold War. The accusations were wild, and unfounded in even a shred of truth, much like those made by the Ban The Soviets Coalition in the United States. Certainly it was clear that the Soviet team was no longer wavering over their attendance based on these statements. President Reagan did not hold the corner market on reviving Cold War rhetoric of the past, but the response was stronger than it had been during the buildup to the Games.

Even after the statements made by Gramov, the LAOOC and Ueberroth remained committed to the task of reversing the boycott. Ueberroth even made a public statement after meeting with the reverend Jesse Jackson saying he would be "supportive in any way," in the Democratic presidential contender's efforts to persuade the Soviet Union and Cuba to send athletes to the Olympic Games.²⁷⁶ Jackson met in Washington DC with Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin in May of 1984 and announced that he would meet in June with Cuban President Fidel Castro on behalf of the LAOOC. Jackson, who attempted to make the boycott into a campaign issue stated, "We must move from Cold War behavior and hot war rhetoric to aggressive diplomatic efforts," in trying to bring more than a dozen boycotting nations to the Games.²⁷⁷ While nothing came from Jackson's efforts, Ueberroth's open support of Jackson's efforts is further evidence of his commitment to attempting everything possible to convince the Soviets to come. It is

²⁷⁶ Lee May, "Ueberroth Will Back Jackson Bid to Reverse Games Boycott," *Los Angeles Times* June 6, 1984.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

unclear what the Reagan camp thought about this, given their close relationship with the LAOOC during the period.

On the eve of the Olympic Games, the IOC leader condemned the United States and the Soviet Union for exchanging Olympic boycotts. The result was a vow to seek countries with better political conditions in choosing sites of future Games, expressed by Juan Antonio Samaranch, the president of the IOC, as the organization celebrated the ninetieth anniversary of its founding.²⁷⁸ This was an international slap on the wrist to the United States and the Soviet Union, to a lesser extent. Samaranch mentioned former President Jimmy Carter and the United States by name in decrying the 1980 and 1984 boycotts, but did not mention the Soviet Union by name; alluding to the Soviet boycott as “the other side of the coin.”²⁷⁹ Like much of the historiography of the era, he considered the action a tit-for-tat response.

The last-ditch efforts of the IOC representatives who traveled to Moscow were not effective. Mexico’s Mario Vazquez-Rana, president of the worldwide Association of National Olympic Committees said that what prompted the decision “will always remain a mystery.”²⁸⁰ Samaranch stated at the two-hour meeting with unnamed Soviet officials in the Kremlin that security in general, planned demonstrations against the Soviet team, and the existence of anti-Soviet movements were not a credible threat. Samaranch did not agree with the Soviet reasons, but could not convince them otherwise.

²⁷⁸ Kenneth Reich, “Olympic Chiefs Look to More ‘Serene’ Sites,” *Los Angeles Times* June 2, 1984.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

Samaranch did say that he found some encouraging elements in the situation. Unlike 1980, virtually all of the nonaligned states in the world agreed to come to Los Angeles. The number of teams participating in the Games in Moscow was eighty-one; over 130 in Los Angeles.²⁸¹ The IOC was willing to discipline the United States, but the language was certainly harsher than the actual resolve. Of course, the Cold War was drawing to a close – unbeknownst to the United States, the Soviet Union, or the IOC.

Once the Games began, Moscow revived its propaganda attacks on the Games, suggesting that the slaying of twenty-one people in a McDonald's restaurant in San Diego in late July of 1984 justified its boycott on grounds of inadequate safety. "Gunfire is thundering on the eve of the Games in California," the official TASS news agency said in an article printed in *Sovietsky Sport*, the country's leading sports publication.²⁸² "The bloodletting gives nightmarish testimony to the climate of violence reigning in the 'Olympic state,'" the report claimed. The murders "once again show what the security guarantees of the US authorities are worth, and what can happen to any guest in Los Angeles."²⁸³ The geography of California was not explained in the Soviet press, as San Diego held only one Olympic event and is more than 100 miles from Los Angeles. Regardless, the boycott was a means by which to grow more aggressive with their rhetoric and accusations and not appear as warmongers. Not a direct show of militaristic power, this rhetoric was veiled in discussions that were largely directed at specific targets: Reagan, Los Angeles, safety, overt commercialization, etc.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Robert Gillette, "Soviets Cite Slayings, Revive Boycott Rhetoric," *Los Angeles Times* July 24, 1984.

²⁸³ Ibid.

Pravda, the Communist Party daily newspaper, joined in the new campaign by alleging that the forty-one year old gunman, James Oliver Huberty, exemplified feelings that are widespread in America – anti-Communist hatred, the bitter legacy of Vietnam, and the despair of the unemployed. Playing up the hazards of heat and smog, the Soviet press has also begun calling the Olympics ‘the games in a gas mask,’ and *Pravda* carried a photograph of a jogger identified as a Swedish journalist in downtown Los Angeles with a gas mask over his face.²⁸⁴ The smog issue was consistently emphasized in the Soviet press.

The outrage in the United States over the boycott eventually gave way to commentaries during the Olympic competitions that the Soviets and their allies’ teams were missed. As *Los Angeles Times* reporter Scott Olster suggested during the 1984 Olympics:

When those crazy Commies announced that their athletes already had plans for these two weeks and wouldn’t be coming to Los Angeles, the unofficial motto of the Olympics became: “Bleep ‘em.” As in: “We’ll have just as much fun without ‘em,” and “Who needs ‘em?” What else could we say? We certainly didn’t want to give the Soviets any satisfaction by sulking. So we put on our party hats, grabbed our flags and started counting American gold medals. For the most part we’ve avoided mentioning the boycott bloc... but, the thrill is gone from basketball, gymnastics, boxing, track and field and baseball. It’s like going to a party and your date doesn’t show up.²⁸⁵

Olster’s emphatic language demonstrates the hopefulness that many Americans were led to feel by the Reagan administration despite the many blatant problems still present. Many Americans agreed with Olster, but the 174 medals that the United States won

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Scott Ostler, “Thanks to the Boycott the Thrill is Gone,” *Los Angeles Times* August 5, 1984.

during the 1984 Olympic Games were celebrated by the majority of Americans, and made huge celebrities of many of the preeminent athletes of the games. Carl Lewis won gold medals in the 100m, 200m, 4x100m relay, and the long jump – an unprecedented feat in track and field. Mary Lou Retton won the women’s gymnastics all-around title for the United States for the first time, the first gymnast not from Eastern Europe to win the gold medal. Additionally, the gold medal winning American men’s basketball team, spearheaded by Michael Jordan, Patrick Ewing, and Chris Mullin, further distanced the memory of the controversial 1972 defeat at the hands of the Soviet basketball team in Munich. The Soviet boycott led to unprecedented American sports successes, much like the American boycott in 1980 led to unprecedented Soviet sports successes.

The drive to “win” took on special meaning during the 1984 Olympics. Partly because of the boycott, American athletes triumphed in large numbers. Crowds waved banners proclaiming “We’re #1” and chanted “U.S.A., U.S.A.” Television coverage in the United States sometimes skipped victory ceremonies in which non-Americans took top honors and often declined to broadcast the national anthems of other teams. All of these events coincided with President Reagan’s 1984 reelection campaign. In the campaign television sports, a great deal of Olympic footage was included.²⁸⁶ President Reagan’s campaign used the boycott to change the campaign. Reagan’s landslide victory over Walter Mondale in November 1984 prompted House Speaker Tip O’Neill to

²⁸⁶ Michael Schaller, *Reckoning with Reagan: America and its President in the 1980s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 146-147.

tell the president: “In my fifty years in public life, I’ve never seen a man more popular than you with the American people.”²⁸⁷

Long after the Games were over the Soviets remained committed to a confrontational international position with regard to the Olympics. A five-page letter written to President Reagan by Constantin Adrianov and Vitaly Smirnov, the IOC’s two Soviet members, warned the IOC’s leaders that an irrevocable split in the Olympic movement was possible. The request also requested the IOC assign many of its powers to the national Olympic committees and the international sports federations. However, the most inflammatory accusation in the letter suggested corruption in 1978 on the part of the IOC leadership in awarding Los Angeles the Olympic Games of 1984.²⁸⁸ The reason given for the impropriety was that the leaders conspired to enrich the IOC with television revenue. The television deal was not made until late 1979, but this accusation was very poignant, since the 1984 Games garnered the richest television contract in Olympic history, some \$225 million for US rights to the games. The letter accused the IOC of getting \$75 million of the lucrative deal, which was incorrect – they received \$34 million.²⁸⁹ The accusation was discussed at the time as a reflection of the anti-capitalist nature of the Soviets propaganda machine and their embarrassment over the relative financial failures of the 1980 Moscow Games versus the successes of the 1984 Los Angeles Games by comparison. However, like the American posturing of the era, it was

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 147.

²⁸⁸ Kenneth Reich, “Soviets Assail IOC Leaders in Harshly Critical Letter,” *Los Angeles Times* December 1, 1984; C1.

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

simply another form of soft power expression.

Conclusions

The spectacularization of the Olympics was revolutionized again by the expressions of soft power of the Soviet Union and the United States in 1980 and 1984. The political meaning of the Games has also remained consistently visible since. What has changed is the manner in which political meaning has been demonstrated. While overt demonstrations like protests and terrorist attacks have recurred, more nuanced demonstrations of power have entered into the equations. The negotiations over the Soviet Union's participation in the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles were a long, drawn out affair. President Reagan and much of his staff clearly believed that the Soviet Team intended to participate in the games. When the negotiations became more convoluted early in 1983, their efforts continued while President Reagan simultaneously began his most aggressive anti-Soviet rhetoric in the press. This behavior appears puzzling on the surface. For nearly a year, from late 1983 until May of 1984 the White House staff and internal agencies frantically continued negotiations and consistently approved often outlandish accommodations for the Soviets. Simultaneously, the White House escalated the Cold War rhetoric that had largely been in retreat for over a decade. While the President wanted the Soviets to participate in order to demonstrate American superiority in hosting an international athletic competition, the economic viability of the

Olympics in Los Angeles, and the cosmopolitan nature of Los Angeles, he was also committed to raising the defense budget.²⁹⁰ Prior to the boycott, President Reagan tried to balance the two issues out.

Once the boycott was announced, Reagan used it as another tool to point out the hostile nature of the Soviets while still publicly trying to convince them to change their minds. Villainizing the Soviets was a way of restarting the identification of the Soviet Union as a threat, demanding defense spending, and reheating the Cold War. The mass of internal documentation at the White House generated by this singular issue is very substantial. The possibility that the Soviets had already decided to make a political statement and boycott prior to their actual announcement is not demonstrated in internal White House discussions. In fact, President Reagan and his aides gave the appearance to working hard to ensure Soviet participation until the very last minutes leading up to the Games. However, it is likely that many of Reagan's top level advisors would have suspected the boycott was imminent regardless of the machinations of the office.

It is also apparent that the men tasked with the negotiations were committed to the process. Kenneth Hill, the State Foreign Service officer who was detailed to the White House in July 1983 to coordinate all Federal involvement in security for the 1984 Summer Olympic Games in Los Angeles made his stance clear when he said that the Soviet requests were too great a security risk. Despite the protestations of Hill, Michael Deaver, the Deputy Chief of Staff who was the Presidential liaison to the Olympics, Robert C. McFarlane, President Reagan's NSA, and Michael A. McManus, Jr., the

²⁹⁰ Schaller, *Reckoning With Reagan*, 47-49.

Deputy Assistant to President Reagan, all pushed an agenda of accommodation. Despite the internal policy of an arms buildup, their internal memos all suggest that the Olympics were a priority for the White House, and that Soviet participation was worth some security risks. Of course, plans were detailed that would minimize risk – but they all wrote in opposition to the recommendations made by Hill.

Despite the apparent solidarity in the White House, questions surrounding this Cold War episode remain. Whether the Soviet Union actually intended to participate is less clear. The analysis of the Soviet propaganda done by Evelyn Mertin suggests that the Soviets' decision not to attend the 1984 Olympic Games was not predetermined, based on the Soviet archival records of how much money was spent preparing Soviet athletes and sports delegations for 1984.²⁹¹ Great attention was paid to the impression their representatives would make while competing in capitalist countries. Ideological lectures were intensified to secure the delegations "exemplary behavior" and prevent them from being influenced by ideological opponents "under the circumstances of the aggravating international situation."²⁹² In fact, the political situation was consistently discussed and taken into consideration:

The clear anti-Soviet position of the present U.S. government [...] has already damaged international sports cooperation and can darken the atmosphere of the Games of the XXIII Olympiad. Therefore it is necessary to carefully watch the developing situation in and around Los Angeles. It is also important to take compulsory steps to oppose ideological diversion.²⁹³

²⁹¹ Mertin, 244-246.

²⁹² Ibid., 243.

²⁹³ J.M. Gel'perin, *Sport (USA) Posle Olimpijskix Igr v Moskve* (Moscow: Booklet Printed at VNIIFK, 1982), 5.

The immediate plan was not clearly a revenge boycott, but caution was still in the dialogue during the interim period between 1980 and 1984.

Since the propaganda literature demonstrated that Soviet athletes would participate as late as April of 1984, then something drastic may have happened that created the last minute reversal. However, this question remains a mystery. Why did the Soviet Union spend so much time and energy engaged in negotiations and then pull out at the last minute? The historiographical argument that it was a direct response to the 1980 US boycott does not hold based on the evidence found in the Reagan White House and the Soviet documents uncovered by Mertin. From May 1982, a new topic was included in Soviet scolding of the upcoming Olympics: the correct maintenance of the Olympic Charter during the preparations. The Soviet sport officials demanded official guarantees to ensure their rights within the Olympic movement. They already feared being discriminated against by American authorities and anti-Communist groups in the US. Examples of hostile movements and plans against Soviet athletes in America were described in the press.²⁹⁴ Instead, the likely answer lies in the transition of power at the top levels of the Soviet government where Brezhnev allies regained control just prior to the 1984 Games. Any decision of the magnitude of the boycott would have come from the top levels of government alone. Despite the apparent good faith negotiations by Soviet representatives, the reality was they were not privy to the decision makers' feelings at the top of the Communist Party structure.

²⁹⁴ Mertin, 243.

The triumphs of the American athletes in Los Angeles were unprecedented; due in large part to the absence of the Soviets and most of the Warsaw Pact nations. Three Socialist countries disregarded the boycott and attended anyway: Yugoslavia (which hosted the 1984 Winter Olympics), the People's Republic of China, and Romania. Romania, a Warsaw Pact country, opted to compete despite Soviet demands. This led to a warm reception of the Romanian team by the United States. When the Romanian athletes entered during the opening ceremonies, they received a standing ovation from the spectators, which comprised mostly US citizens. Romania won fifty-three medals, including twenty gold, more than the nation has in any other Olympics and second in the overall medal count to only the United States. This success spoke to the strength of the Communist Bloc athletic system.

Speaking to the United States Olympic medal winners following the games, President Reagan again iterated the importance of the Olympics to the crowd. His speech was a testament to nonpartisan American politics. He was made an honorary member of the team, and publicly took great pride in this:

There was something very special about the Olympics; there was a special spirit to it. You gave us all such a lift. You gave us something to be unified around and cheer for together. And I think maybe you possibly heard down on the field that cheer. It went something like, U.S.A.! U.S.A.! Well, it doesn't matter whether you won the gold or the silver or the bronze; the cheer was for you, and for all of you.

The specialness of this Olympics was apparent from the beginning. You walked into the opening ceremonies with a special kind of pride, a vibrant and a very human delight that was transmitted to the crowds and that was picked up by the people who were watching on TV. Throughout the games, I couldn't help but think that if the people of the world judged Americans by what they saw of you, then they think, "Americans? Well, they're generous and full of serious effort;

they're full of high spirits; they're motivated by all the best things. They're truly a nation of champions.²⁹⁵

These words are revealing, since the latter part of the passage points to the importance of the Olympics in presenting the United States to the rest of the world. As is the case with any host nation, this is one of the most important reasons for hosting Games.

Given the context of the Cold War's revival in the early 1980s, there was extra impetus for the moment than there would have been otherwise. After all, the Cold War was still being fought. The hearts and minds of the rest of the world were still a prize worth fighting for in the eyes of Reagan and his administration. The President obviously felt strongly that the athletes were a great way to display the supremacy of American culture. Despite the general feelings of goodwill, there was still one last frustrated shot taken at the Soviets for not participating:

The games were a triumph, a triumph of friendly and generous competition, a triumph of fellowship, and a triumph of the spirit. And it turned out that nothing could mar those games, nothing could detract. The only losers of the 23d Olympiad were those who didn't or couldn't come.²⁹⁶

To the President these "losers" were the Soviets and their communist counterparts that decided to boycott the Olympics. A final parting Cold War shot regarding the Olympics was made by the President at the Soviets was made that August in 1984.

The 1984 Summer Olympics were boycotted by the Soviet Union and most of their allies. The negotiations prior to the boycott between the Cold War powers were at

²⁹⁵ Ronald Reagan, "Remarks to United States Olympic Medal Winners in Los Angeles, California, August 13, 1984," in *Presidency Project* (accessed May 7, 2009).

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

times legitimate, seemingly productive, and from an American perspective – resolved. Most Americans involved believed up until the start of the Olympics that the Soviets would participate. The quick disintegration of the agreements caused the White House and to a lesser extent the LAOOC great surprise. From the perspective of the United States Government, the games were on – with the Soviets as participants and potentially the Americans greatest competitors. In the end the games went on without the Soviets, were an overwhelming economic success, but did not allow for the competitive success between the Americans and the Soviets that most in the United States hoped for. As USOC President William Simon said while lamenting the Soviet boycott, “...we’ll always have problems with the Games because they’re too big a spectacle for politicians not to monkey with.”²⁹⁷ Ironically, the operational and financial success of the Games despite the Soviet boycott made them an even more powerful demonstration of American strength than they might have been if the Soviets had chosen to attend and compete.

²⁹⁷ William Oscar Johnson, “Is There Life after Los Angeles,” *Sports Illustrated*, May 21, 1984, 36.

Chapter Three

The “Look” of the Games: Advertising and the Rise of Corporate Sponsorship

In the current global economy, the presence of corporate sponsorships in international and domestic sports competitions is a foregone conclusion. Most major sports organizations, teams, and leagues in the world generate revenues by selling television rights and official licenses to private companies, offering exclusivity in trade for enormous amounts of money, often guaranteed over multiyear contracts. This development followed on the heels of the mass commoditization of sports during the late nineteenth century in the United States (1870-1930). Boxing, thoroughbred racing, and baseball were the dominant professional sports in the United States. During the 1880s, publishers like Richard Kyle Fox of the *National Police Gazette* helped create modern boxing by conducting promotions, offering prize belts, and publicizing the exploits of the great John L. Sullivan. Fox used the *Gazette* as a pulpit to denounce hypocrites who opposed the modern sport of boxing.²⁹⁸ However, only baseball remained a consistently supported professional sport in the United States as boxing and thoroughbred racing suffered mounting challenges throughout the era that made most professional competitions illegal.²⁹⁹

The commercial sport industry sought to organize events on strict market principles – namely, the pursuit of capital accumulation—rather than the satisfaction of

²⁹⁸ Guy Reel, “Richard Fox, John L. Sullivan, and the Rise of Modern American Prize Fighting,” *Journalism History* 27: 2 (Summer 2001), 73.

²⁹⁹ Steven Riess, ed., *Major Problems in American Sport History* (Stamford, CT: Cengage Learning, 2015), 206.

individual personal and social needs, which is what early sport in America was previously organized around.³⁰⁰ Sports were not commercially popular in the United States widely until the rise of the middle class in the late nineteenth century. Sporting was considered mostly a commoditized leisure activity for the growing segment of American society, much like the ideals upheld by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) suggested. Sports commercialization first began in the United States then, with the manufacturing and marketing of goods such as cricket bats, bows and arrows, billiard tables, and hunting and fishing gear.³⁰¹ When the United States began projecting as a global power in the late nineteenth century, baseball was enlisted in America's imperial quests – helping the nation colonize other lands, from the Caribbean to Asia to the Pacific.³⁰² Professional sports in the United States were nonexistent other than baseball, the first commercially viable sport successfully launched. William Hulbert, a Chicago businessman, created the National League in 1876 as the successor to the first professional league, the National Association of Professional Base Ball Players (1871-1875). He sought to bolster his city's national reputation by creating a league on business principles that would flourish for years to come.³⁰³ By the 1880s, baseball was a \$10 million a year enterprise.³⁰⁴

³⁰⁰ George H. Sage, *Power and Ideology in American Sport* (Chicago: Human Kinetics Books, 1990), 105.

³⁰¹ Dave Zirin, *A People's History of Sports in the United States: 250 Years of Politics, Protest, People, and Play* (New York: The New Press, 2009), 17.

³⁰² Robert Elias, *The Empire Strikes Out* (New York: The New Press, 2010), 1.

³⁰³ Robert K. Barney and Frank Dallier, "I'd Rather Be a Lamp Post in Chicago Than a Millionaire in any Other City: William A. Hulbert, Civic Pride, and the Birth of the National League," *NINE: A Journal of Baseball History and Culture* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 92.

³⁰⁴ Zirin, 21.

Despite the relatively quick economic successes of the sport industry, it took the development of mass media technologies to make the industry the financial behemoth it is today. Not until the rise of the radio and the newsreel in the 1920s were sports celebrities truly created and successfully monetized in the United States. Babe Ruth, the iconic New York Yankees baseball player was the ultimate realization of that shift when he was described by admirers as a national hero in 1920. “Next to the leading candidates for the White House, a one-time waif on the streets of Baltimore is perhaps the most discussed person on the American continent today.”³⁰⁵ Even still, it was rare in the decades that followed for international sporting events to achieve financial successes. American commercial success was in its infancy. International commercial sports successes were not yet a consistent reality. A major pillar for stability and maintenance of commercial sport is the mass media and the corporate sponsors that take advantage of the medium.³⁰⁶ Not until the 1980s did lucrative new revenue streams become available through cable television and municipal support for stadium and arena construction.³⁰⁷ These streams gave an opportunity for international sporting competitions to achieve financial success as well.

The Los Angeles Olympics of 1984 were a transitional moment in which the marriage of sports, mass media, and corporate America discovered the successful model for the modern business of commercial sport. More than a political moment, the impact

³⁰⁵ From, “A New Hero of the Great American Game at Close Range,” *Current Opinion* 49: 4 (October, 1920), 477.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 114.

³⁰⁷ Ron Briley, “Review: A People’s History of Sports in the United States: 250 Years of Politics, Protest, People, and Play,” *Journal of Sport History* Vol. 37, No. 1

of 1984 in global corporatization was equally dramatic. In many ways, 1984 was a marriage between politics and commercialization. Much in the way that the cultural commodification of the United States was on display during the early years of the Cold War, 1984 offered a new opportunity for the United States to demonstrate the power of the private sector by hosting the Olympic Games. In the years following the 1984 Olympics, American sport became a massive commercialized enterprise as a result. In one pivotal moment the 1984 Olympics demonstrated the immense power of the American capitalist enterprise, the financial creativity of an American Olympic Committee, and the ability of the United States to make the Olympics profitable for the first time in over fifty years. By harnessing existing infrastructure, capitalizing on the political climate, and exploiting corporate dollars the LAOOC created a model for not only the Olympics, but for many professional sports organizations worldwide.

The 1984 Games were a watershed where the LAOOC simultaneously rewrote the economic framework for staging an Olympics and sparked an era where North American capital would come to dominate the macro-economics of the Olympics.³⁰⁸ American companies sponsorships of 1984 were deemed successful, and a wave of American corporate sponsorship for subsequent Games resulted. A key study in 1988 found that the gross national sport product of the United States was \$50 billion in 1987, directly contributing over one percent of the value of all goods and services produced in the

³⁰⁸ Alan Tomlinson, "The Commercialization of the Olympics: Cities, Corporations, and the Olympic Commodity," in *Global Olympics: Historical and Sociological Studies of the Modern Games*, Kevin Young & Kevin B. Wamsley, eds. (Elsevier, Ltd: San Diego: 2005), 184.

United States.³⁰⁹ This growth was directly related to the commercial successes of the companies who broadcasted and advertised at the Olympics Games in 1984. In the years that followed, corporate involvement with the Olympics continued to accelerate. At present, the average corporate Olympic sponsor pays \$100 million to be dubbed a “major” sponsor, and thus create entire advertising campaigns around the sponsorship for each Olympic Games.³¹⁰

The unique financial success of the 1984 Los Angeles Games could hardly have been predicted with certainty. Each of the Olympics of the prior fifty years had been financially disastrous undertakings for the host countries. At the state and national level there was a great deal of opposition to the use of government funds for construction projects related to the Olympics. Congressman Charles Wilson was the loudest objector to the use of federal tax dollars in preparing for the Los Angeles Games. He urged President Carter to, “be cautious in the midst of the present rush by individuals seeking to have federal tax dollars committed in the fiscal year 1981 budget.”³¹¹

In June of 1978 the negotiations between the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the City Council of Los Angeles began to break down over a provision in the contract that required the municipality to assume financial liability for the Games. Mayor Bradley of Los Angeles announced that he would ask the City Council to withdraw the bid for the games if this provision was to be enforced, leading to the origin of the private

³⁰⁹ R. Sandomir, “The \$50 Billion Sports Industry” *Sports Inc.* (November 14, 1988) 14-23.

³¹⁰ Virginia Harrison, “Olympic sponsorship: Is it worth it?,” CNN Money, <http://money.cnn.com/2014/01/29/news/companies/sochi-sponsors-investment> (accessed August 3, 2014).

³¹¹ Letter from Charles H. Wilson to President Jimmy Carter, November 8, 1979, LAOOC Papers, Collection 1403, Box 62, Folder 3, UCLA.

Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee (LAOOC), a group created immediately after the IOC awarded the Games to the city.³¹² The committee then assumed the financial risks associated with hosting the Olympic Games. In previous Olympics, the host cities were compelled to take out bonds in order to pay for construction and other preparations with the hope that the profits and in some cases television contracts from the Games would be enough to recover their costs. In every Olympics between the 1932 and 1984 Olympic Games, both of which were hosted by Los Angeles, this strategy was unsuccessful. As LAOOC President Peter Ueberroth stated,

The reason we consider this financial approach so vital is that the Games are in danger of becoming victims of their own success – too big and too costly. Some means other than governmental support must be found to fund them. Otherwise, it seems likely that only the wealthiest of nations will be able to host the Olympic movement in the future.³¹³

The approach to paying for the Olympics was fundamentally changed by the 1984 Los Angeles Games in part due to the public pressure that the City of Los Angeles not incur any debt by hosting the Games.

In the final accounting the Los Angeles Olympics ended up a resounding endorsement for the capitalist endeavor of the LAOOC. The corporate sponsorship strategy employed by the LAOOC was profoundly inventive in comparison with the state of corporate marketing in sports globally at the time. Americans' passion for sports provided businesses with a powerful advertising opportunity by the end of the 1970s. Sports became a marketing tool and industry on a national scale. This trend coincided

³¹² Kenneth Reich, *Making it Happen*, 24.

³¹³ Peter V. Ueberroth, "Looking Towards 1984," *Olympic Review* 159, no. 1 (1981): 15.

with the health craze that swept the nation, increasing the sporting goods and athletic shoe industries. Businesses then increasingly found associations with sports and teams a winning match.³¹⁴ While corporate sponsorship had been a part of international sporting competitions in years prior with varying levels of success, the concept of utilizing these companies as the major funding source for the competition was revolutionary. Corporate sponsorship had been mostly a way for events, teams, and leagues to gain items and services in trade for corporate visibility. Very little funding was actually provided in most cases by corporate sponsors. Instead, corporations were viewed as providers of goods and services as a way of keeping down operating costs. As a result, the 1984 Games mark a wholesale shift in corporate marketing on a world stage, allowing the US to reposition itself through opportunities not available previously. Companies such as Coca-Cola, Anheuser-Busch, McDonald's, 7-Eleven, and Canon U.S.A reached previously untapped markets due to the participation of more countries in the 1984 Games than ever before. While companies like Coca-Cola had been sponsors before, the demands the LAOOC placed on sponsors for 1984 were much greater than ever before. In the first Olympics to be paid for largely by private businesses, these firms staked huge amounts of cash and pride on what they hoped would be an uplifting sixteen days of sports. Company officials, though, were nervous due to the uncertainty of their investments – largely due to the pullout of athletes from the Soviet Union and thirteen other countries that could possibly have hurt television ratings and dampen the press

³¹⁴ Juliann Sivulka, *Soap, Sex, and Cigarettes: A Cultural History of American Advertising* (Boston: Wadsworth, 2012), 299.

coverage of the Games.³¹⁵ This potential crisis loomed large in the wake of the repeated disastrous outcomes of the most recent previous Games.

The political crises in prior Olympics created a great deal of uncertainty with regard to financing successful Games. Just a year before the Los Angeles Olympic bid began moving forward in 1977, corruption and unexpected cost overruns due in part to the exorbitant demands of international sports authorities caused a \$1 billion deficit for the Montreal Games.³¹⁶ Montreal also had severe political problems, including a boycott by the African countries in reaction to the International Olympic Committee's refusal to ban New Zealand, whose rugby team had been touring South Africa, a country that had been excluded from many international sporting events due to implementation of apartheid policy. The 1972 Summer Olympics, in Munich, saw one of the most notorious terrorist attacks of the postwar era, the fatal Palestinian assault on Israeli athletes. The Olympics before that, in Mexico City in 1968, suffered the tragedy of a massacre of student protestors. Two years after Los Angeles was awarded the 1984 Games, the planning was disrupted by the American-led boycott of the 1980 Moscow Games. Sixty-five national Olympic committees did not send teams to Moscow, greatly reducing the financial return on the Soviet Union's investment. The events of 1980 further clouded the potential financial success of the 1984 Los Angeles Games. The threat of a Soviet-led retaliatory boycott made the undertaking in Los Angeles even more financially uncertain. This Cold War threat to the success of the Games led the LAOOC

³¹⁵ Stephen S. Koepp, "Going for the Green: Olympic Sponsors Look for Big Payoffs From Their Million Dollar Promotions," *Time* (June 18, 1984), 60.

³¹⁶ Reich, *Making it Happen*, 13.

to develop a new strategy based on the very capitalist system the Soviets and their allies rejected. However, this was tempered publicly until the Soviet boycott was official.

“The Games of the XXIIIrd Olympiad will be less commercial than most other recent Olympic games,” said Peter Ueberroth, the President of the LAOOC. “By comparison the games of the XXIIIrd Olympiad will have no more than fifty sponsors as compared to several hundred in prior Olympic Games, licensees will be limited to those that have a reason for being included and are involved with youth and sports.”³¹⁷ This counterintuitive statement by Ueberroth in 1980 required further clarification to staff members, potential corporate sponsors, and the media. “The licensing and merchandising activities of the 1984 Olympic Games is one of the most important sources of financial support for the Games, since these games will not derive one cent of financial support from city, county, state, or federal government funds. These games will be financed exclusively from the private sector,” elaborated Ueberroth.³¹⁸ In the end, Ueberroth’s promise was kept, as forty-two official sponsors were allowed in all, with fifty-two additional official LAOOC suppliers allowed.³¹⁹ Fewer sponsors gave the appearance of less corporate Games initially. This kept critics of the strategy as a dangerous over-corporatization at bay. However, the strategy was designed to extract more sponsorship dollars for the hosting committee while simultaneously centralizing control over the

³¹⁷ Telex from Joel Rubenstein, LAOOC Director of Licensing and Merchandising to Davila Davis, LAO LSA, September 23, 1980, 1; LAOOC Papers, Collection 1403, Box 92, Folder 3, UCLA.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

³¹⁹ Memo to File, Sponsors; February 1, 1984; LAOOC Papers, Collection 1403, Box 1430, Folder 39, UCLA; Memo to File, Suppliers; February 1, 1984; LAOOC Papers, Collection 1403, Box 1430, Folder 40, UCLA.

Olympic brand. The distribution of potential wealth resulting from Olympic involvement at the corporate level was also under much more consolidated control than ever before.

President Ueberroth meant that the number of sponsors involved in the Games would be fewer, but they would be required to contribute far more financially than any corporation had ever done before. This was the key element to the privatization of the Games. Corporate sponsors would carry the bulk of the fiscal responsibility for financing the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games. In addition, most would be expected to still provide gratis products and services to the LAOOC for their use in planning and promoting the Games. These demands were agreed to by the sponsors, even though the requirements were unheard of. This was the groundbreaking strategy pioneered by the LAOOC. The gratis items would be expected, but the financial contributions from the chosen sponsors would pay for the majority of the competitions, construction, and operating costs. This was a way of getting additional value out of the sponsors in addition to their financial contributions.

The traditional structure of Olympic funding was a trifecta of government funding, lotteries, and donations. Of these three, government funding was usually the largest source of income in prior Olympics. President Reagan was also especially interested in the way that the Games were to be run and paid for. During a speech on the 5th of August in Washington D.C., he stated: “I have felt for a long time that the work of the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee isn’t good work, it is great work because of the dedication and the selflessness of the people on the committee and

generosity of millions of Americans. You know, these are the first games in history that will be put on totally by the private sector and the LAOOC tells me that they will be depending on volunteers and community groups.”³²⁰ The way the Games were being run was advantageous to President Reagan’s anticommunist Cold War rhetoric – if they were financially successful and executed properly. The President wanted to redefine the struggle between the superpowers as a moral contest between two different economic systems. As President Regan said during his remarks at the Annual Convention of the National Association of Evangelicals in 1983,

I believe that communism is another sad, bizarre chapter in human history whose last pages even now are being written. I believe this because the source of our strength in the quest for human freedom is not material, but spiritual. And because it knows no limitation, it must terrify and ultimately triumph over those who would enslave their fellow man. For in the words of Isaiah: “He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increased strength. . . . But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary. . . .” Yes, change your world. One of our Founding Fathers, Thomas Paine, said, “We have it within our power to begin the world over again.”³²¹

Since the LAOOC concluded an agreement with the city of Los Angeles guaranteeing that taxpayers would not have to bear any of the costs of the Olympic Games, government funding was out of the question in Los Angeles.³²² The structure of the LAOOC’s strategy would rely on television rights, commercial sponsorships, and

³²⁰ President Reagan, “Speech in Washington D.C.,” August 5, 1982, quoted in *Olympic Review* 180 (October 1982): 554.

³²¹ President Reagan, “Remarks at the Annual Convention of the National Association of Evangelicals in Orlando, Florida,” March 8, 1983, The Ronald Regan Presidential Foundation & Library, http://www.reaganfoundation.org/pdf/Remarks_Annual_Convention_National_Association_Evangelicals_030883.pdf (Accessed July 5, 2014).

³²² “Los Angeles 1984,” *Olympic Review* 183 (January 1983): 41.

ticket sales – a daunting formula without government funds. According to Ueberroth, to produce an Olympic Games of the highest quality, it was estimated that it would cost between \$450 and \$500 million.³²³ The prognosis of collecting that much money looked grim at the time, considering that all previous organizing committees had failed to reap as much as \$75 million from those sources.³²⁴ Joel Rubenstein, the LAOOC Director of Licensing and Merchandising, went to Lake Placid to study the sponsorship program used at the 1980 Winter Olympics under direction from Ueberroth. He reported that the organizers had more than three hundred commercial sponsors, but the result of all this were, “lifetime supplies of Chap Stick and yogurt – and less than \$10 million dollars.”³²⁵ This type of result was not acceptable for the LAOOC. The analysis of Lake Placid made it clear to the LAOOC that a new approach was needed if the Games were to be financially feasible without government funding. What needed to be worked out was how to change the sponsorship system to get the corporations to buy in. In its rewriting of the rules of staging the Games, the LAOOC sought to ensure that it did not replicate the financial difficulties experienced by the organizing committee of Montreal in 1976.³²⁶

Montreal as host city context was an extremely powerful cautionary tale. Having successfully hosted the 1967 World Exhibition, Montreal was poised to do very well in hosting the Games. The Montreal Expos, the professional baseball team in Montreal

³²³ Economic Research Associates, *Community Economic Impact of the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: October 1984); Economic Research Associates, *Community Economic Impact of the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: June 1986).

³²⁴ Peter Ueberroth, Richard Levin, and Amy Quinn, *Made in America: His Own Story* (William Morrow and Company: New York, 1985), 61.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*

³²⁶ Tomlinson, “Commercialization of the Olympics,” 184.

sought a world class stadium in 1969 – and in the buildup to the bid for the Games it was constructed as the centerpiece to what were proposed to be “modest” games.³²⁷ In reality the mayor of Montreal, Jean Drapeau, used the Olympics to push his urban vision which was exclusively made up of large-scale projects of which the Olympics were to be the final step before the “mother of all projects,” moving the United Nations to Montreal, had a chance to materialize.³²⁸ Drapeau’s crusade did not cause any long-lasting economic benefits for the community, nor did the \$1.2 billion investment create much of a short-term boost to the economy either.³²⁹ The “modest” 1976 Games turned into a financial disaster with no lasting visible economic legacy. This was exactly what the LAOOC was determined to avoid.

Armed with the knowledge of the financial shortcomings of 1976, and the assumed overruns from Moscow in 1980, Ueberroth and Rubenstein agreed that it would be preferable to limit sponsorships to about thirty to avoid clutter and duplication, and to select only major advertisers as sponsors, one in each category. This would increase the value of each sponsorship and create a more valuable marketing tool, according to Ueberroth, who set a \$4 million floor for each potential sponsor.³³⁰ This was an astonishing number, but sponsors would have the perceived advantage of being the only official sponsor of the Games in their specific business category. This would allow them

³²⁷ Daniel Latouche, “Montreal 1976,” *Olympic Cities: City Agendas, Planning, and the World’s Games, 1896-2016* (Routledge: New York, 2011), 257.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, 263.

³²⁹ J. Iton, *The Economic Impact of the 1976 Olympics Games: A Study Undertaken for the Organizing Committee of the 1976 Olympic Games* (McGill University Industrial Research Center: Montreal, 1977), 1.

³³⁰ Tomlinson, 184.

the added benefit of excluding their competitors from having any Olympic tie-in at all. In addition to a fee, the LAOOC sought a total corporate commitment – including supplies, promotion, etc. Thus, the value of each of the sponsorships would actually be much greater than just their monetary value, as operating costs of the LAOOC would be drastically impacted by each sponsorship. The basic plan for paying for the Games was created; all that remained were the negotiations with the corporations.

In Los Angeles, everything was for sale. This included any components of Olympic symbolism that could be peddled to the public via corporate sponsors, a strategic commodification of the ritualistic elements of the Games.³³¹ The LAOOC even sold the privilege of carrying the Olympic Torch during the cross-country torch relay for \$3,000 per kilometer, to be donated to a charity of the participant's choice, not to go towards the LAOOC's costs (meanwhile AT&T ended up as the official sponsor, paying for all logistical costs). This plan was initially opposed by Ueberroth's entire senior management, since it would make the event seem too commercialized.³³² However, Ueberroth himself was insistent that a three month relay, involving 3,350 people across the country, raising \$10 million for individually chosen charities and causes, would be incomparable pre-event marketing, while appealing to the American public.³³³ Ueberroth then faced down a hurdle regarding the blatant commercialization of the relay from Greek IOC objectors. Ueberroth had no patience for such qualms, particularly when he saw that the economy of the town of Olympia, Greece depended in large part on selling

³³¹ Ibid.

³³² Reich, *Making it Happen*, 43.

³³³ Ueberroth, *Made in America*, 189-191.

the flame, from the “Olympic Flame Hotel” to gift shops selling little plastic torches. Further, as he (along with many others) notes in his memoir, *Made in America*, the torch relay is hardly a sacred, ancient Greek ritual, but a 20th century invention by the Nazi regime during the 1936 Olympics in Berlin.³³⁴ This type of response by Ueberroth is representative of his negotiating tactics when it came to fundraising for the Games. Every conflict could be negotiated though to the advantage of the LAOOC because the Games were so marketable in eyes of consumers and corporations.

Television Rights

Past Olympic host committees had made efforts to raise funds through the sales of television rights for the Games. This was not an invention of the LAOOC. However, the 1984 Games would mark a wholesale shift in the amount of television dollars involved in winning the right to broadcast a major athletic competition. At the same time as the fledgling committee set its sights on future contracts, it was in desperate need of cash to continue daily operations. Instead of asking for a handout, Ueberroth asked for a deposit. In the spring of 1979, with the negotiations for US television rights just getting underway, the LAOOC required all bidders to pay \$500,000. Each deposit (along with the additional \$250,000 that the final five bidders put down for formal negotiations) was

³³⁴ La Rocco, “Rings of Power,” 12.

refundable, of course—but, in the meantime, the Los Angeles committee was free to live off the interest generated by these hefty payments.³³⁵

In early September 1979 at David Wolper's home in Los Angeles, bidding took place for the television rights to the 1984 Games. His company, Wolper Productions, created television shows like *Roots* and *The Thorn Birds*—the two highest-rated miniseries of all time, movies such as *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*, along with dozens of other award winning efforts. Due to Wolper's experience in television, he was asked to be the chairman of the television committee by Peter Ueberroth. Wolper understood based on his research of past Games finances and his personal experience that television rights were the single largest revenue source for a project of this nature. Each of the networks made its presentation to the television committee including Ueberroth and John Argue. The Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) bid \$150 million and then the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) went to \$200 million.³³⁶ The television rights agreement was announced publicly and the American Broadcasting Company (ABC) television network purchased the rights to show the Games in the United States for a record \$225 million, providing nearly half the money that the LAOOC estimated would be necessary to pay for the Games.³³⁷ However, the contract had a stipulation that would require a \$70 million rebate from the LAOOC if the Soviets boycotted the Los Angeles Games and the boycott actually hurt ABC's audience ratings during the Games.³³⁸ Thus,

³³⁵ Claudia La Rocco, "Rings of Power: Peter Ueberroth and the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games," *Financial History* (Spring 2004): 11.

³³⁶ David L. Wolper, *Producer: a Memoir* (New York: Scribner Books, 2003), 282.

³³⁷ Reich, *Making it Happen*, 15.

³³⁸ Reich, *Making it Happen*, 89.

the potential boycott mattered politically because of the economics—not just due to the symbolism. After the Games, ABC’s viewer ratings were so high that it had no grounds under the contract to pay anything less than the \$225 million in the original agreement. After the fact, the Soviet absence ended up having no serious impact on the value of the broadcast to ABC even though the projections were pessimistic. ABC Sports, which had televised seven of the previous nine Olympic Games, would provide more than 200 hours of coverage to the US audience for Los Angeles. ABC Sports would also make preparations to accommodate the needs of the 6000 to 7000 international broadcasters expected for the Games.³³⁹

By comparison, the television contracts for the Olympics the decades prior were quite modest. Globally, American television was the most lucrative contract any host nation could hope to gain, far outspending television stations outside the US. Almost all telecasting outside North America was non-commercial at that point in time. Thus, the American television rights were only of any real value to sell for each host city. In 1972, ABC won American telecasting rights to the Munich Games with a \$13.5 million bid.³⁴⁰ As soon as those Games ended Montreal let the world know they were open to bids for 1976. In early January 1973, Roger Rousseau, commissioner general of the Montreal Olympic Games, called a press conference and announced the awarding of American rights to ABC at the \$25 million price.³⁴¹ By comparison, all of Europe, Asia, Latin

³³⁹ Peter C. Diamond, “Los Angeles 1984: ABC and Television Coverage,” *Olympic Review* 167 (September-October 1981): 555-556.

³⁴⁰ Herb Weinberg, “Writer Tells the Story of TV Contract for Montreal Games,” *Lake Placid News*, September 30, 1976, 16.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*

America, Africa, and the Middle East paid \$9.4 million for 1976. The American bidder with only one-sixth of the potential viewers (population) paid almost triple the price paid by all the rest of the world. The 1980 Olympics in Moscow were boycotted by the United States, but initial prices the Soviets suggested for the American television contracts were upwards of \$100 million, although that number was leaked in all likelihood to get the American broadcasting companies to back off of their overtures to the Soviets so that they could do some financial planning before beginning negotiations.³⁴² Since the Games in Moscow were boycotted, the Soviets got no television money for American rights. This was a large financial blow, to be sure. Television money was becoming more important prior to 1984, but it was nowhere near the central financing source it became in Los Angeles in 1984, even without the presence of the Soviet Teams.

American television audiences were growing more rapidly than ever before when the 1984 Olympic Games were broadcasted. The 1984 Cable Act passed by Congress established a more favorable regulatory framework for the industry, stimulating investment in cable plant and programming on an unprecedented level. Deregulation provided by the 1984 Act had a strong positive effect on the rapid growth of cable services. By 1984 there were 34.2 million cable subscribing households in the United States, nearly double the number in 1980.³⁴³ From 1984 through 1992, the industry spent

³⁴² Ibid.

³⁴³ SNL Kagan, "Cable Video Customers," National Cable Television Association, <https://www.ncta.com/industry-data.html> (accessed February 22, 2014).

more than \$15 billion on the wiring of America, and billions more on program development. This was the largest private construction project since World War II.³⁴⁴

The cost of the television rights for 1984 led ABC to focus their coverage on the Americans even more heavily than anticipated, given the Soviet boycott. The American coverage of the Olympics focused largely on US winners, and the American athletes won more medals in 1984 than in the past several Games due to Soviet absences. ABC officials worried that the boycott would hurt their ratings. The IOC, most visibly the president, Juan Antonio Samaranch, branded the coverage too focused on Americans and not international enough in tone. Samaranch even wrote a letter to that effect to Ueberroth, saying “The coverage should be of an international nature, particularly of the victory ceremonies. I therefore insist that you take the necessary action to have this situation rectified, as the Games belong to the whole world.”³⁴⁵ Samaranch was likely worried that the boycott would make the Games seem less legitimate, exacerbated by the ABC American-centric coverage. The potential for financial loss for everyone involved in 1984 due to the boycott was a very real fear. The IOC, LAOOC, the corporate sponsors, and the television broadcasters all had an immense amount of money riding on the success of the Games. If this were the case, the Olympic movement might be in true jeopardy, since two Summer Games in a row were boycotted. If they were equally financially disastrous, who would ever want to risk hosting again?

³⁴⁴ Patrick R. Parsons and Robert E. Friedman, *The Cable and Satellite Television Industries* (Pearson: New York, 1998), 270; “History of Cable,” California Cable & Telecommunications Association, <http://www.calcable.org/learn/history-of-cable.html> (accessed February 22, 2014).

³⁴⁵ Jay Sharbutt and Kenneth Reich, "Flap Over Coverage Is 'Bum Rap,' Arledge Says," *Los Angeles Times*, August 5, 1984.

Ueberroth and David Wolper, the ABC Executive Producer of the Games both promptly disagreed in public statements.³⁴⁶ According to various accounts, when Samaranch showed up at the ABC studios for a meeting the day after the letter was disclosed, he was told in no uncertain terms there would be no shift in ABC's focus.³⁴⁷ The power of ABC's financial commitment is evident in this response. They had paid for the Games and would televise it how they saw fit.

Americans wanted to see US athletes during their moments of triumph, so that is what ABC televised. Past American broadcasts in the United States had not been so unilaterally focused, but 1984 was different moment in that the United States was in the throes of a renewed Cultural Cold War. In this way the absence of the Soviets not only led to the United States winning eighty-three gold medals, their highest total ever, but to American broadcasting that documented every moment of their triumphs for a large international audience that received the American broadcast in large doses. Since ABC's international coverage overlapped heavily with their American coverage, the whole world television audience was fed steady streams of American dominance in the events that were televised.

This jingoism was not undocumented, even while it was occurring. "Oh, what we've done to the Olympics," lamented Frank Deford in *Sports Illustrated* magazine. "God only knows what the 2.5 billion people around the globe who are watching the games will think of a vain America, so bountiful and strong, with every advantage,

³⁴⁶ Patt Morrison & Kenneth Reich, "IOC President Protests Focus of ABC's Coverage; MEDIA," *Los Angeles Times*, August 3, 1984.

³⁴⁷ Reich, 124.

including the home court, reveling in the role of Goliath, gracelessly trumpeting its own good fortune while rudely dismissing its guests."³⁴⁸ This type of criticism was largely overpowered by the success of the American athletes competing in the Games, the flag waving that permeated the contests, and the chants of "U-S-A, U-S-A!" that showered the participating athletes in nearly every venue. The viewers tuned in from the very beginning, the corporate sponsors advertising campaigns generated massive revenues, and the American critics were largely forgotten as the medal count piled up.³⁴⁹ Certainly this emboldened the Cold War rhetoric led by President Regan. A new form of American Exceptionalism was created – unopposed dominance in the Games through the realms of athletics, economics, and patriotism.

Just because ABC won the right to televise the Games didn't mean that the LAOOC would not seek to promote the Olympics on other major networks and at other sporting events. Hank Rieger, Director of Communications for the LAOOC contacted CBS to schedule an appearance by the Olympic Mascot, Sam the Bald Eagle to be the emcee of the halftime show at the Los Angeles Rams vs. Detroit Lions National Football League (NFL) game September 7, 1980 in Anaheim. He went on to suggest,

I would like to offer one of our people for a possible halftime interview by your troupe. Possibly Peter Ueberroth or Harry Usher, our number two man.³⁵⁰ As you

³⁴⁸ Mike Weinreb, "The American Ideal: The 1984 Olympics Were a Spectacle of Patriotism and in-your-face Capitalism," 8 July, 2009, <<http://sports.espn.go.com/espn/page2/story?page=weinreb/090708>>, accessed 14 December, 2012.

³⁴⁹ The first night of competition of the Los Angeles Olympics in 1984 drew the highest-ever U.S. overnight for the first night of Olympic competition: 29.5. This means that 29.5% of American households were tuning in. Michael Hiestand, "It's a record start for Olympic TV ratings," USA Today, <http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/sports/olympics/london/story/2012-07-29/london-olympics-tv-ratings/56573118/1> (accessed August 3, 2014).

³⁵⁰ Harry Usher was the Vice President of the LAOOC.

know, there is now considerable interest in Los Angeles and the country in the Olympics. And there is much to talk about, interesting info, regarding what is going on with the LAOOC and the planning and financing of the Games.³⁵¹

Rieger went on to schedule additional network appearance for Sam on network television. Some opportunities were back with ABC, others were not. Sam was scheduled for the ABC shows, “Battle of the Network Stars,” and “The Harlem Globetrotters Go Hollywood.” Additionally, he sought to get publicity at televised events like Major League Baseball playoff games and the World Series, the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City, the Tournament of Roses Parade, the Rose Bowl Game, the Super Bowl, etc.³⁵² The LAOOC was not limited by selling the television rights to promoting the Games on ABC. Instead, Ueberroth made it clear that ABC would not have the corner on television promotion of the Games from the beginning. Instead, every opportunity was utilized on rival networks like CBS up until the Games commenced in the summer of 1984. This demonstrated the never-ending ability of the LAOOC to seek out more media attention for their event in the hopes of gaining financial success. Despite the widespread negative reception of these ploys, the strategy paid off.

³⁵¹ Letter from Hank Rieger, Director of Communications to Carl Lindemann, VP, CBS Sports, NY – August 29, 1980; LAOOC Papers, Collection 1403, Box 92, Folder 2, UCLA.

³⁵² Memo from Rieger to Usher, August 29, 1980, LAOOC Papers, Collection 1403, Box 92, Folder 2, UCLA.

Corporate Sponsorships: Venues

In order to keep operating costs down, the LAOOC was determined to construct as few new venues as possible. Instead, the LAOOC's strategy was to utilize existing structures whenever possible and to convince corporate sponsors to construct or update the major venues needed for the Games. Corporate sponsor construction was a new idea to Olympic site construction, pioneered by the LAOOC. The total cost of venue construction and refurbishment in Los Angeles for the 1984 Games was \$242 million. By comparison, the 1976 Montreal Games spent \$2 billion on new sporting facilities.³⁵³ This strategy combined with the aggressive television rights price were the building blocks for the financial success of the LAOOC. Within the context of the Cultural Cold War, it also broadcasted to the rest of the world that the American capitalist system could make the Olympic profitable. New venue construction costs were the key expenditure of the past Games problems, and avoiding those costs through utilizing existing infrastructure and corporate dollars was the solution to the problem.

The most prominent examples of sponsor-paid for construction were the McDonald's Olympic Swim Stadium and the Southland Olympic Velodrome. Each of these facilities was financed by one corporate sponsor who had exclusive naming rights to the venue for a negotiated length of time. Additionally, the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum, a structure in existence since 1921, would be the centerpiece of the Games. In keeping with their cost saving strategy, rather than construct a new central stadium the

³⁵³ Kitchin, 145.

LAOOC would pay for upgrades and updates in order to make the existing facility work. The LAOOC further bolstered their cost saving strategy by constructing their new venues on university campuses in exchange for use of their surrounding facilities and their absorption of maintenance costs. The LAOOC then gifted the construction to the schools. In sites that already existed, improvements to surrounding areas and infrastructure were gifted in the same manner. This strategy was not only cost effective, but a great public relations boon to the LAOOC. The word “gifted” was purposely used, making the LAOOC’s lasting impact one that seemed altruistic.

The McDonald’s corporation won the right to construct the Olympic Swim Stadium which opened in July of 1983 with the McDonald’s international Swim Meet on July 14-15 in preparation for the Olympic Games. Designed by architects Flewelling and Moody, the facility was built by Wetern Alta Construction Company at a cost of \$3 million, supplied by the McDonald’s Corporation.³⁵⁴ The pool was built on the campus of the University of Southern California (USC), in order to keep additional operational costs down. Parking, locker room facilities, restroom facilities, and other needed office space in neighboring campus buildings were granted to the LAOOC as part of the agreement. Neighboring Heritage Hall’s existing facilities were agreed upon specifically in the agreement. After construction was completed, the maintenance of the facility was turned over to USC. When the Executive Director of Administrative Services at USC requested changes amounting to over \$88,000 after construction was complete and the

³⁵⁴ LA Sports, “McDonald’s Olympic Swim Stadium,” LA Sports, <http://www.lasports.org/lafacilities/display.php?s=Specialized&id=67>, (accessed October 19, 2012).

opening meet was concluded, the LAOOC and USC split the cost of the alterations needed for competition.³⁵⁵ Even expenditures of this relatively little amount were negotiated over by the LAOOC in true cost-saving fashion.

7-Eleven, part of the Southland Corporation, was awarded the right to construct the velodrome needed for the cycling competitions at the Games.³⁵⁶ Multiple sites were debated, but like the pools constructed for swimming and diving, the complex was to be constructed on a university campus in the Los Angeles area, California State University, Dominguez Hills (CSUDH).³⁵⁷ When Don Gerth, former president of CSUDH, was hoping to bring publicity to the university during the 1984 Olympics, he offered a portion of the Carson campus to the event chairman Peter Ueberroth. “I was aware they were placing venues on campuses and there was a lot of press about UCLA and USC, and I didn’t want the university to be overlooked,” recalls Dr. Gerth 25 years later. “We had a good conversation and at the end, [Ueberroth] asked, ‘How would you like to have the Olympic Velodrome?’ I said, ‘We’ll take it. What is it?’”³⁵⁸ The choice of Carson, California, where CSUDH is located was purposeful, demonstrating to the larger community that the benefits of permanent construction would not just benefit the west

³⁵⁵ Letter from Paula I. Thomas, Executive Director Administrative Services, USC to Anita DeFrantz, Assistant Vice President Olympic Village, LAOOC, August 3, 1983; LAOOC Papers, Collection 1403, Box 10, Folder 1, UCLA.

³⁵⁶ Letter from Richard J. Sargent, Director of Sports to Bruce D. Becket, A.I.A.; Bruce Becket and Associates, Los Angeles, CA, September 12, 1980; LAOOC Papers, Collection 1403, Box 92, Folder 1, UCLA.

³⁵⁷ “Gift of Velodrome to CSUDH” Velodrome Venue Development Plan, January 31, 1981; LAOOC Papers, Collection 1403, Box 283, Folder 13, UCLA; Executive Summary: Cycling-Velodrome, December 20, 1983; LAOOC Papers, Collection 1403, Box 283, Folder 9, UCLA.

³⁵⁸ Joanie Harmon, “A Look Back: Velodrome Built for 1984 Olympics Brought CSU Dominguez Hills Recognition as Sports and Entertainment Venue,” California State University Dominguez Hills <http://www.csudh.edu/univadv/dateline/archives/20090813/campusnews/alookback.htm>, (accessed July 6, 2014).

side or downtown. That way, the velodrome would be a gift from the LAOOC to the university and the LAOOC would be allowed to utilize all of their parking, locker-rooms, and other needed facilities. Additionally, maintenance of the Velodrome would be the responsibility of the university.³⁵⁹ These agreements would further keep operational budgets under control. This mutually beneficial relationship between the LAOOC and CSUDH was very successful. Thomas Philo, University Archives and Special Collections archivist at CSU Dominguez Hills, said that the effort required to bring an Olympic venue to CSU Dominguez Hills speaks to the commitment the campus was making to become a vital part of the Los Angeles community, “where people would come for a premier event like the Olympics.” “It put us on the map,” he said. “The thought behind it was that we would [later] use it as an outdoor amphitheater for the university. The further thought was we would make Dominguez Hills the center of collegiate cycling in the country.”³⁶⁰ Until the demolition of the stadium in 2003 to build a corporate sponsored soccer stadium, the velodrome led CSUDH to be the place to go for the community of bicycle racers throughout Southern California and introduced CSU Dominguez Hills as an educational and sporting venue to the greater Los Angeles area.

The Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum, commissioned in 1921 as a memorial to veterans of World War I (rededicated to veterans of all wars in 1968) opened in May 1923 and became home to USC football and later, UCLA football. It was the centerpiece of the 1932 Olympic Games and originally seated 76,000 spectators at a cost of

³⁵⁹ “Gift of Velodrome,” LAOOC Papers.

³⁶⁰ Harmon, “A Look Back.”

\$954,873.³⁶¹ In 1984, the Coliseum became the first stadium to ever be used for the opening ceremonies and track and field competitions of two Olympic Games. Instead of constructing a new central stadium for the Games, the LAOOC created a cost-effective model for hosting the Olympics by deciding to update the existing structure. However, in order to be ready for the 1984 Olympics, the stadium underwent considerable renovations. In all, the LAOOC agreed to provide \$5 million in order to provide the necessary reconditioning for the stadium.³⁶² H.D. Thoreau, Co-Commissioner of Track and Field was in charge of the on-field renovations on behalf of the LAOOC. The Coliseum track had not been updated since the 1950s, and had not hosted a track meet in some time. Thoreau explained, “I had learned over the years looking at tracks in Europe and various other places that there were better and worse ways to do things and the number of degrees in the turns was very important...”³⁶³ He was considered an expert, and was given the specific task of redoing the track. This model was utilized for all of the other venues that needed updating or to be constructed.

No one sponsor paid for all of the updates, which included upping the Coliseum’s capacity to 91,500, but Coca-Cola, the first corporate sponsor signed by the LAOOC, had the most visible corporate presence at the site. All concession fasciae at the Coliseum

³⁶¹ LA Sports, “Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum,” LA Sports, <http://www.lasports.org/lafacilities/display.php?s=Stadium&id=8>, (accessed October 19, 2012).

³⁶² Organizing Committee of the Games of the XXIIIrd Olympiad. Richard B. Perelman, ed. *Official Report on the Games of the XXIIIrd Olympiad, Los Angeles 1984*. Los Angeles: Olympic Organizing Committee, 1985, 94.

³⁶³ H.D. Thoreau, interview by Dr. Margaet Costa, June 26, 1994, interview 47-2-B, transcript, Paul Ziffren Sports Resource Center, LA84 Foundation Sports Library, Los Angeles, CA.

would have Coca-Cola logos during the Games.³⁶⁴ If the LAOOC would have been allowed to rename the structure, it might have been called the Coca-Cola Olympic Coliseum. However, the City of Los Angeles would not even allow a temporary name change sought out by the LAOOC to the Los Angeles Olympic Memorial Coliseum.

A great number of other existing sites were renovated and updated in similar fashion by the LAOOC. The campuses of USC and the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) served as major focal points for the Games, even housing many of the athletes in the vacant dormitories occupied by students during the school year. Practice facilities were built or updated near the Olympic Villages as well. For example, the LAOOC used funds to build practice tracks for the participants in the games. According to H.D. Thoreau, tracks were built for the Olympics around Los Angeles at high schools and colleges and then donated to the respective schools after the Games were over. As Thoreau stated:

... and then we put one down at Southwest Los Angeles College which was down in the Los Angeles South Central area not too far from USC. It was in an area which would get a lot of usage by the community where they needed a good track, they had a lousy dirt track. So that was a good expenditure.³⁶⁵

By planning to leave behind facilities for public educational institutions the LAOOC fostered some goodwill in local communities during the period leading up to the Games.

³⁶⁴ No title sponsorship was granted at the Coliseum, nor was the word "Olympic" allowed to be put in place of "Memorial" on the peristyle sign at the front of the stadium. See: Memo from Scott Cuyler, Sussman/Prejza Graphics Plus to Ralph Mechur; March 21, 1984; LAOOC Papers, Collection 1403, Box 10, Folder 10, UCLA; Memo from Ralph Mechur, LAOOC to File, re: Coca Cola Signage; July 23, 1984; LAOOC Papers, Collection 1403, Box 10, Folder 7, UCLA.

³⁶⁵ Thoreau, Interview.

Funds were available for these types of facilities because of the increased revenues generated by the LAOOC and the lack of capital construction projects.

By not committing to new construction for most of the competitions and support facilities, the LAOOC ensured a more moderate budget than the host cities of the preceding and successive years. One of the official reasons given by the Soviets for their decision to boycott was that the games were too commercialized. While the LAOOC cut down on the number of sponsors from prior contests, their contributions were larger than ever before. Thus, this criticism had some legitimacy. The visibility of the new sponsors was substantial. However, Los Angeles largely restrained from constructing massive new facilities that would dominate Olympic experience or significantly change the landscape of the host city, and the venues that were utilized were usually not allowed to have a naming rights agreement in conjunction with the construction agreement.

Corporate Sponsorships: Sponsorships and Advertising

Once the television rights had been sold, the LAOOC sought to ensure further financial stability by selling major sponsorships to corporations in trade for exclusivity. According to the LAOOC, major sponsorships for the 1984 Games were awarded based on the amount of the bid presented by the company. After the bid was awarded, it was up to the company to determine how best to utilize the sponsorship for their purposes. However, there were a great number of rules and regulations put in place by the LAOOC to regulate the execution of advertising and sales.

According to Joel Rubenstein, Peter Ueberroth emphasized that all licensing and merchandising support for these games would be based on quality, not quantity. The licensing and merchandising activities for the Games was supervised by the Licensing and Merchandising Advisory Commission, which was comprised of prominent business people with vast experience in marketing. This commission was chaired by Card Walkern, Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer, Walt Disney Productions.³⁶⁶ The LAOOC was committed to maximizing their licensing rights in order to guarantee their financial success. Dozens of companies lined up in order to secure an advertising advantage over their competitors by having exclusivity with the LAOOC, even though the LAOOC set a sponsorship floor of \$4 million. The largest of these contracts were held by Coca-Cola, Anheuser-Busch, and the McDonald's Corporation. As a result, their advertising and corporate presence played a major role in the look and feel of the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics.

The confidence the advertisers demonstrated in the Olympics came from a newly growing trend in 1984. Sports sponsorship was one of the hottest promotional vehicles in 1984. According to the industry rule of thumb of the era, \$1 million spent on sponsoring a sporting event made the same impression on the public as \$10 million worth of other advertising. Said Barry Pavelec, executive director of the Center for Sports Sponsorship: "A company can instantly pick up an identification with the life-style or attitude that the sport reflects."³⁶⁷ Even with fears of a Soviet boycott swirling, the advertisers were not

³⁶⁶ Telex from Rubenstein to Davis, 3.

³⁶⁷ Koepp, "Going for the Green," 61.

heavily concerned about a lesser return on their advertisement investments.

Corporate Sponsorships: Coca-Cola

The first major corporate sponsorship to be awarded in 1980 was to Coca-Cola. Coca-Cola and Pepsi-Cola both bid to be the official soft drink at the Games, even though Coca-Cola had a twenty-five year history of Olympic participation. In the end, Coca-Cola leveled a bid of \$12.6 million and won the right to be the official soft drink of the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games. This was more money than the company had ever committed to a single sports promotion.³⁶⁸ Ueberroth's \$4 million sponsorship floor had been dramatically exceeded on the first try, making the possibility of funding the Games through private financing a possibility that would quickly become a reality.

Once the major sponsors were committed to the Games, subsequent additional sponsorship opportunities were "offered" by the LAOOC for Olympic related opportunities. These items would cost additional funds not included in the previously agreed upon contract. For example, full page color advertising space in *Olympic Review*, an IOC magazine that promotes the Olympic Games, was suggested to each of the major

³⁶⁸ Ueberroth, 64.

sponsors netted by the LAOOC.³⁶⁹ Most of these sponsors participated in these types of opportunities.

In 1984, Coca-Cola also implemented a series of US youth programs, including a national Coca-Cola Olympic Youth Soccer Competition, a Coca-Cola Olympic Games educational program for schools, and Coca-Cola Olympic Youth Jamborees, which provided underprivileged children a chance to, “experience the Olympic Spirit.”³⁷⁰ The event’s mascot, Sam the Eagle, was depicted on a series of 23 commemorative Coca-Cola cans. The mascot also was shown with a bottle of Coca-Cola on a limited-edition, prototype Olympic Games lapel pin. Trading cards featuring “America’s Greatest Olympians” were included in 12-packs of their products as well.³⁷¹ The images of victorious American athletes suggested that the American public needed to be part of the “team.” Purchasing the products of a major sponsor like Coca-Cola was a way for Americans to support the team through their consumer spending – much like they had helped fight World War II and the early Cold War through their spending. Coca-Cola had been an Olympic sponsor since 1928, but this was the most fully developed line of advertising vehicles they had ever developed. Based on their large investment in the Games, this was sound marketing strategy to get the best return on their investment possible. The marketing of American patriotism by Coca-Cola at the 1984 Olympics was blatant and extremely profitable.

³⁶⁹ Letter from Joel K. Rubenstein to Robert E. Hope, Manager, Trademark Visibility Programs, Coca-Cola USA, September 9, 1980; LAOOC Papers, Collection 1403, Box 92, Folder 1, UCLA.

³⁷⁰ Coca-Cola Company, “Coca-Cola and The Olympic Games: Our Partnership History,” Coca-Cola Company (2010) <http://www.thecoca-colacompany.com/heritage/pdf/Olympics_Partnership.pdf> (Accessed 9/15/2012).

³⁷¹ Ibid.

The “Coke is It” advertising campaign promoted the role that Coca-Cola played in getting Los Angeles (and specifically, the Coliseum) ready for the Olympics by showing anonymous planners and architects designing some of the Olympic sites enjoying a Coke. It is likely that the Coca-Cola ads were referencing leaders like Ueberroth and Sussman. Later in the spot, construction workers inside the Coliseum are seen similarly enjoying the product. The suggestion that both white collar and blue collar people can all enjoy Coke is clearly implied. The catchy jingle suggested that Coke was there as part of the preparations, and the closing image showed a construction worker stepping up to the first place Olympic podium raising his arms in victory while holding his Coke.³⁷² The insinuation about Coca-Cola’s role in the reconstruction of the Coliseum is implied in the ad, even if they were not allowed to have naming rights on the city facility. One other element of the ad that was extremely misleading and is only present on the screen for a few seconds shows a pool under construction, which is a definite cooptation of McDonald’s payment for the Olympic Swim Stadium on the USC campus. Coca-Cola was an extremely successful element of the Cultural Cold War – perhaps the most recognized symbol of American consumerism was also one of the largest (and thus most visible) sponsors of the 1984 Games.

Another representative advertisement that ran for Diet Coke showed a gold medal winning runner receiving his medal at the podium for Team USA. The spot is a montage of hard workouts in the rain, in the dirt, on the track, etc. His father, also his coach, was

³⁷²“Coke is It,” <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5v14yx1xrv8>> (1983), Accessed 13 November 2012.

there spurring him on the entire way; and several shots of the entire family together drinking Diet Coke together are intermixed. The ad shows him with both of his parents celebrating at the Games following his victory, and the jingle “Just for the taste of it, Diet Coke!” is the final line in the somewhat campy song-based advertisement.³⁷³ At the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles, Coca Cola was the second leading advertiser, spending \$29,875,000 on promotion of its drinks.³⁷⁴

Despite their early enormous financial commitment, a major sponsorship did not grant free reign to Coca-Cola or any other corporation. Rubenstein sent a letter to Robert E. Hope demonstrating this in September of 1980,

This is to advise you that the artwork for the proposed necktie to be used by Coca-Cola, LA, with the rendering of Sam on it is approved as submitted providing that the Eagle protection is on the inside of the necktie. Also, this is to advise you that according to our contract with Coca-Cola, the necktie you have proposed is not covered. Therefore, our granting this right to you is an exception to the contract on a one-time basis only.³⁷⁵

A one-time courtesy was extended to the major sponsor, but the LAOOC was extremely tough on its sponsors when it came to following to the letter their contractual limitations. This strategy ensured that the maximum number of dollars would be extracted from licensing opportunities. David Simon, Director of Governmental Relations for the LAOOC, illustrated the level of commitment to this in a memo to all LAOOC staff in 1980.

³⁷³ “Just for the Taste of It!”, <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gETWOimzVuA>> (1984), Accessed 13 November 2012.

³⁷⁴ Johnny K., Lee, “Marketing and Promotion of the Olympic Games,” *The Sport Journal* (Summer 2005) <http://thesportjournal.org/article/marketing-and-promotion-olympic-games>, Accessed 13 November 2012.

³⁷⁵ Letter from Rubenstein to Jackie Mann, Manager, Corporate Office Services, Coca-Cola Bottling Company of LA, September 5, 1980; LAOOC Papers, Collection 1403, Box 92, Folder 1, UCLA.

As you know, the use of the Olympic rings, the LAOOC mascot and emblem, the word “Olympic” etc. are protected by copyright. Whenever you see a possible violation around town such as a sporting goods store that uses the rings in its advertising or a T-shirt that uses our emblem please let Harry know, in writing, so that he may take appropriate legal action. It is especially important that we protect our emblem and mascot in these early days so that the word can get out that the LAOOC is no pushover when it comes to copyright or trademark infringement.³⁷⁶

Later, the LAOOC would debate licensing an official necktie, demonstrating why these types of unapproved promotions were not allowable under their strategy of one in each category.

The 1984 Coca-Cola advertising sponsorship is significant because of both the strategic and financial precedents it set. The distinct iconography and messaging that is part of the Coca-Cola advertising campaigns of the 1984 Games established a clear strategy that is still employed by Olympic sponsors today. Linking patriotism to the Olympic Spirit, Coca-Cola made consumption of their products synonymous with American success. Americans who spent their dollars on Coca-Cola products were helping their team fight for victory through consumer spending. Coca-Cola banked on this strategy, and their \$12.6 million dollar commitment was the largest in history at that time and set the stage for the other major sponsors in 1984 and in future Olympics and sports sponsorships.³⁷⁷ Their ads also reached 140 participating nations, more than ever before in any Olympics (including Communist nations China and Romania who attended despite the Soviet led boycott), promising them a chance at a stronger global market

³⁷⁶ “Memo from Dave Simon to all staff,” August 19, 1980; LAOOC Papers, Collection 1403, Box 92, Folder 2, UCLA

³⁷⁷ Coca-Cola Company, “The Coca-Cola Company and the Olympic Movement,” 14 April, 2008 <<http://www.coca-colacompany.com/media-center/company-statements/the-olympic-movement>>, accessed December 14, 2012.

share. The Olympic spirit was something that was both ethereal and concrete for their consumers – financial support through purchasing Coca-Cola equated to helping America win at the Olympics and in the larger Cultural Cold War.

Corporate Sponsorships: Anheuser-Busch

The Anheuser-Busch Company began its sponsorship of the Olympics in 1984 and has remained the official beer sponsor of the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) ever since. This was ground breaking, as it was the first time an alcohol sponsorship had been granted to the USOC. This trend is still prevalent, as in 2012 Heineken was the “official lager supplier and sponsor of London 2012.”³⁷⁸ At the time, the Miller Brewing Company, a major competitor, had been outspending Anheuser-Busch to grab important sports media and sponsorships.³⁷⁹ Anheuser-Busch hired Joe Pytka, who with his brother founded and launched their production company, Pytka, in Venice, California in 1984. Considered by many to be at the top of his field, Pytka's work has earned him numerous awards since.³⁸⁰ The ad campaign from Anheuser-Busch would become one of the most important of the Games. It was wildly successful, and set a new direction in sports advertising that would be used for years to come.

³⁷⁸ Mike Daube, “Olympics Sponsorship: Promoting Healthy Lifestyles?” *The Conversation* (August 26, 2013) <http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2012/07/21/olympics-sponsorship-promoting-healthy-lifestyles>, accessed February 22, 2014.

³⁷⁹ Terry Lefton, “Ad One of Bud Light’s Most Memorable,” *Sports Business Journal* (11 June, 2007) <http://m.sportsbusinessdaily.com/Journal/Issues/2007/06/20070611/SBJ-In-Depth/Ad-One-Of-Bud-Lights-Most-Memorable.aspx>, accessed November 13, 2012.

³⁸⁰ “Pytka, Joe (1938-),” *Advertising Age* (September 15, 2003) <http://adage.com/article/adage-encyclopedia/pytka-joe-1938/98840/>, accessed July 6, 2014.

Gaining the rights to the 1984 games in Los Angeles provided Anheuser-Busch with a new platform, but it also presented a challenge. “We were coming in the Olympics as this new brand, and here we were with messaging no one had seen before from the beer industry,” said Bob Lachky, a longtime Anheuser-Busch marketer and former Bud Light brand manager. “It made us realize it’s OK to be emotional sometimes and that we can mine that better than anyone.”³⁸¹ Using emotion was a major part of the advertising campaign that was launched by Anheuser-Busch, it turned out.

The ad titled “Heartland” precisely captured the mood of the country and the 1984 Olympics. An Olympic torch runner ran across the farmland of middle America while a narrator in the background who sounded a lot like President Ronald Reagan saying, “As we host the games this summer, let’s hope that we all learn that the true measure of the Olympics is not in the winning, but discovering the best in all of us...”³⁸² “Like most great ads, it speaks to everyone and it was easy to understand,” said Chuck Fruit, former director of media for Anheuser-Busch. While other Olympic advertisers celebrated athletes’ unique abilities, “Heartland” worked because the runner was a potent symbol. “That torch runner wasn’t any celebrity, but he represented all of America and the Olympic ideal,” MacDonough said. “Anyone could appreciate him and imagine himself doing that or cheering him on.” On a more practical note, the actual 1984 Olympic Torch Relay was sponsored by AT&T. Anheuser-Busch, an Olympic sponsor since those Games, ambushed with “Heartland,” appropriating the torch relay as its own. “We

³⁸¹ Ibid.

³⁸² Pytko Commercials, “Heartland,” VHS Tape, UCLA Media Library, Accessed July 7, 2012. Pytko Commercials, “Various,” ed. Pytko (1984).

produced one spot that people still talk about, and we had 85 percent recall that we were the sponsor of the torch relay,” Fruit said. The ad was named to the Clio Awards Hall of Fame in 1992 and is still used by the US Olympic Committee as an example to sponsors of how they can tie themselves to the games without being overly commercial.³⁸³

The rest of the ad campaign took its cues from “Heartland,” and used the catchphrase from that ad for Budweiser Light, “Bring Out Your Best.” This was sung repeatedly in the background of “Heartland” and each of the other ads in the campaign. Subsequent ads were tied more specifically to a particular sport. However, none of the ads used celebrity athletes or even official uniforms. There was an especially popular Olympic track relay iteration, in which the same narrator suggested “We never run faster than when we run together,” and “the best never comes easy, that’s why there is nothing else like it.” Even though the deal was signed for the 1984 Summer Olympics, the choice was made to run an ice hockey version, which was obviously in homage to the 1980 “Miracle on Ice” in which the United States defeated the seemingly unbeatable Soviet team. In the commercial as the US goalie “brings out his best” and stops all of the shots from what looks like the Russian national hockey team leading to the inevitable American triumph.³⁸⁴

Anheuser-Bush struck gold with these ads. “We were coming in the Olympics as this new brand, and here we were with messaging no one had seen before from the beer industry,” said Bob Lachky, a longtime Anheuser-Busch marketer and former Bud Light

³⁸³ Lefton. 2012.

³⁸⁴ Pytko Commercials, “Bring Out Your Best,” VHS Tape, UCLA Media Library, Accessed July 7, 2012.

brand manager. “It made us realize it’s OK to be emotional sometimes and that we can mine that better than anyone.”³⁸⁵ The ad precisely captured the mood of the country and the 1984 Olympics. “Like most great ads, it speaks to everyone and it was easy to understand,” said Chuck Fruit, former director of media for Anheuser-Busch.³⁸⁶ While other Olympic advertisers celebrated athletes’ unique abilities, “Heartland” worked because the runner was a potent symbol. “That torch runner wasn’t any celebrity, but he represented all of America and the Olympic ideal,” MacDonough said. “Anyone could appreciate him and imagine himself doing that or cheering him on.” On a more practical note, the actual 1984 Olympic Torch Relay was sponsored by AT&T. Anheuser-Busch, an Olympic sponsor since those Games, ambushed with “Heartland,” appropriating the torch relay as its own. “We produced one spot that people still talk about, and we had 85 percent recall that we were the sponsor of the torch relay,” Fruit said. The ad was named to the Clio Awards Hall of Fame in 1992 and is still used by the US Olympic Committee as an example to sponsors of how they can tie themselves to the games without being overly commercial.³⁸⁷

Similar ads followed in basketball, skiing, boxing, and a variety of other sports. After these ads were so successful, Anheuser-Busch returned to an ad similar to “Heartland” and ran one in which factory workers who were working extra shifts were shown sacrificing so that one fellow worker could go watch his daughter follow her

³⁸⁵ Terry Lefton, “Ad one of Bud Light’s most memorable,” *Street and Smith’s Sport Business Journal*, <http://m.sportsbusinessdaily.com/Journal/Issues/2007/06/20070611/SBJ-In-Depth/Ad-One-Of-Bud-Lights-Most-Memorable.aspx> (accessed August 3, 2014).

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

dream in the Olympics. They gathered around after work to watch her compete in gymnastics on a small black and white TV while an interpolation of the same slogan was narrated in the background, “all learned that the true measure of bringing out their best.” The successes of ads like these suggest that the people in the United States who consumed them could relate to the ideas of nationalism and sacrifice. Anheuser-Busch also rode this success into becoming the official beer of the National Football League (NFL).³⁸⁸ The partnership between Anheuser-Bush and the LAOOC led to the modern relationship between American beer companies and sporting events that is so prevalent today. For example, every single professional sports team in the United States has an individual official beer sponsor. “Most of what we’ve done with Bud Light has been lighthearted, but that ad marked us forever as an important Olympic sponsor,” said Tony Ponturo, vice president of global media and sports marketing for Anheuser-Busch. “It showed what sports marketing could do at its best, when it was just becoming a profession.”³⁸⁹

Corporate Sponsorships: McDonald’s

In addition to paying at least \$4 million to be a primary sponsor of the 1984 Games and paying \$3 million for the construction of the swim stadium at USC, the

³⁸⁸ “Pytko, Joe (1938-),” *Advertising Age* (September 15, 2003) <http://adage.com/article/adage-encyclopedia/pytko-joe-1938/98840/>, accessed July 6, 2014.

³⁸⁹ Lefton, “Ad.”

McDonald's Corporation, under the guidance of Davis, Johnson, Mogul and Colombatto Advertising Agency (DJMC), spent \$32 million on advertising during the Games, ranking them as the top advertiser of the period. The biggest advertising campaign that the McDonald's Corporation rolled out was the, "When the U.S. Wins, You Win," scratch off game. The McDonald's customer received a scratch off game piece that revealed one Olympic event with his or her purchase. If the United States won a gold medal a free Big-Mac hamburger was the reward, a silver medal meant a free regular french-fries, a bronze was worth a free small soft-drink. Additionally, other instant prizes were available (from other corporate sponsors of the Games) including Reebok sports gear or RCA televisions.

The commercials for this promotion showed "regular" Americans participating in the Games. McDonald's ads were designed to appeal to the masses and make them all feel like they were part of the American team, participating in the Olympic Spirit. Much like the Coca-Cola ads, the McDonald's ads sold consumption as participation in the Games and the larger Cultural Cold War. Winning a "medal" in the scratch off game, or an actual plastic "medal" as a Happy-Meal toy makes this connection very direct. Another representative advertisement included an American businessman competing in the uneven bars gymnastic event, ironically one that is only for women's competition.³⁹⁰ This kind of participatory advertising is a common strategy still employed by companies who advertise in athletics today. What transpired was quite costly for the McDonald's

³⁹⁰ McDonald's Corporation, "When the U.S. Wins, You Win," <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1zaLMWizN4s>> Accessed December 14, 2012.

corporation as a result of the boycotts by the Soviet Union and East Germany especially. The United States won 174 medals overall, the most in Olympic history. By comparison, the United States won 94 medals in 1976, the last Olympics prior when both the United States and the Soviet Union participated. The results cost McDonald's twice what they anticipated in giveaway costs, however their losses were not costly enough to discourage the company from running the same promotion during the 1988 Summer Olympics in Seoul, Korea.

Creating an Image: Design and Ceremonies

In addition to answering financing and advertising questions, the LAOOC decided to make bold decisions regarding the look and feel of the 1984 Games. Before Ueberroth came on board, the initial design of the Games was handed over to Walt Disney Productions and its associate Robert Jani. Disney and Jani had produced numerous extravaganzas, and had a wealth of logistical support. Jani had been an important creative employee for Disney, having planned the opening of Walt Disney World and EPCOT Center in Florida. He did not work directly for Disney any longer, but was contracted by them to handle the arrangements and would be paid by them directly. The Olympic tradition was to use the appropriate national patriotic symbols of wherever the Games were held. In America, that would mean a red, white, and blue motif; and an

American eagle mascot.³⁹¹ This was how the committee started out, as proposed to them by Disney. In 1980, the LAOOC accepted Disney's proposed Olympic mascot, Sam the Eagle. But the mascot did not work out well, initially. It stumbled and fell on its first public showing at the Los Angeles City Hall the day after the 1980 Moscow Games were over. It was criticized for looking too much like existing Disney characters, and generated a lot of negative reactions internally at the LAOOC (see fig. 2).³⁹² Despite



Figure 3. Sam the Eagle plush toy widely distributed for the 1984 Games (Reich, 1984).

these objections, the mascot was not changed. However, other attempts were made by the LAOOC to move away from the blatant patriotism demonstrated by Sam the Eagle as mascot. The Cold War tensions of the era were undoubtedly on everyone's minds, as the

³⁹¹ Reich, *Making it Happen*, 138-139.

³⁹² *Ibid.*, 139.

threat of the possible retaliatory boycott loomed, and the growing tensions of 1983 were fresh in the minds of the LAOOC.³⁹³

Vice President of the LAOOC Harry Usher took charge in the area of design early on. Ueberroth inherently trusted Usher, and delegated to him often. When interviewed after the fact, Usher remembered that the most vehement objector to limiting the look of the games to a red, white, and blue theme was David Wolper, one of the most influential television and film producers in Hollywood who had been appointed to the LAOOC by Mayor Tom Bradley.³⁹⁴ The first time he saw Sam the Eagle, he “believed that they should not be doing that.”³⁹⁵ Usher and Wolper agreed that they should not be chauvinistic about their look (as opposed to the television coverage), but rather should create a tremendous festival feeling, keeping in mind that they had an enormous geographic area, a tremendously disparate ethnicity and geography to represent – and

³⁹³ 1983 provided several key events in the revamping of American Cold War rhetoric. For example: March 8: In a speech to the National Association of Evangelicals, President Reagan labeled the Soviet Union an "evil empire"; March 23: President Reagan proposed the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI, or "Star Wars") upsetting the balance of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD); September 1: Civilian Korean Air Lines Flight 007, with 269 passengers, including U.S. Congressman Larry McDonald, was shot down by Soviet interceptor aircraft; October 25: U.S. forces invaded the Caribbean island of Grenada in an attempt to overthrow the Marxist military government, expel Cuban troops, and abort the construction of a Soviet-funded airstrip; November 2: Exercise Able Archer 83 — Soviet anti-aircraft misinterpret a test of NATO's nuclear warfare procedures as a fake cover for an actual NATO attack; in response, Soviet nuclear forces are put on high alert. All of these events contributed to escalating tension between the United States and the Soviet Union in the year leading up to the Los Angeles Games.

³⁹⁴ In the late 1960's Wolper was appointed by President Gerald Ford as Chairman of the President's Council of the American Revolutionary Bicentennial Administration responsible for overseeing and coordinating all the celebrations of the 200th Anniversary of the United States. In part this led to his service as Vice Chairman of the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee, a member of its Executive Committee and Chairman of the Television and Ceremonies Committee. He was the Producer of the acclaimed Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games.

³⁹⁵ Harry Usher interview by Kenneth Reich, April 14, 1985, 5. Transcript, v.5, Paul Ziffren Sports Resource Center, LA84 Foundation Sports Library, Los Angeles, CA.

something had to tie it all together.³⁹⁶ They hired two prominent design firms, the Jerde Partnership led by Jon Jerde and Prejza/Sussman, led by Deborah Sussman to work on the look of the games for the LAOOC. The look of the games was critical in the eyes of the LAOOC – Usher and the others would not settle for a red, white, and blue theme. So the Jerde Partnership and Prejza/Sussman settled on a palette of “western” colors that included textures and patterns of Pacific Rim countries. Sussman conceived and demonstrated the colors and Jerde made the arguments for them. Drawing colors and shapes from Mexican, Indonesian, and Japanese cultures. The palette featured a signature magenta shade, plus other bright colors like aqua, red, yellow and purple, which deviated boldly from the previously considered red, white and blue, and gave the design a truly international look. Usher emerged as the champion of the color scheme, because he wanted something unique and different that would give a uniform image to all the many different stadiums and other facilities that the committee had scattered over several counties of Southern California.³⁹⁷ There is no better statement signifying the dichotomy of the 1984 Games than by Jerde who explained, “If there ever was a period in the planet’s history that you didn’t want to be intensely nationalistic, if there was ever a country that was better suited to be a marvelous host to the planet rather than a tough kind of showoff, this was the moment in time to do that.”³⁹⁸ By attempting some measure of internationalism, a thin veil was draped over the intensely nationalistic

³⁹⁶ Ibid.

³⁹⁷ Reich, *Making it Happen*, 83, 150.

³⁹⁸ Harry Usher interview by Kenneth Reich, 150

advertising and support for the American team that washed over the Games when they were finally underway.

Ueberroth and Usher both realized that the opening ceremonies would be the most crucial event in determining whether the Games would be a success. In the spring of 1982, Jani made a presentation to the LAOOC that outlined his plans for the opening ceremonies. Jani came away from the presentation with the view that those who had seen it were impressed and that he had a go-ahead to develop a budget and make more precise plans. However, this was not the case according to members of the committee. John Argue, the founding chairman of the LAOOC characterized Ueberroth's reaction as one of disappointment.

He wanted more, he wanted more umpphh, he wanted things different. He wanted the breakthrough. He wanted something really spectacular.³⁹⁹

The Disney plan was not up to the LAOOC's expectations. This was the beginning of the move away from Disney. In early 1983, Jani produced the halftime show for the Super Bowl held at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena. Michael Mount, the group's vice president remembered saying, "There's no goose-bumps here. This is Hollywood bullshit."⁴⁰⁰ The committee also began to feel that Jani was not focused enough on the Olympics, and the cost overruns of his other projects were worrisome as well. The initial proposal from Jani featured an estimated \$20 million in expenses, a budget that flabbergasted the committee.

³⁹⁹ Ibid., 141.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid., 141.

The committee was prepared to pay \$6 million, a number that the Disney executives by all accounts had agreed upon themselves.

In May of 1983, at a breakfast meeting at the Bel Air Country Club Disney was relieved of producing the ceremonies. The monetary reasons were not the real reason for the relief of Jani, given that the Disney executives had agreed in principle to the \$6 million dollar budget. Ueberroth indicated that the lack of confidence in Jani was the real reason. Harry Usher, the Vice President of the LAOOC would talk about Jani, Ueberroth would not. Usher explained the decision:

Bob Jani worked for about six or nine months on plans for the ceremonies and I had a great deal of difficulty having Bob explain to me what he wanted to do. It never seemed well articulated. It always seemed to be floating. And there was a concomitant float which was a financial float. The way it came out in the press and the way it was all done, it was a financial consideration, because Disney wouldn't guarantee, and two, that Peter made the decision. The truth is, I made the decision to get rid of Bob and basically it didn't have very much to do with finances at all. I couldn't get any sense of where Bob was going.⁴⁰¹

Ueberroth's confidence in Jani was shaken, and the excuse of the financial implications was a convenient way to exit the relationship.

In place of Jani, David Wolper, a member of the LAOOC executive committee and a wildly successful Hollywood producer was put in charge of the opening ceremonies. According to Wolper, at one point during the negotiations with Disney Peter Ueberroth told Wolper he "was never totally confident Disney would capture the imagination of two and a half billion people."⁴⁰² Wolper had been present throughout all

⁴⁰¹ Ibid., 145.

⁴⁰² Wolper, *Producer*, 284.

of the negotiations and meetings with Disney and Jani. Wolper had been to three previous Olympics, so he knew what was expected. However, he had never done anything on the scale required; so he quickly enlisted help. One of the key members he signed up was Tommy Walker, a veteran of large outdoor shows, and ironically a one-time entertainment director for Disneyland. With little over a year left until the Games were to begin, the job was extra demanding and had to follow a series of Olympic rules that stated that the opening ceremonies must display the culture of the host country.⁴⁰³ Within the context of the Cultural Cold War, this was a critical moment in the event – the world would see what the host wanted them to see regarding the United States and Los Angeles. The pressure was immense.

⁴⁰³ Wolper, *Producer*, 285.

The Opening Ceremonies

The opening and closing ceremonies were both striking successes, particularly with regards to the emotion that Wolper had always said was vitally important and that Ueberroth and Usher had found lacking in the Jani Plan. Public reaction in the stadiums and on television was emotionally charged. At the opening and closing ceremonies, director David Wolper incorporated trumpets and kettledrums, thousands of balloons, numerous marching bands, a small battalion of baby-grand pianos belting out Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue," church bells, skywriters, jazzercise dancers, a flock of doves, a man wearing a jet pack (who performed at Disneyland regularly), and enough pomp and glitz, according to the New York Times' Dave Anderson, that it made "the Super Bowl halftime show look like a high school play."⁴⁰⁴

Not every plan that Wolper had originally considered was included. He considered, and then eliminated, a lot of other potentially dazzling concepts before settling on the show. For example, he wanted to create a waterfall that had real water flowing down into the Coliseum – but then realized that all of that flowing water might make people want to go to the bathroom. If that occurred, it might cost them half of their television audience, which would be disastrous.⁴⁰⁵ As epic as the ceremony ended up being, it was still less grand than it might have been if Wolper's imagination had been able to completely run wild. Wolper also wanted to do a giant, helium-filled balloon

⁴⁰⁴ Weinreb, "The American Ideal."

⁴⁰⁵ Wolper, *Producer*, 285.

replica of the world, which would eventually be released. Unfortunately it would have taken about fourteen days to inflate and have cost \$3.6 million. At that price, they couldn't find a corporation to sponsor the world.⁴⁰⁶ Another grand idea turned into a public relations disaster. Wolper wanted a bald eagle, the symbol of America, to fly across the stadium and land on a platform next to the flag stand while everyone was singing "The Star-Spangled Banner." Unfortunately, the only trained eagle available was a golden eagle, not a bald eagle. One suggestion from the committee was to paint the head, but Wolper thought better of using an impostor. Instead, the Fish and Wildlife Service was contacted since the bald eagle is a protected species. A permit was obtained to train a bald eagle, and an eagle in Alaska named Baba was flown to Los Angeles for training. However, the eagle died in training for unknown reasons, and the coverage of the death was very negative – the LAOOC had killed a member of an endangered species.⁴⁰⁷

The Opening Ceremony of the 1984 Games was a typical-of-the-genre three and a half hour show. It was at times a jingoistic celebration of American culture, life, and entertainment. 92,655 spectators, some paying as much as \$1,000 for a pair of \$200 face value seats who pulled off a dazzling card stunt depicting flags of all 140 participating nations (see fig. 3).⁴⁰⁸ Each of the audience members was given a colored card that made up a small part of a larger image of a national flag. Iconography of peace flowed throughout the show. The card stunt resonated as a symbol of international unity, a 1,000

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid., 286.

⁴⁰⁸ Dick Schaap, *The 1984 Olympic Games: Sarajevo/Los Angeles* (New York: Random House, 1984), 110.

person choir sang the Olympic hymn, and the release of thousands of doves into the skies of Los Angeles drove the apolitical, but simultaneously very political, message home.

Wolper also worked into the act the president of the LAOOC, the president of the IOC, and the President of the United States. Nearly a dozen former Olympic champions played parts too, leading up to the lighting of the Olympic flame. A historically important moment in the Opening Ceremonies, the lighting of the flame was a prestigious honor. Wolper and the LAOOC generated great excitement and speculation over who would actually light the torch in the Coliseum. It was kept a secret who it would be, and rumors swirled regarding the possibility it might even be Nadia Comaneci, the retired Romanian gymnast who was visiting Los Angeles as a guest of the LAOOC. But Ueberroth started new rumors by saying first that it would be lit by someone who was immediately recognizable, and then that it might be more than one person. Guesses ranged from the logical, Muhammad Ali or the 1980 US hockey team, to the absurd, Michael Jackson.⁴⁰⁹ Before the mystery was solved, two billion television viewers and the Coliseum crowd enjoyed the entire program.

The participation of Romania in the 1984 Olympics is an excellent example of a Warsaw Pact member using sport in international relations. Nowhere was this more visible than during the opening ceremonies. Romania relished the media attention it received for fighting the tremendous Soviet pressure to join the boycott. Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu was able to manipulate the United States to gain economic, political, and public relations advantages. Upon entering the Los Angeles Memorial

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.

Coliseum during the traditional parade of nations, the Romanian team received a standing ovation from the crowd of over 92,000. The ABC commentators, Peter Jennings and Jim Lampley, made a point to discuss their nation's resistance to the boycott with the international audience. They also highlighted the legacy of Nadia Comaneci in Romania's disobedience of the Moscow-directed boycott, as she did not win the gold medal in women's gymnastics at Moscow in 1980 that most observers felt she deserved.⁴¹⁰ Comaneci had become something of a cult hero in the United States, and coverage of her and her supporter's protests against the apparent corrupt judge for women's gymnastics from the Soviet Union at the 1980 Olympics was widespread in the United States. She was a symbol of those who would stand up to the Soviet Union, making her very popular and especially relevant to the message the United States was sending to the Soviet Union in Los Angeles in 1984. This reception by the crowd, combined with the coverage by ABC demonstrates the importance placed on the participation by the Warsaw Pact nation by the United States. The United States was not the only power that used the 1984 Olympics as an opportunity for political theatre.

After the parade, Peter Ueberroth, the president of the LAOOC, praised the athletes of the world, then introduced Samaranch, the president of the IOC, who concluded his remarks, "God Bless America," then introduced President Ronald Reagan, who could not resist rearranging his script (see fig. 3).⁴¹¹ The 17 words he was limited to

⁴¹⁰ ABC, "Los Angeles Olympics Opening Ceremonies Show," July 28, 1984, LAOOC Papers, Collection 1403, Box 92, Folder 2, UCLA.

⁴¹¹ Photo: *Sports Illustrated*, "History of the Opening Ceremonies," http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/multimedia/photo_gallery/1207/olympics-opening-ceremony-history/content.22.html (accessed September 5, 2013).

by Olympic mandate – built in protection against politicians. Instead of saying, “I declare open the Olympic Games of Los Angeles, celebrating the XXIII Olympiad of the modern era,” President Reagan said, “Celebrating the XXIII Olympiad of the modern era,



Figure 4. The card "stunt" viewed from inside the Coliseum at the Opening Ceremonies. (Schaap, 1984)

I declare open the Olympic Games of Los Angeles.”⁴¹² (see fig. 4) His subtle script change was his way of leaving a small mark on the Games that only Americans might understand. Earlier, meeting with the US athletes at their headquarters in the Olympic Village at the University of Southern California, the President had offered a more familiar speech. “Do it for the Gipper,” he said, recalling his movie role as George Gipp,

⁴¹² Ibid.; Photo: Dick Schaap, *The 1984 Olympic Games: Sarajevo/Los Angeles* (New York: Random House, 1984), 112.

the Notre Dame Football star.⁴¹³ The President ever so subtly used the opportunity to make a point about the difference between Los Angeles and games prior. His role, although minimal, was powerful given the context of the boycott by the Soviets and the demonstration of American society for the world's viewers.

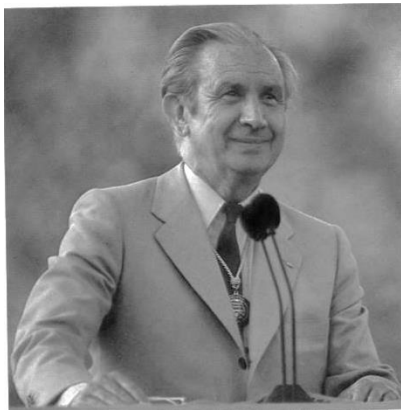


Figure 5. Above left, IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch addresses the Coliseum; Above right, President Reagan declares the 1984 Olympic Games open, visible on the Coliseum television. (Schapp, 1984)

Next, eleven Americans carried in the Olympic flag, eight of them former gold medalists, representing many ethnic groups including racial minorities such as Native Americans, Japanese Americans, and African Americans. This was of course a conscious decision made to emphasize the diversity of the athletes of the United States to the

⁴¹³ Schapp, *The 1984 Olympic Games*, 112.

billions watching on television around the world. The audience might also link diversity and harmony with Los Angeles through the moment. Also present was Richard Sandoval, a boxer who made the 1980 team that didn't compete in Moscow – a clear political statement buried in the ceremony.⁴¹⁴ The 1980 Soviet boycott was mentioned repeatedly during the television broadcast by ABC – not just to the American audience, but in the global broadcast as well.⁴¹⁵ In fact, the Opening Ceremonies took on a tenor demonstrated palpable reminiscence of the 1980 boycott. After 2,500 pigeons flew off from the Coliseum, attention focused on the tunnel leading to the track.

Everyone wanted to see who would come in carrying the torch. An African-American woman emerged, Gina Hemphill, granddaughter of four-time gold medalist Jesse Owens, who medaled at the Berlin Games in 1936 and upstaged Hitler. Hemphill was another purposefully political choice meant to demonstrate the triumph of America against tyranny (see fig. 5). This was likely another thinly veiled shot fired at the absent Soviets and their allies. She handed the torch of to the man who would light the flame, Rafer Johnson. Johnson was the 1960 Olympic decathlon champion. He raced up the permanent steps to the rim of the open end of the peristyle end of the Coliseum, and then continued up temporary steps that ascended as he reached them. Johnson lifted the torch to salute the crowd, and then thrust the flame into a duct above his head (see fig. 5).⁴¹⁶

⁴¹⁴ ABC, “LA Olympics Opening Ceremonies Show.”

⁴¹⁵ Ibid.

⁴¹⁶ Photo: Schapp, *The 1984 Olympic Games*, 112-114.

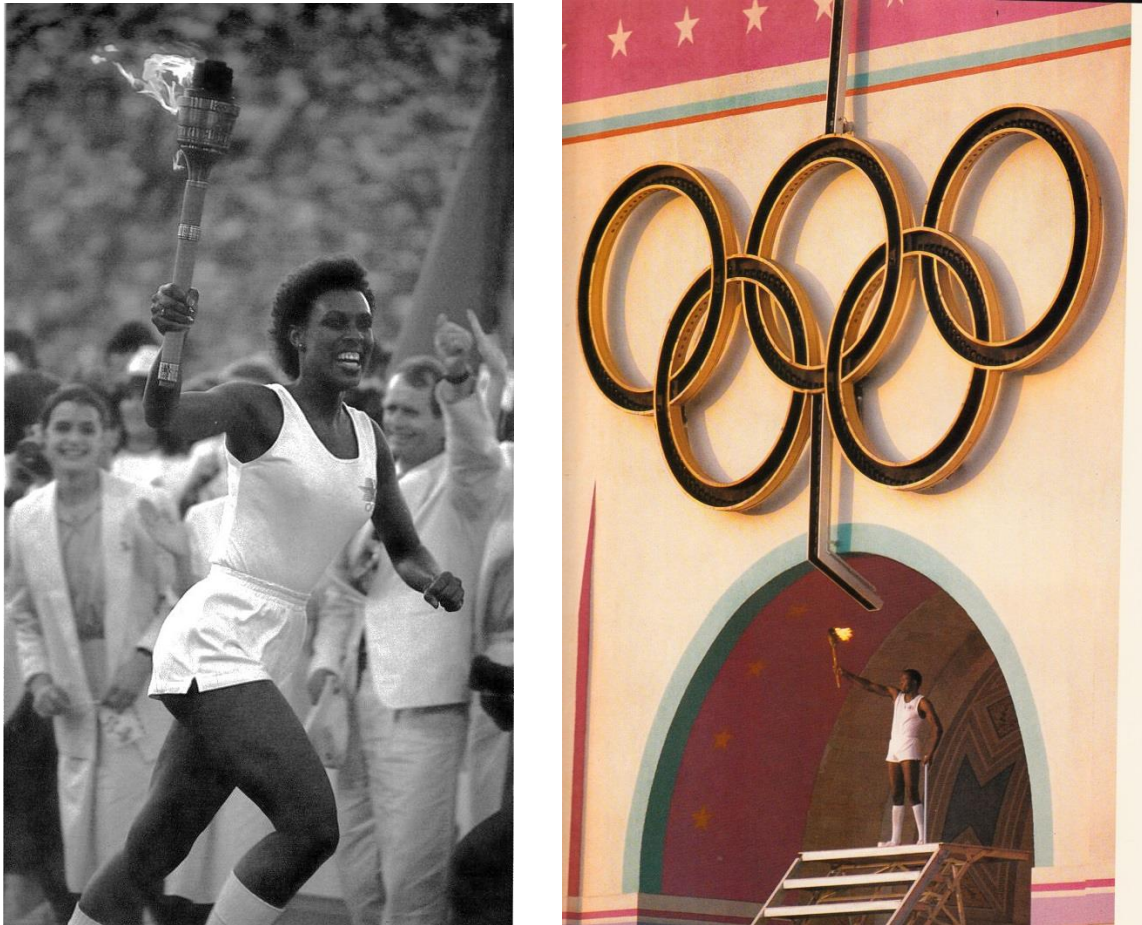


Figure 6. Figure. *Above Left*, Gina Hemphill, granddaughter of Jesse Owens, carries the Olympic torch into the Coliseum; *Above Right*, Rafer Johnson salutes the crowd and prepares to light the Olympic Torch Bowl. (Schaap, 1984)

The flame traveled through the duct, swirled brightly around five symbolic Olympic rings, and then traveled up toward the bowl that would house the flame for the two weeks of the Games (see fig. 5).⁴¹⁷ The Coliseum roared. Finally, as Vicki McClure sang “Reach Out,” a musical call for understanding and peace, the athletes of the world joined

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., 114.

hands and began to sway and dance. In his seat not far from President Reagan, the Secretary of State, George Shultz, said softly, “Chernenko, eat your heart out.”⁴¹⁸

The Opening Ceremonies were a celebration of American culture, diversity, and excellence. They were also a thinly veiled series of attacks against the Soviet Union and their political boycott of the Games. The emphasis on the Romanian team’s participation in the stadium and on television, the choices of who ran with the torch, and the celebration of American diversity were all purposefully directed as strong counterarguments against the detractors of the United States.

The Evolution of the Look of the Games

The original plan for the look of the Games was to follow the tradition of using national colors of the host nation. What eventually was settled on was a combination of the red, white, and blue with a number of pastel colors. The decision to temper the dominance of the patriotic colors was a conscious decision made by the LAOOC. The LAOOC leadership decided not to rely on national colors for creating the look of the 1984 Olympics. While not his area of expertise, H.D. Thoreau said very early on to Harry Usher and Peter Ueberroth,

For God’s sakes, let’s not make this look like another opening of a supermarket, or make it look like a fireworks stand on the Fourth of July with red, white, and blue you know. This is an international event. And I told them the most

⁴¹⁸ Ibid.

impressive thing I had ever seen was the '72 Olympic venue in Munich which had terrific colors, it wasn't just the typical German black and red and whatever the hell the other German color is; it was pastels, it was yellow and green and a light blue and it was really effective and the shapes of the draping over the stadium was effective. And it was really impressive and almost all of the colors were matched in line and it was really terrific.⁴¹⁹

The LAOOC took Thoreau's recommendations to heart, but their plans were already moving away from reliance on the red, white, and blue (see fig. 6).⁴²⁰



Figure 7. At the peristyle end of the Coliseum, the vibrant pastel color palette widely utilized throughout the Games is on display: magenta, pink, green, yellow, and orange are all of the most visible colors. (Reid, 1984)

Jerde and Sussman's designs for the look of the games were supported by Harry Usher and the LAOOC before the end of 1982. Sussman was taken with the idea of using what she considered a pastel color pallet, especially variations of magenta and

⁴¹⁹ H.D. Thoreau, "Interview," 1994.

⁴²⁰ Photo: Scott M. Reid, "Los Angeles Joins Race for 2024 Olympics," *OC Register* (7 March, 2013) <http://www.ocregister.com/articles/bid-498684-games-usoc.html> (Accessed September 5, 2013).

vermillion.⁴²¹ Ironically, the colors were not technically pastels, as they were far too bright in most cases to be categorized as pastels. Regardless, supported by Simon and Usher, Sussman challenged everyone who thought that the Olympics could not use these types of colors. She remembered a friend of one of the other designers saying, “You know the Olympics is lean and it’s white and it’s old and it’s serious and you can’t use those bright colors.”⁴²² But she felt strongly about color and about getting away from the red, white, and blue wherever possible. According to Sussman, no directive about getting away from the red, white, and blue came from Usher or any other top level people – she and Jon Jerde were left to come up with the color scheme she thought was appropriate.⁴²³ According to Sussman, later on a lot of people were involved in the design effort, but the use of more bright and pastel colors continued. However, it isn’t clear who else was actually involved in the choices. In the fall of 1983, the LAOOC published a design guide for big sponsors and licensees. At that point, the pastel color scheme was agreed upon by the LAOOC and utilized for the first time in official publications. During the summer of 1983, the LA’83 Summer Sports Festival piloted the “look of the Games” at six Olympic venues that were used and tested by 1,000 athletes in what were pre-Olympic competitions.⁴²⁴ The look was especially present at UCLA’s Pauley Pavilion,

⁴²¹ Deborah Sussman interview by Kenneth Reich, April 4, 1985 (421.9), 4. Transcript, v.4, Paul Ziffren Sports Resource Center, LA84 Foundation Sports Library, Los Angeles, CA.

⁴²² Ibid., 4.

⁴²³ Ibid., 4.

⁴²⁴ ABC, “’83 Events,” 1983 (LAOOC), VHS, LAOOC Papers, Collection 1403, Box 616, Folder 2, UCLA.

where gymnastics were to be held. The “pastel” color scheme was especially visible in the television broadcast of the gymnastics events in 1983 and again in 1984.⁴²⁵



Figure 8. The “Festive Federalism” on display at the Coliseum. (LAOOC, 1984)

Going forward, the look of the Games was a major part of the buildup to the actual event. Signs for events and locations were brilliant magenta, vermillion, aqua, yellow, and vivid green and “representative of the California spirit” and “expressed Los Angeles’ diversity,” according to official press.⁴²⁶ The multicolored theme was symbolic of Los Angeles and its diversity and flavor. Bright and Associates, another design firm, were hired to create the look for the Olympic sites pictograms. It was called “Festive

⁴²⁵ Ibid.

⁴²⁶ ABC, “Look of the Games,” March 30, 1984, VHS, LAOOC Papers, Collection 1403, Box 92, Folder 2, UCLA.

Federalism,” and in addition to the color scheme, utilized a “playful” design of building blocks, thousands of painted columns throughout the venues, and Olympic pictograms – all used to explain critical information to participants, volunteers, and attendees, regardless of nationality and languages (see fig. 7).⁴²⁷ Pictograms were traditionally used at the Olympics prior to 1984, but not with the color palette that the LAOOC utilized.

The “look” was a conscious decision to attempt to temper the appearance of nationalistic fervor that was present in Los Angeles in 1984. The appearance of avoiding jingoism was important to the LAOOC, and to the United States government, given the politically charged nature of the Soviet boycott. In reality, the look did little to limit the provocative and rampant American Exceptionalism that pulsed throughout the Games. Due to the boycott, the United States dominated the Games and the largely American crowds were swept up in the successes. The American attendees draped the Games in the flag, both metaphorically and literally. Triumphant athletes were viewed as victorious Cold Warriors, demonstrating “good” in the face of the absence of the “evil empire” (see fig. 8).⁴²⁸ While unfurling flags in the stands and dressing in national colors was not unusual at previous Olympic Games, it carried special meaning in 1984 – and was so consistently paired with chants of, “U.S.A., U.S.A” by the majority of spectators and some boorish behavior that the nationalistic fervor of the crowd was clear. Not only were Americans exuberant about the victorious athletes, the Games gave Americans a largely false sense that the US was now recovered from the long economic and political

⁴²⁷ LAOOC, *Official Report: 1984*, 248.

⁴²⁸ Photo: Schapp, *The 1984 Olympic Games*, 112-114.

nightmares of the 1970s, ignoring the rampant homelessness and police-state like conditions present in Los Angeles while the Games were underway.



Figure 9. The US crowd was consistently raucous and dressed in the colors of the United States. (Schaap, 1984)

Conclusions

In the final accounting the Los Angeles Olympics turned a profit of \$222.7 million on unrestricted revenues of \$718.5 million, a phenomenal and unprecedented return of 31%. No Olympics in fifty years could boast of having made so much as a cent. Moreover, there were no serious terrorist incidents, nor any major protest demonstrations. The Soviet Union and most of its allies boycotted Los Angeles, but that boycott backfired from a financial perspective as the Games were overwhelmingly profitable. The Soviets had suffered dramatic financial losses during the 1980 Moscow Olympics, and blamed much of this on the US – led boycott. The final operating budget in Moscow was \$231

million, while the final costs were \$1.35 billion.⁴²⁹ The response in the Soviet Union was demonstrated by an open letter to US President Jimmy Carter published by Aleksandr Chakovsky, the editor of *Literaturnaya Gazeta*. Chakovsky placed the blame on the United States and traced the decline in Soviet-American relations back to the early days of the Carter Administration. Another example is found in *Pravda*, where an editorial written before the US Olympic Committee officially voted not to participate in the 1980 Moscow Games denied the connection between the boycott and the “events” in Afghanistan. “Washington does not hide the fact that the campaign aimed at wrecking the Olympics is being pursued for strictly political ends,” the editorial exclaims.⁴³⁰ The author argued that President Carter set his sights on a boycott in 1978 during the trial of the alleged American spy Anatoly Shcharansky, threatening to wreck the Moscow Olympics.⁴³¹

Not only did the Soviet Boycott in 1984 help inspire great enthusiasm for the Games throughout America, but, due in part to an unpublicized telephone bank operation run directly out of the organizing committee under Peter Ueberroth’s personal direction, 140 countries, the largest number by far ever to attend an Olympics, were successfully recruited and did show up in Los Angeles.⁴³² In the end, by turning a significant profit, the Los Angeles Games also served at least in the minds of Americans as a demonstration

⁴²⁹ “XIII Olympic Summer Games Moscow - Final Report,” International Olympic Committee, <http://library.la84.org/6oic/OfficialReports/1980/or1980v1.pdf> (Retrieved February 13, 2014).

⁴³⁰ “The Price of Ambition,” *Pravda*, March 18, 1980, in *The USSR Today, Perspectives from the Soviet Press* (Columbus, Ohio: Current Digest of the Soviet Press, 1981), 214.

⁴³¹ Anatoly Shcharansky was arrested by the KGB, accused of treason and espionage, and was tried secretly and sentenced to thirteen years in prison and hard-labor camps. He was released in a prisoner exchange with the West on Feb. 11, 1986, and settled in Israel.

⁴³² *Ibid.*, 13.

of power and systemic superiority to the Soviet Union and the rest of the Eastern Bloc. It is possible that Reagan and other American politicians and leaders of the LAOOC, including Peter Ueberroth, foresaw this and wanted the Soviets and their allies to see the superiority of the American system firsthand. Political leaders like Reagan had much to gain if the Games were a smashing success – the validation of the American capitalist system would do much to combat the international embarrassment of the Vietnam Era and the economic troubles in the US during the 1970s. This strategy assumes that international audiences elsewhere cared at all about profit as a marker of success- it is not clear that they did in actuality. For the LAOOC and people like Ueberroth, the corporate investment made the Games a huge international opportunity for global marketing of American companies. Even without the Soviets and their closest allies' participation, access to a wider international audience for these sponsors made the investments much more than just domestic in nature. The strategy worked well, but reception everywhere was not as easy as these men had hoped. For example, PepsiCo, not Coca-Cola enjoyed access to Soviet markets beginning in 1974 while Coca-Cola was not admitted.⁴³³

The financial victory of the Los Angeles Games certainly flew in the face of the prevailing trend displayed by recent host nations. The privatization of the Games led by Peter Ueberroth, the President of the LAOOC, was successfully executed. The committee's ability to utilize corporate sponsorships without allowing the sponsors to run the Games was evidence of the viability of a capitalist Olympics. The corporate

⁴³³ Michael Parks, "Pepsi Push Into Soviet Union a Textbook Case in Marketing," *The Los Angeles Times* June 26, 1988.

sponsorships utilized by the LAOOC offer a compelling example of the role of corporate America in a global setting. McDonald's, Coca-Cola, Anheuser-Bush, and forty other American-based companies simultaneously demonstrated the viability of the capitalist system through their financing of the Games and sold officially licensed memorabilia to most of the world. Additionally, these corporate sponsors in some cases paid for the construction of venues and buildings that would later become owned by the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA), the University of Southern California (USC), California State University Dominguez Hills (CSUDH), and the city of Los Angeles.

The strategy of redefining corporate sponsorship for the Olympics was so successful that the International Olympic Committee (IOC) changed its role in the aftermath of 1984, creating a new organization known as The Olympic Partnership (TOP) which created a program between the IOC and some of the most successful multinational companies in their respective businesses. As a result the TOP sponsors to this day support the Olympic Movement through the payment of sponsorship fees and the provision of value-in-kind assistance at the staging of the Olympic Games. Each TOP sponsor has exclusive global rights to the Olympic imagery and logos that can be used in their marketing, promotion, and communications activities during their partnership, not just during the individual Games.⁴³⁴ This relationship runs until each given contract is either fulfilled or renewed.

⁴³⁴ Paul Kitchen, "Financing the Games," in John R. Gold and Margaret M. Gold, eds., *Olympic Cities: City Agendas, Planning, and the World's Games, 1896-2016* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 133.

Infrastructure building for the Olympics was something that was not new in 1984. The genius of the bid of the LAOOC was that they utilized existing facilities and gained corporate sponsorships to pay for the venues and infrastructure that did need to be constructed. This moment offered these sponsors a unique opportunity to market their products and services to global markets while leaving a lasting legacy behind in the host city in a way not previously available during the Cold War. In addition to print, radio, and television advertisements in the United States, televised images of branded locales and advertisements were shared globally during the Olympic Games. This would lay the groundwork for both demand and eventual entry for these products into the Soviet Union and Eastern bloc nations.⁴³⁵ Even though a great number of these nations were not reached directly by the 1984 Games, their markets soon felt the pressure to allow these American-based companies in. The appearance of the American consumers' republic was offered to the rest of the world – through products like Coca-Cola.

After Los Angeles in 1984, organizers would seek to secure significant broadcast funding to help finance their games, and the IOC was allowed to take a more active role in the process.⁴³⁶ The IOC began after 1984 to engage in the negotiations with the host city and the television networks who bid for broadcasting rights. Furthermore, the use of brand categories by Los Angeles in 1984 showed how a sophisticated marketing program could work. The organizers of the Los Angeles Games guaranteed sponsoring companies exclusivity so that their competitors would not be able to associate with the event. This

⁴³⁵ It wasn't until 1985 that Coca-Cola was allowed to sell products in the Soviet Union. See: Associated Press, "Soviet to Allow Coca Cola," *New York Times*, January 24, 1985.

⁴³⁶ Robert Pound, *Inside the Olympics: a behind-the-scenes look at the politics, the scandals, and the glory of the games* (Toronto: John Wiley and Sons, 2004), 170.

exclusivity allowed them to increase the value of each deal while reducing the total number of sponsors.⁴³⁷ The ultimate result of the LAOOC's success was the nearly identical design of the Olympic Partnership (TOP) program, which was established between the IOC and some of the most successful multinational companies in their respective businesses as a result. From 1984 onwards, the TOP would last four years and apply to both the Summer and Winter Olympic Games. From 1988 onwards, it also included the Paralympic Movement. As a result, revenue increased from \$96 million in 1985 to \$279 million by the end of 1996, establishing it as a key aspect of Olympic financing.⁴³⁸

While the model for corporate sponsorship and operating the Olympics in a cost efficient manner was set by the Los Angeles Games in 1984, few Games before or since balanced their direct costs with revenues. To a greater or lesser extent, the equation is tempered by the fact that staging the Olympic Games often serves a wider political agenda.⁴³⁹ Ironically, the larger political agenda of the United States during the Cold War moment that was 1984 was *best* served by turning a profit despite the absence of the Soviets and the nations that followed their call for a boycott. The financial success of the Games created by advertising and sponsorships created a new series of weapons for the Cultural Cold War. Made more powerful by the absence of the Soviet athletes, the new American weapons were a return to the strategy of consumerist superiority of the 1950s. Less tangible than the dishwasher or the toaster, the entire system of products,

⁴³⁷ Kitchin, 137.

⁴³⁸ International Olympic Committee, *The Olympic Marketing Factfile* (2008 Edition). <http://multimedia.olympic.org/pdf/en_report_344.pdf>, Accessed November 13, 2012.

⁴³⁹ Kitchin, 146.

advertising, corporate sponsorship, and athletic dominance made for metaphorical weaponry that was draped with the literal veneer of the international “look of the Games.”

Since 1984, the Olympics have become such a high-profile global phenomenon that the IOC decided to separate the Summer and the Winter Games in 1986, in the wake of the euphoria of the profile and the profitability of the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics and as a way of giving better value to those companies anteing up to be preferred partners in the IOC’s new sponsorship programs.⁴⁴⁰ In the decades following 1984, host cities are not selected on the basis of any core Olympian value but, rather, as appropriate settings for the consumer bonanza that the Games have now become. Official Olympic sponsors universalize contemporary Olympism as a form of global consumerism.⁴⁴¹ In the televised version of the Olympics, there appears to be purity about the Olympic setting and the five-ring logo. There is no commercial signage allowed in the venues. However, athletes wear clothes bearing logos, and in the surrounding Olympic parks and streets exist orgies of consumption, sites of commercial advertising and selling. It is a brilliant conjuring or marketing trick by which the IOC, in the post-1984 era has preserved a presentational gloss of idealism and universalism.⁴⁴² The 1984 Olympic Games ushered in the formalization of relations between the world of business and the

⁴⁴⁰ Tomlinson, “The Commercialization of the Olympics,” 179.

⁴⁴¹ Maurice Roche, *Mega-Events and Modernity: Olympics and Expos in the Growth of Global Culture* (London: Routledge, 2000), 26-27.

⁴⁴² Tomlinson, “The Commercialization of the Olympics,” 195.

modern Olympic movement.⁴⁴³ Ever since 1984, the bottom line has been a large part of the Olympic host selection process. William Simon, President of the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) summed it up best in 1984 after learning of the Soviet boycott: “Commercialization is as much a part of the Olympic Games today as the release of the doves or peace during the opening ceremony or the raising of the flag of the winner, or the extinguishing of the flame during the closing ceremony.”⁴⁴⁴

⁴⁴³ Robert K. Barney, Stephen R. Wenn, and Scott G. Martyn, *Selling the Five Rings: The International Olympic Committee and the Rise of the Olympic Commercialism* (University of Utah Press: Salt Lake City, 2002), 160.

⁴⁴⁴ “Presentation by the President of the United States Olympic Committee, Mr. William E. Simon,” Annex 10 to Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the IOC Executive Board, May 18-19, 1984, Samaranch Olympic Studies Centre, Olympic Museum, Lausanne, Switzerland.

Chapter Four

The Olympic Arts Festival as Cultural Exchange and Legacy Builder

The opportunity for cultural exchange at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics came during a moment of heightened Cold War tensions. The Soviet war in Afghanistan had prompted a cooling in diplomatic relations between the United States and the Soviet Union. Cultural exchanges between the superpowers, which had been slowly gaining momentum during the 1970s, slowed to a crawl once again as a result of this political tension. For example during the early 1970s, the *détente* years, the United States and the Soviet Union signed eleven cooperative agreements in various fields of science and technology. There was also similar cooperation in other disciplines. The American-based International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX), with the assistance of the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS), established with the Soviet Academy of Sciences a committee to create an agenda for cooperative projects that would be most useful to scholars of the two countries. That committee evolved into an ACLS-Soviet Academy Commission on the Humanities and Social Sciences, which had its first meeting in 1975.⁴⁴⁵ However, as the events of the early 1980s unfolded the exchanges were more strained. The invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviets in 1979 followed by the imposition of martial law in Poland and the shooting down of Korean Airlines Flight 007 by the Soviets in 1981 caused a steady deterioration in US-Soviet relations and

⁴⁴⁵ Yale Richmond, *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War: Raising the Iron Curtain* (Pennsylvania State University Press: University Park, PA, 2003), 77.

cooperation between the two countries. Four of the cooperative agreements were suspended – Space, Energy, Science and Technology, and Transportation. By 1983 the level of activity under the remaining agreements had fallen to about twenty percent of the 1979 level. The cultural agreement was allowed to lapse, although scholarly exchanges continued.⁴⁴⁶

The Olympic Arts Festival provided an opportunity to reverse this trend and build some sense of international artistic community, even if it was only to be temporary. Prior to the boycott, bringing the Soviet Union's cultural best to Los Angeles would go a long way towards elevating the status of the art scene in Los Angeles and simultaneously fulfill the internationalist design of the Games. Once the boycott was announced Soviet participation at the Olympic Arts Festival would still be sought out by the LAOOC and the United States Government. It was not until June 1984, a full month after the May 8 announcement that the Soviets were not coming to the Olympics, that President Reagan, in an effort to improve relations and perhaps help to change the minds of the Soviets, called for a renegotiation of the cultural agreement and the revival of four of the noncontroversial agreements still in effect – Environmental Protection, Housing and Other Construction, Public Health and Medical Science, and Agriculture.⁴⁴⁷ The City of Los Angeles, long considered a high culture wasteland by much of the intellectual establishment long centered in New York, was reinvented as a global city and world-class

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid., 70.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid.

artistic community by the Olympic Arts Festival – and Soviet participation would make the transition even more legitimate.

By all accounts, those in positions of influence in both the US and in the Soviet Union believed the cultural exchange would occur. Before the boycott was announced, the LAOOC asked if the Soviet Union would support the invitation of Soviet performing arts groups such as the Rustaveli Theatre from Georgia or the Gorkey Theatre from Moscow. Both Alexander P. Potemkin, Deputy Consul General of the USSR in San Francisco and Anatoly Dyuzhev, Cultural Attaché for the Soviet Embassy in Washington were clear in their correspondence with the LAOOC that they were in favor of Soviet involvement. Much in the same ways as the higher-level politicians seemingly negotiated the conditions for Soviet participation in the Games, negotiations over Soviet participation in the Arts Festival suggests that the opportunity for cultural exchange was desired by at least some on both sides of the Iron Curtain.

The Olympic Arts Festival was directed by Robert Fitzpatrick, the President of California Institute of the Arts (CalArts), who hoped to create enduring links between Los Angeles and international art and performance communities, especially in Europe. His friend Dr. Armand Hammer, a wealthy American executive and philanthropist, was central in the effort to bring Soviet performers to the United States. Hammer was a close friend of Festival Director Robert Fitzpatrick with close ties to the Soviet Union. He traveled extensively in the Soviet Union for business purposes from 1921-1930. There he first worked with Vladimir Lenin and sold millions of bushels of American wheat to the

Soviets during a famine in the Volga region that killed nearly five million people. In 1926, Hammer opened the first Soviet Union's pencil factory in Moscow. By the end of the 1920's Armand Hammer became the most influential American in Russia, representing 37 leading US companies, including Henry Ford's group.⁴⁴⁸ In the buildup to the 1984 Games, Hammer received special directions from Fitzpatrick to attempt to get a number of foreign performers to attend – especially certain Russian groups. Hammer was later appointed Special Assistant to the President of the LAOOC with regard to International and Cultural Exchange due to his experience in this area. In a series of letters between Fitzpatrick and Hammer, the emphasis on the participation of Soviet performing arts groups was emphasized. Hammer traveled to Moscow in order to lead a number of negotiations, including securing the participation of the world famous Rustaveli Theatre and the Moiseyev Dance Company. Fitzpatrick stated, “... this would be a brilliant addition to the Olympic Arts Festival. The combination of the two companies would insure a very major presence for the Soviet Union in the Festival.”⁴⁴⁹ From the beginning of Hammer’s involvement, his main reason for being called upon by the LAOOC was to secure Soviet participation in the Arts Festival.

In July of 1983, Hammer secured a promise from Pioty Demichev, the Minister of Culture of the Soviet Union that the Rustaveli Theater was to perform at the Olympics. However, Hammer asked for the Moiseyev Dance Company to be committed as well –

⁴⁴⁸ Alexander Perechny, “The Soviet Union that Hammer Built,” *Pravda.ru*, http://english.pravda.ru/history/23-05-2012/121214-armand_hammer_soviet_union-0/ (accessed August 3, 2014).

⁴⁴⁹ Letter from Robert J. Fitzpatrick to Dr. Armand Hammer, 7 April 1983, LAOOC Papers, Collection 1403, Box 151, Folder 18, UCLA: 1.

and promised that they would be offered the opportunity to participate in the opening ceremonies. This would be the highest honor extended to any participating country, as no other foreign performers would be participating in the ceremonies.⁴⁵⁰ The desire to encourage Soviet participation is perhaps most evidenced by this promise. The idea of including an artistic performer in the opening ceremonies goes beyond any honor extended to a visiting nation – this could only have been an attempt to lure the Soviets to the United States in 1984.

Rick Jacobs, one of Hammer's assistants went to Moscow on his behalf again and held meetings with the Ministry of Culture to follow up on the request for the Moiseyev Dance Company. The Ministry of Culture was informed of the high level of interest in the LAOOC for including the Moiseyev in the Opening Ceremonies, honoring the USSR as the only nation other than the US to participate. Jacobs arranged a meeting for Hammer's staff and Mr. David Wolper with Mr. Eliseev, Deputy Director of Gosconcert (the management for Moiseyev Dance) to discuss the specifics of the Moiseyev's participation. Hammer was pleased to write to Ueberroth on July 18, 1983, "We have arranged for the Soviets to agree in principle to participate in the Opening Ceremonies and pending final negotiations should be able to arrange for their presence in the Olympic Arts Festival in the evenings of 23-26 July 1984."⁴⁵¹ Before the boycott, all was in place for the Soviets to participate – at a level of involvement that would have made their presence the most honored of any foreign participant.

⁴⁵⁰ Letter from Dr. Armand Hammer to Pioty Demichev, 3 July 1983, LAOOC Papers, Collection 1403, Box 151, Folder 18, UCLA: 1.

⁴⁵¹ Letter from Dr. Armand Hammer to Peter Ueberroth, 18 July 1983, LAOOC Papers, Collection 1403, Box 151, Folder 18, UCLA.

The ten week long Olympic Arts Festival in 1984 was designed to be international, reflecting the character of the Games and the host city, Los Angeles, where 83 languages and cultures co-existed in 1984. Past host nations would be given an especially prominent role in the proceedings. According to Robert Fitzpatrick, LAOOC Vice President and the Olympic Arts Festival Director, it would be interdisciplinary, representing artistic creativity in most of its forms. It would have traditional arts, preserving and presenting the best of both American and other cultures, including contemporary arts by acknowledging artists of today, particularly those who challenge aesthetic conventions.⁴⁵² This was especially significant since the US had positioned itself as anti-USSR throughout the Cold War. With Los Angeles's arrival on the national art scene in the mid-1960s, when the Los Angeles County Museum of Art opened in Hancock Park (1965), along with the Music Center including the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion (1964) and then the Ahmanson Theater (1967) and Mark Taper Forum (1967), there was little beyond the original county Museum of History, Science, and Art in Exposition Park to lend the city much desired cultural status equal to that of the country's cosmopolitan centers.⁴⁵³ A perceptible tension developed between the pop art that seemed to bolster Los Angeles's national image and the artful criticism that commented on the city's enduring social crises. The impact of cultural commodification, media attention, and a new art market rendered it without a historical context or an obviously

⁴⁵² Robert Fitzpatrick, "The Olympic Arts Festival," *Olympic Review* 198 (April 1984), 247.

⁴⁵³ Sarah Schrank, *Art and the City: Civic Imagination and Cultural Authority in Los Angeles* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2009), 6.

critical perspective.⁴⁵⁴ The founding of the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) in 1979 established a civic cultural stronghold that opened in 1986.⁴⁵⁵ The 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games offered an opportunity that changed the perception that Los Angeles lacked high culture dramatically. Los Angeles might gain acknowledgement as a global city, both in terms of its diverse population and what it had to offer the artistic community of the world.⁴⁵⁶

The LAOOC reached out to the city's vigorous arts community to enlist the support of its museums and galleries, its theatres and dance companies, and its cultural and community centers. These organizations soon became co-producers of the festival. Robert Fitzpatrick's stated mission suggested that, "the goal of the festival is that art is not a form of propaganda but an instrument of truth, an opportunity to put aside differences and rejoice in being alive."⁴⁵⁷ This carefully chosen language suggests that the festival was intended to be non-jingoistic in nature, possibly in an effort to attract the Soviet Union to participate. In actuality, the Soviets used art and culture as a vehicle of the state and the communist system. This statement would thus have been interpreted as hostile by the Soviets. While the festival was international in nature, it leaned heavily towards European artists and musicians – not a true global representation as it claimed to be. Fitzpatrick's motivations in this were hardly altruistic, as the artistic community of

⁴⁵⁴ Sarah Schrank, "The Art of the City: Modernism, Censorship, and the Emergence of Los Angeles's Postwar Art Scene," *American Quarterly* 56, no. 3, (September, 2004): 686. ; *ibid.*; *ibid.*; *ibid.*; *ibid.*; *ibid.*; *ibid.*

⁴⁵⁵ Schrank, *Art and the City*, 6.

⁴⁵⁶ Daniel Widener, *Black Arts West: Culture and Struggle in Postwar Los Angeles* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 8.

⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 248.

Los Angeles would directly benefit from the attendance of the Soviet performers. Beyond raising the cultural profile of Los Angeles, which in actuality was very strong despite the international perception, encouraging the attendance of the Soviets was another way to demonstrate American material superiority to Soviet cultural celebrities. Simultaneously, if the Soviets did attend and participate they would certainly be bombarded by the commercial nature of the Games and the city of Los Angeles itself. In the city that contained Hollywood, much of the music industry of the United States, and a significant percentage of the American fashion industry the Soviets would have faced the power of American consumer excess directly had they chosen to attend.

Arts Festivals, World's Fairs, and the Olympics

Cultural programs, meaningfully coordinated with athletic events became an integral part of the Olympic movement after the Games were revived by Pierre de Coubertin in 1896. Coubertin's mission to join Sport and Art in the Olympic Games was inspired by his belief that Ancient Olympia derived its power from combining "athletics, art, and prayer."⁴⁵⁸ From 1912 in Stockholm until 1948 in London, arts competitions were organized in parallel to the sporting competitions and artists, like athletes, competed and won gold, silver, and bronze medals.⁴⁵⁹ Regulations and contest parameters changed

⁴⁵⁸ Carl Diem Institute, ed., *Pierre De Coubertin, The Olympic Ideal; Discourses and Essays* (Lausanne: Editions Internationales Olympia, 1966), 29.

⁴⁵⁹ D. Good, "The Cultural Olympiad," in R. Cashman and A. Hughes, eds., *Staging the Olympics: the Event and its Impact* (Sydney: Centre for Olympic Studies, 1999).

considerably though, due to difficulties in defining the different competition sections and problems in defining the most appropriate subject for the works presented.⁴⁶⁰ The dichotomy of pairing sport with artistic expression included the perceived masculine realm of athletics with the more effeminate world of artistic expression. This significant addition to the Olympic program brought an even greater significance to the Olympic cultural exchange that occurred every four years. By design, the Olympics were constructed to be an occurrence for competition, but also a place where ideas were shared.

The first official Olympic arts festival was held at the Melbourne 1956 Games. After six years of discussion, Article 31 was added to the Olympic Charter at the 1954 IOC Congress in Athens: “The Organizing Committee will organize a demonstration or exhibition of Art (architecture, music, literature, painting, sculpture, sports philately, and photography) ... The program could also include ballets, theatre performances, operas or symphony concerts.”⁴⁶¹ The festival had two major components: one in visual arts and literature, and another comprised of music and drama.

After Melbourne, successive host cities had very different approaches to the cultural component of the Games either in length, organization, objectives, or themes.⁴⁶² During the Olympic Games in Mexico, in 1968, the artistic program had been limited to an invitation to all participating nations to make their own cultural contributions. It was

⁴⁶⁰ Beatriz G. Garcia, “The Concept of Olympic Cultural Programmes: Origins, Evolution, and Projection,” *University Lecture on the Olympics* (2002): 6.

⁴⁶¹ Monique Berlioux, *Olympica* (Paris: Flammarion, 1964), 409.

⁴⁶² *Ibid.*, 7.

not until Munich in 1972 that a large, pre-planned cultural program was organized to coincide with the Olympic Games. Planning began in 1967, and after it was executed fifty nations participated over a six-week period. Fifty-seven operas were performed, seven operettas, three musical comedies, ten ballets, thirty theatrical shows, forty-two concerts, twenty-four chamber concerts and recitals, eight choirs involving twenty-two orchestras, fifty-six conductors and seventy soloists.⁴⁶³ Despite the tragedy that occurred in Munich during the Games, the standard for an Olympic Arts Festival had been set. In preparation for the Los Angeles Festival, Robert Fitzpatrick and Klaus Bieringer, head of the State Department of Culture in West Germany (and director of the Cultural Division of the Olympic Organization Committee for Munich 1972) traded correspondence. Bieringer noted, “The German press has frequently reported during the past months on the Olympic Arts Festival that you are staging... you had kindly remarked several times, that the cultural program of the Olympic Games in Munich of 1972 was the best in the history of the Modern Olympic Games.⁴⁶⁴ The level of participation and investment made in Munich was something that was not attempted in the Olympics that followed immediately afterwards. When Los Angeles began to plan for 1984, Munich was to be the model.

Following the lead of Canada in 1976, the Moscow Olympic Organizing Committee in 1980 chose to design a national festival, which focused on “the heritage and achievements of the Soviet multinational culture” including representatives from all

⁴⁶³ Klaus K Bieringer, “Olympic Games and Culture: A Report From Munich, 1972,” *Cultures* 1, no. 2 (1972): 177

⁴⁶⁴ Letter from Klaus Bieringer to Robert Fitzpatrick, 16 April 1984, LAOOC Papers, Collection 1403, Box 132, Folder 10, UCLA.

15 Soviet Socialist Republics.⁴⁶⁵ The Soviet Union produced an arts festival rife with national and folkloric content, and was completely managed by the state. This was unlike the much more internationally focused arts festivals (like Munich in 1972 and Los Angeles in 1984).⁴⁶⁶ A preliminary cultural festival was held the summer before the Olympic Games. Associated with the seventh Summer Spartakiad of the Peoples of the USSR, this festival turned into a kind of dress rehearsal for the subsequent Olympic festival. Approximately forty performing groups participated in the more than 100 opera, ballet and drama performances and nearly 350 concerts.⁴⁶⁷ Four cities outside of Moscow also participated in the cultural program, including Tallinn, Leningrad, Kiev, and Minsk. In Tallinn, theater productions were staged at the theatres as well as at historical sites. Leningrad situated its cultural programs at its “museums, historical monuments and architectural complexes, while Kiev presented outdoor theatrical performances in parks and city squares.⁴⁶⁸ The Soviet Olympic Arts Festival did not offer any pretense regarding the political nature of their offerings. There was no little discussion of outside artistic influences or international participation.

The Olympic Games and World’s Fairs, by virtue of their scale, media exposure, cultural exchange, and international reach share a number of salient characteristics. The modern Olympic Games were conceived by Coubertin as a “competitive means to a cooperative end: a world at peace.” Indeed for their founder, the political purpose of the

⁴⁶⁵ Organizing Committee of the 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow, *Official Report of the Games of the XXII Olympiad, Moscow, 1980*, ed. I.T. Novikov (Moscow: Fizkultura i Sport, 1981), II: 402.

⁴⁶⁶ Garcia, 8.

⁴⁶⁷ Olympic Committee of Moscow, 402.

⁴⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 413-414.

Games – “the reconciliation of warring nations” was of greater importance than the athletics.⁴⁶⁹ World’s Fairs, or Expos, are ostensibly organized to commemorate an historical event. The 1904 World’s Fair in St. Louis celebrated the centennial of the Louisiana Purchase. Spain’s Expo ’92 was the quincentennial party for Columbus’ discovery of the New World. Historically expositions championed scientific progress and consumerism as the keystones of modern western civilization. Beyond the idealism of their missions, contemporary Olympiads and World’s Fairs are golden opportunities for site cities to invest substantially in infrastructure, forward national political goals, and jumpstart urban renewal projects.⁴⁷⁰ Another shared characteristic that World’s Fairs and the Olympics have shared include both the opportunity for cultural exchange through the hosting of grand events and the imperial nature they both demonstrated in the early years of their existences and the move toward capitalist tendencies in the later twentieth century.⁴⁷¹

World’s Fairs have varied in their financial outcomes and global perceptions in the same way that the Olympic Games have. Since their earliest moments, hosting a World’s Fair was a large risk for the host city and nation. The 1892 Knoxville World’s Fair was obstructed by corrupt bankers from transforming its grounds into a permanent urban renewal project. Like the Olympics, many World’s Fairs struggled to make their operations viable. Conversely, other efforts were well received and prospered financially. The 1939–40 New York World's Fair diverged from the original focus of the

⁴⁶⁹ Guttman, *The Olympics*, 1.

⁴⁷⁰ James Gilbert, “World’s Fairs as Historical Events,” in *Fair Representations: World’s Fairs and the Modern World*, ed. Robert Rydell and Nancy Gwinn (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1994), 26.

⁴⁷¹ *Ibid.*

world's fair expositions. From then on, world's fairs adopted specific cultural themes; they forecasted a better future for society. Technological innovations were no longer the primary exhibits at fairs, even though they continued to play a prominent role in the displays. The theme of the 1939 fair was "Building the World of Tomorrow." Unlike modern architects, whose utopias rarely develop beyond the drawing stage, the first American industrial designers were able to build their model city, the 1939 New York World's Fair.⁴⁷² Ironically, technology was still a big part of the Fair, as the relatively new development of television broadcast the opening of the fair as an early experiment with broadcast television. The 1967 International and Universal Exposition in Montreal was promoted under the name *Expo 67*. Event organizers retired the term world's fair in favor of expo. There was no clear pattern to the successful operations and failures. The New Orleans fair in 1984 went bankrupt and lost approximately \$120 million. Seville's Expo '92, which ended with a surplus of 16 million pesetas, credited its financial survival to corporate sponsorships – "a lesson learned from the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles."⁴⁷³ Opportunities for cultural exchange through the hosting of grand events like the Olympics and the World's Fair have gained operational strategies and new organizational principles from the successes of Los Angeles in 1984. Profitability, along with international exposure, made it desirable to host events like these once again.

⁴⁷² Donald J. Bush, *The Streamlined Decade* (New York: George Braziller, 1975), 3.

⁴⁷³ John Findling, "Fair Legacies: Expo '92 and Cartuja '93" in *Fair Representations: World's Fairs and the Modern World*, ed. Robert Rydell and Nancy Gwinn (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1994), 184-185, 195.

Los Angeles, 1984

The claimed goal of the 1984 Olympic Arts Festival was completely different from that of Moscow in 1980. Hope Tschopik, the Associate Director of the Olympic Arts Festival during the 1984 Games, gave an assessment regarding the political nature of the Moscow Olympic Arts Festival which was as distant from that of Fitzpatrick's as is possible. According to Director Fitzpatrick in his forward to the souvenir book, *Olympic Arts Festival* the origins of the festival were more artistically pure:

The Olympic Arts Festival began with the principle that art is not a form of propaganda but an instrument of truth, an opportunity to put aside differences and to rejoice in being alive. The guiding principle in selecting the exhibitions and performing arts companies that would participate in the Festival was that of excellence. Because it was the Olympics and because half the population of the human race would be looking at Los Angeles in the summer of 1984, the response was favorable. Countries without diplomatic relations with one another, such as the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Korea, were content to appear on the same stage. Governments which might have preferred more traditional representatives of the cultures respected the artistic integrity of the festival and provided substantial support for artists of untraditional bent.⁴⁷⁴

The claims of putting aside differences in order to achieve an apolitical arts festival are indicative of the approach to the 1984 Games that the LAOOC attempted. The goal was not to exclude the Soviets or their allies. Instead, the goal was to include them in as many ways as possible so as to demonstrate to their participants the greatness of the American way of life – in this case the quality of the artistic community of Los Angeles.

⁴⁷⁴ Robert J. Fitzpatrick, *Olympic Arts Festival* (Los Angeles Time Syndicate: Sequoia Communications, 1984), 14.

This cooptation of China, Korea, etc. was a way of reinforcing claims of global inclusiveness. The onus was put on the Soviets to participate, or be left out of a major artistic celebration of world cultures.

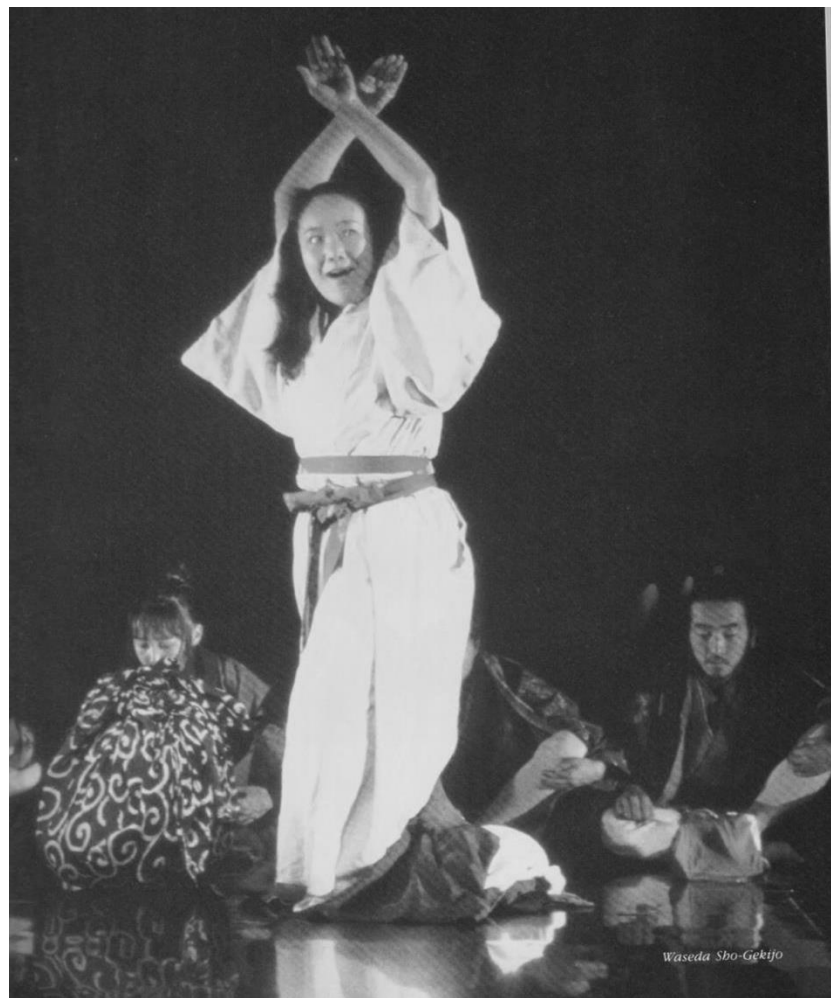


Figure 10. Waseda Sho-Gekijo performing *The Trojan Women* in 1984 at the Festival. (Fitzpatrick, 1984)

Even more pronounced was another stated goal of the Festival: the blending of cultures. One of the ways in which this “blending” was achieved was through the many “festivals-within-a-festival” approach. Throughout the city, thematic artistic festivals occurred like the Craft and Folk Art Museum’s International Festival of Masks and the Plaza de la Raza Folklife Festival. These festivals offered an intermingling of cultures from all over the world. The most evident example of intermixing was the theatrical productions of the Japanese company Waseda Sho-Gekijo, who offered an adaptation of *The Trojan Women* that reshaped a classic of Western drama into a tale told by an aging beggar-woman sifting through the rubble of post-World War II Tokyo (see fig. 9).⁴⁷⁵ The inclusion of Greek literature and performance is clearly connected to the Olympic origin. However, the adaptation by a Japanese group suggests the international reach of the Olympic movement and the cultural exchange that it fostered. The 1984 Festival was designed to demonstrate to the world that the United States, and more specifically Los Angeles, was a place for cultural exchange. The irony comes from the fact that this was purposely done – it was not organic.

Initially the IOC contested the proposed arts program because Rule 34 of the Olympic Charter stipulated that the cultural component of the Games must be “national in character.”⁴⁷⁶ In an interview with journalist Kenneth Reich, Fitzpatrick said that he had learned from IOC Executive Director Monique Berilouix that the rule had been made to “avoid lots of political problems.” The compromise reached between Fitzpatrick and

⁴⁷⁵ Fitzpatrick, *Olympic Arts Festival*, 16, 47.

⁴⁷⁶ Comité International Olympique, *Olympic Charter 1984* (Lausanne: Chateau de Vidy 1007): 21, http://www.olympic.org/Documents/Olympic%20Charter/Olympic_Charter_through_time/1984-Olympic_Charter.pdf (accessed 2 September, 2013).

the IOC was to present only American artists during the two weeks of the Games, and to “do the bulk of the festival, including the international things, beforehand.” The national display of artistic might occurred during the Games, while more foreign attention was on the United States anyways. Simultaneously, the appearance of an international, non-jingoistic festival was maintained. This compromise provided the best of both possibilities for the United States—nationalism that was veiled in internationalism. After the Games ended Fitzpatrick believed the rule “may still be on the books, but they don’t care anymore, because they found that the thing was so successful in Los Angeles, that it didn’t make sense to take this sort of narrow approach.”⁴⁷⁷ Like the financial successes of the 1984 Games, the success of the Olympic Arts Festival changed what future hosts sought in their endeavors. The results were multilayered for the 1984 Festival. The Los Angeles artistic community was forever changed in the eyes of the international community while future festivals mostly followed the example of creating a celebration of international performances – leading eventually to a change in the IOC rule.⁴⁷⁸

The 1984 Olympic Arts Festival Master Plan, finalized in January 1981, was the first version of the arts festival presented to Ueberroth. It was predicated upon having a cultural budget of approximately 1.5 million to \$2 million.⁴⁷⁹ A “Corrected Budget Summary” and a memo, dated November 25, 1980, prefaced the report. Fitzpatrick and

⁴⁷⁷ Robert John Fitzpatrick, interview by Kenneth Reich, 16 April 1985, Transcript, Paul Ziffren Sports Resource Center, Amateur Athletic Foundation, Los Angeles, CA; and Robert J. Fitzpatrick, interview by J. Metcalf, Tape recording, NY, NY, 12 Sept. 1995.

⁴⁷⁸ John Huet, “The Modern Olympic Games,” International Olympic Committee (IOC), http://www.olympic.org/Documents/Reports/EN/en_report_668.pdf (accessed August 3, 2014), 8.

⁴⁷⁹ Robert Fitzpatrick, “Draft of Master Plan, January 1981” LAOOC Papers, Collection 1403, Box 115, Folder 8, UCLA: 1.

the leadership of the Festival recommended that the LAOOC commit \$5 million toward the mounting of the Arts Festival, an increase of \$3 million over what is mentioned in the original Master Plan. The Master Plan called for a multidisciplinary festival featuring all the arts; however dance was given the central position as the art form most appropriately associated with athletics since both use the body as instrument. American art and artists would receive the primary attention, particularly artists of international stature living in Southern California, but many international artists would also be invited to participate.⁴⁸⁰ The agenda for Fitzpatrick was to market Los Angeles as a global city that had a serious art community that demonstrated an appreciation for high culture. This was something that the Soviets especially valued, as their most famous international performers were in performances of ballet and the Moscow Virtuosi Chamber Orchestra.

The Olympic Arts Festival was designed as an international gathering – purposely differentiated from its predecessor in Moscow. This goal was not possible even with the \$5 million budget proposed in the Master Plan. The LAOOC was determined to make the Olympic Arts Festival a valuable addition to the Games, so Ueberroth and Usher helped to secure a corporate sponsor. In the Fall of 1981, the LAOOC was in the process of negotiating a limited number of corporate sponsorships for the games, and entered into negotiations with the Times-Mirror Company, the parent company for the *Los Angeles Times*. Hope Tschopik, the Associate Director for the festival was arranged to have a “chance meeting” with Stephen Meier, assistant to Robert Erburu, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Times Mirror Company. Meier expressed interest in

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid., 1.

underwriting a cultural project, according to Tschopik.⁴⁸¹ Eventually a final agreement was reached between the LAOOC and the Times-Mirror Company:

The Games provide a rare opportunity to bring to Los Angeles a quality and diversity of international theatre that we would not normally have access to. From Bob Fitzpatrick's preliminary discussion in Japan, France, and Mexico, we think we can anticipate substantial help in bringing to LA some of the best companies in the world. An additional budget of 5 million dollars will be necessary, however. The Times-Mirror Company has contributed a great deal over the years to enhance the quality of theatre available in LA, and this project is consistent with the company's interests.⁴⁸²

The increased funds from Times Mirror permitted Fitzpatrick to shift the Festival's emphasis to international companies and productions. The Arts Festival fundraising was managed in much the same way as the rest of the Games. Corporate sponsorships were offered to a variety of companies, not just Times-Mirror.⁴⁸³ Also, sponsors were expected to provide additional services – Times-Mirror would be no exception. They agreed to pay the printing costs for 20,000 posters and 13,000 press kits at a cost of an additional \$35,550.⁴⁸⁴ Times Mirror was also asked to place an advertisement in the Olympic Arts Festival Ticket Brochure, on the inside cover at a cost of an additional \$50,000. In trade, they would be the only advertiser allowed in the ticket brochure.⁴⁸⁵ In similar fashion to other advertisers as well, being the title sponsor did not give Times Mirror license to utilize the Olympic Arts Festival trademark without permission. On at

⁴⁸¹ Hope Tschopik, Memo, 28 Oct. 1981, LAOOC Papers, Collection 1403, Box 151, Folder 20, UCLA: 1.

⁴⁸² Ibid.

⁴⁸³ "Going for Gold: Corporate America and the 1984 Olympics," *Burson-Marsteller Report* (Summer 1983).

⁴⁸⁴ Letter from Mr. Pisano to Robert Fitzpatrick, 13 December, 1983, LAOOC Papers, Collection 1403, Box 151, Folder 20, UCLA.

⁴⁸⁵ Letter from Mr. Pisano to Robert Fitzpatrick, 28 September, 1983, LAOOC Papers, Collection 1403, Box 151, Folder 20, UCLA.

least one occasion, they were in violation of their agreement with the LAOOC for improper usage and agreed to stop and submit ads for approval in the future as agreed upon previously.⁴⁸⁶

Despite the purported focus on dance and theater, Fitzpatrick stressed publicly that it was important that the festival leave a visible legacy to the people of Los Angeles, much as the bronze and marble statues of athletic heroes are part of the legacy left by the ancient Olympics. This strategy would help to create a lasting legacy to the people of the city in his opinion, and would help to reach a wider audience – as creations such as freeway murals would be unavoidable to citizens who elected not to participate or attend the festival directly. Another more pragmatic reason was a beautification project in advance of the Games that would make the City of Los Angeles appear more artistic to the visitors from around the world, which would help to foster the goal of presenting Los Angeles as a global city with high culture. The Times Mirror Company also was concerned about permanent, tangible benefits of the Olympics Arts Festival.⁴⁸⁷ Thus, the LAOOC commissioned several works of public art as part of the larger festival. Sculptor Robert Graham's monumental bronze Gateway, facing the peristyle end of the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum in Exposition Park, was a gift to the people of Los Angeles from the LAOOC. The 25-foot-high gateway consists of a post-and-lintel structure supporting the nude torsos of one male and one female athlete. The sides of the

⁴⁸⁶ Letter from Ms. Aggie Skirball to Mr. Pisano, 9 April, 1983, LAOOC Papers, Collection 1403, Box 151, Folder 20, UCLA.

⁴⁸⁷ Memo from Hope Tschopik to Peter Ueberroth Re: Conversation with Stephen Meier, 22 February, 1982, LAOOC Papers, Collection 1403, Box 151, Folder 20, UCLA: 1.

Gateway's posts feature bas-reliefs of male and female athletes in motion. Another major commission is the Olympic Mural Project, in which ten major Los Angeles artists known for their mural paintings were invited to adorn the freeways between downtown Los Angeles and the Coliseum with their creations.

At the time, there was concern over the selection of the artists chosen for these and other projects related to the Arts Festival. For example, the Times Mirror Company and the LAOOC held a search for artists to design a series of fifteen posters that would be the Official Fine Arts Poster Series. Letters came into the Times Mirror offices and the LAOOC from the general public voicing these concerns. For example, Los Angeles resident Pierce Johnson Jr. was, "especially worried about whether or not the works of any Hispanic or Black artists would be made part of the collection of posters." He explained: "The Communist bloc nations are going to seize every opportunity possible to expose the racial inequities and injustices connected with the 1984 Games. As a native of Los Angeles, I would like to know that the LA Times has extended its sphere of influence as far as possible to include a fair cross section of minority representation in all fields of art associated with the visual arts program."⁴⁸⁸ Johnson, and dozens of other letters like his led Fitzpatrick to write to Meier so that the official position of both could be relayed to such objectors. Fitzpatrick stated to Meier that, "...the LAOOC was assisted in the selection process by a number of distinguished curators and museum directors." He then explained that, "two of the artists are black, Martin Puryear and Raymond Saunders; and

⁴⁸⁸ Letter from Pierce Johnson, Jr. to Steve Meier, 10 December, 1982, LAOOC Papers, Collection 1403, Box 151, Folder 20, UCLA: 1.

one is Hispanic, Carlos Almaraz.”⁴⁸⁹ The sensitive nature of the appearance of racial equality during the Cold War was widely understood by a variety of citizens in Los Angeles.

These artistic contributions to the community were financed by the corporate sponsors who paid for the venues and offices that were donated to the community after the Games as well. All of this was part of a financially successful undertaking that allowed for a substantial profit to be made while simultaneously improving the host city both structurally and culturally. South Los Angeles, a predominantly low-income African-American community, was the beneficiary of much of the public art designed to incorporate it into the Olympic moment and at least partially gloss over the history of racial division in the city, although at the time opinion on the desirability of the Olympics and its effect on the area were mixed.⁴⁹⁰ Murals were often the most common approach in the South and Downtown Los Angeles areas, largely constructed along the 110 Freeway. The Olympic Arts Festival officially commissioned 10 murals, and dozens of others were created that were not officially affiliated. Examples like Ulysses Jenkin’s *Transportation Brought Art to the People* (1976), at 3500 Hope Street, east of the 110 Freeway, near the University of Southern California depict contributions and exploitation of many nationalities in the development of transportation technology (see fig 10).⁴⁹¹ The movement of the stagecoach represents the West running wild. Jenkins’ mural already

⁴⁸⁹ Letter from Robert Fitzpatrick to Steve Meier, 17 December, 1982, LAOOC Papers, Collection 1403, Box 151, Folder 20, UCLA.

⁴⁹⁰ Widener, 321.

⁴⁹¹ Ulysses Jenkins, “Transportation Brought Art to the People,” 1976 http://www.publicartinla.com/LA_murals/USC/jenkins/ (accessed August 1, 2014).

existed when the Games were in their planning stages. Since examples like this were generally well received, additional efforts were made during the buildup to the Festival and the Games.



Figure 11: Ulysses Jenkins, Transportation Brought Art to the People, 1976. 3500 S. Hope Street. (Jenkins, 1976)

The 1984 OAF Mural Project was considered successful at the time, and featured a number of artists from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, furthering the goal of the committee of marketing the city as a global city of racial diversity. A representative example is the mural by Roderick Sykes located just off the 110 Freeway at Figueroa Street titled *Unity* (see Fig 11).⁴⁹² Murals like *Unity* depict African Americans as

⁴⁹² Roderick Sykes, "Unity," 1984 <http://muralconservancy.org/murals/unity> (accessed August 1, 2014).

participants in the city and in the Olympic moment. This can be viewed as participating in at least a soft sell of L.A. as a global city.



Figure 12: *Unity* by Roderick Sykes (Sykes, 1984)

It is significant that the city now claims its murals as important emblems of cultural activity and “diversity” or “multiculturalism,” particularly since the 1984 Olympics when the Bradley administration commissioned freeway murals as part of its controversial downtown “cleanup.”⁴⁹³ In appropriating murals, the city has acknowledged, even

⁴⁹³ Sarah Schrank, *Art and the City: Civic Imagination and Cultural Authority in Los Angeles* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 199.

legitimated, the wall as civic space. However, even as the city cleaves art from its politics graffiti writers remind us when they tag officially civic murals that wall space is at a premium and claims to the exterior wall are hotly contested, despite city efforts to render murals conflict free. For example, during the late 1970s, political conflict between Chicano muralists, representing an “official” form and graffiti artists, who in Los Angeles remain on the margins played out a similar battle.⁴⁹⁴ There is clearly a disconnect between sanctioned work and street artists.

After years of being heavily tagged with graffiti, however, most of the murals from 1984 were painted over by CalTrans starting in 2007 to protect them, leaving them in hibernation until funds were available for restoration.⁴⁹⁵ At the time, mural artist Frank Romero sued CalTrans for covering his work. But today, artist Willie Herrón III — whose own mural, "Luchas del Mundo" (Struggles of the World), is part of the Olympic series — is perched atop scaffolding in a hard hat and yellow safety vest, carefully removing the last swath of gray paint that will set Romero's mural free. Herrón's efforts are part of a project overseen by the Mural Conservancy of Los Angeles. The goal was to restore the murals that are salvageable in time for the 30-year anniversary of the L.A. Olympics in 2014.⁴⁹⁶

⁴⁹⁴ Marcos Sanchez-Tranquilino, “Space, Power, and Youth Culture: Mexican American Graffiti and Chicano Murals in East Los Angeles, 1972-1978,” *Looking High and Low: Art and Cultural Identity*, ed. Brenda Jo Bright and Liza Bakewell (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1995), 55-58.

⁴⁹⁵ Deborah Vankin, “Bringing Back a Piece of L.A.’s Olympic Glory,” *Los Angeles Times* (March 1, 2013).

⁴⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

In addition to the murals and sculptures, the California Afro-American Museum (CAAM) opened its doors. Although as a state facility its opening was formally unconnected to the Los Angeles Olympic Games, the museum's debut took place during the 1984 Games, furthering the sense of the Olympics as a moment of municipal support for South Los Angeles.⁴⁹⁷ Located in Exposition Park, a South Los Angeles venue that includes a number of county museums as well as the USC campus, CAAM holds a collection that includes major works of Los Angeles-based black visual artists, as well as collection drawn from throughout the African Diaspora; a research library and archive, and educational and outreach programs. In another attempt to move past the racial violence that was prominent in South Los Angeles in the decades before the Games, the Olympics and the Arts Festival brought new developments like this.

The Olympic Arts Festival was marketed as, "the largest arts festival in American history."⁴⁹⁸ It is significant that the first mention is the national, not the local. This was clearly bigger than just the City of Los Angeles. Simultaneously, according to the official guide published by the *Los Angeles Times*, the 1984 Olympic Arts Festival was much more than that.⁴⁹⁹

The 1984 Olympic Arts Festival represents a unique moment in the history of Los Angeles, a culmination of the city's growth and developing multicultural character. During the ten weeks of the festival, artists and visitors will gather from throughout the world, making it a truly multinational event. This joyous celebration will provide Americans that

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid., 232.

⁴⁹⁸ Barbara Isenberg, ed., "Festival: An Olympic Celebration of the Arts," *Los Angeles Times*, April 15, 1984, 2; LAOOC Archive, Box 153, Folder 22, UCLA.

⁴⁹⁹ LAOOC, Official news release, from Meier to Harry L. Usher, June 23, 1981, LAOOC Archive, Box 151, Folder 20, UCLA.

rare opportunity – to personally witness historic events certain to touch and enrich us all.⁵⁰⁰

Even the promotional materials for the event iterated the importance of the cultural gathering for the United States and the City of Los Angeles. Evidence of this approach is visible in many of the press kits created by the LAOOC for the Festival. The front matter, which gave background information on the Festival explained how Los Angeles would grow to accommodate the proceedings: “The first step in making Los Angeles a festival city, therefore, was rethinking the very idea of a festival. In this, there are strong parallels between the organization of the Festival and that of the 1984 Olympic Games. The decision was made to draw on what Los Angeles had to offer, rather than to bemoan what it lacked. The LAOOC thus reached into the city’s vigorous arts community to enlist the support of its museums and galleries, its theatres and dance companies, its cultural and community centers.”⁵⁰¹ The Festival was designed to change not only the City of Los Angeles, but the cultural landscape of the United States. These lofty goals were inevitably aligned with the Cultural Cold War. By demonstrating an appreciation for high culture and international cultural exchange, Los Angeles could elevate its international prestige in the arts community.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid., 39.

⁵⁰¹ Richard B. Perelman, *Olympic Arts Festival Information for Journalists: Los Angeles June 1-August 12, 1984* (LAOOC & UCLA College of Fine Arts: 1983), LAOOC Archive, Box 151, Folder 20, UCLA, 3.

Legacies of the 1984 Olympic Arts Festival

The festival generated a new identity for Los Angeles from the very beginning. This was a diverse city that reveled in its diversity, not one that succumbed to the differences through violence and a lack of cultural understanding. The United States government carefully constructed an image of American democracy during the Cold War. Evidence from the pamphlet, “The Negro in American Life,” published by the United States Information Agency (USIA) published in the early 1950s demonstrates that the government tried to manage the story of race as an American success story. The pamphlet suggests the US was a nation so open it could discuss its faults, a nation that had sinned but was on the road to redemption and where the people were sufficiently good that, at least in time, they willed for the right things.⁵⁰² Despite the fact that the United States had struggled with issues of race and faced criticism from the international community during the Cold War, Los Angeles sought to project a distinctly different image of racial equality during the 1984 Olympics. Ironically, the politics surrounding the Festival sought to market Los Angeles as a post-racial utopia in many ways and demonstrate how far the city had come since the Watts Riots. Outside of the official LAOOC murals, Mayor Bradley commissioned forty-seven murals, painted along major stretches of the 110, 101, and 10

⁵⁰² Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

freeways. Often showing runners or other sports participants from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds, the murals “officially” resurrected an art form that the city of Los Angeles had destroyed in the 1930s as Communistic, anti-imperialist, and overly critical of racial and class inequities. By the 1960s and 1970s, of course, murals had become a major visual component of the Chicano movement and of radical social movements in Los Angeles and other cities throughout the United States. The irony of the Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department adopting a highly politicized and historically marginalized art form to represent the new global Los Angeles as a set of international financial prowess was not lost on local artists. To this day, the Bradley-era murals are a favorite target of graffiti artists and taggers who see these freeway wall paintings as them unwelcome marks of “official” central authority. The attempt was veiled in the language of inclusiveness and equality, through cultural exchange and expression.⁵⁰³

The Olympic Arts Festival, considered by many in the city the gem of the 1984 LA Games, was an enormous critical and financial success. Audiences clamored for tickets; approximately 75% of the available seats were filled, while 50% of the events sold out. The Festival occasioned the first visits to LA of such renowned theater groups as the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Theatre du Soleil, the Piccolo Teatro di Milano, Cricot 2, Waseda Sho-Gekijo and other sterling companies. The Festival also presented a variety of dance and music performances, including the startling theatrical pieces of the Pina Bausch

⁵⁰³ Schrank, *Art and the City*, 159.

Wuppertaler Tanztheater, the ritualistic drum-beating of Kodo, the stark “butoh” style performances of Sankai Juku, and the productions of the Royal Opera of Covent Garden. In addition, fine art exhibitions were featured, the most striking of them “A Day in the Country: Impressionism and the French Landscape,” loaned from the Chicago Art Institute and the Louvre Museum in Paris. The Olympic Mural Project led to the painting of murals about Los Angeles’s multi-cultural heritage on freeway on-ramps and off ramps.⁵⁰⁴ While some murals were well received, many were tagged by graffiti artists who did not see the cooptation of an art form that had been “theirs” in a positive manner. In many ways the messages these murals seem like overcompensation for the cultural challenges the city continued to face even while the Games and the Festival were held.

In addition to the Olympic Arts Festival, a number of related events took place around Southern California without being officially attached to the Olympics. These events further developed the arts community in Southern California and added to the growing cultural and artistic prestige of Los Angeles. The Los Angeles International Film Exposition was purposely scheduled to coincide, and celebrated the Games with a fifty hour marathon of sports-related films like *Chariots of Fire* and *Rocky*.⁵⁰⁵ At the California Afro-American Museum, which purposely opened its doors during the Olympic year, one of the inaugural exhibitions was entitled “The Black Olympians: 1904-1984.”

⁵⁰⁴ Susanna Halpert Levitt, “The 1984 Olympic Arts Festival: Theatre” (PhD diss., University of California, Davis, 1990), 1.

⁵⁰⁵ Barbara Isenberg, ed., *Retrospective: Olympic Arts Festival Los Angeles – June 1 – August 12, 1984* (LAOOC: 1984), LAOOC Archive, Box 156, Folder 3, UCLA.

Following the model established by the LAOOC, the museum accepted a major sponsorship for the exhibition from Adidas, an athletic and sportswear manufacturer.⁵⁰⁶ In addition, the LAOOC donated \$100,000 to the exhibit.⁵⁰⁷ These examples further demonstrate the momentum created within the arts community by the Olympic Arts Festival.

Conclusions

The Festival's associate director, when asked to what extent political, economic, and social currents influenced the Festival, indicated they had little impact. "Because the Olympic Games are so large and so international and have such enormous goodwill ... attached to them they create their own political environment, they create their own economic environment. They operate almost as a governmental entity... they are the dominant force in the environment."⁵⁰⁸ Tschopik's statement is more revealing than the official statements from Director Fitzpatrick. Tschopik claimed that the Olympics "create their own political environment," thereby at least acknowledging a political presence at the games (unlike Fitzpatrick). However, in the aftermath of 1984 it is clear that much of what was done in preparing for 1984 was influenced by the politics of the Cold War Era. The cleanup of downtown Los Angeles, largely engineered by Mayor

⁵⁰⁶ California Museum of Afro-American History and Culture, Press Kit, 1984, LAOOC Archive, Box 156, Folder 22, UCLA.

⁵⁰⁷ "New Museum Exhibition Views History of Black Olympians," *Los Angeles Sentinel* (2 August, 1984).

⁵⁰⁸ Hope Tschopik, Memo, 28 October 1981, LAOOC Archive, Box 151, Folder 20, UCLA.

Bradley, was designed to reinvigorate the corporate world in Los Angeles and make the city more marketable in the global economic community. The artistic endeavors around the city created by the City of Los Angeles and the LAOOC sought to create a sense of place for the city in the global arts community; a validation that was critical in fighting the Cultural Cold War in 1984 since the international arts community was not well represented in Los Angeles prior to 1984. Even though this cannot be argued, the City of Los Angeles still benefitted from the Festival as it did from the Olympics. The benefits were threefold: financial, image improvement, and some artistic remnants.

Los Angeles' most significant cultural legacies from 1984 – a triennial arts festival, new audiences, and an improved cultural reputation – sprung from the excitement generated by the popular and critical success of the Olympic Arts Festival. Though not all aspects of the festival were uniformly praised in the press, on the whole, it received exceptionally glowing reviews. The *Village Voice* raved, "...the Olympic Arts Festival was the most impressive and successful convocation of artists this country has ever seen."⁵⁰⁹ *Los Angeles Times* theater critic Dan Sullivan wrote, "...it was the most exciting, rewarding, exhausting round of theater that this reviewer has ever had to keep up with, anywhere."⁵¹⁰ In a *Los Angeles Times* follow up article the question was posed to the readers: "Who wouldn't want to repeat an event that the Boston Globe said 'quite probably is the single most important cultural event in our country's history?'"⁵¹¹ The impact the festival had on the artistic community of Los Angeles was short-term on the

⁵⁰⁹ Eileen Blumenthal, "A 9.5 for Cultural Crossfire," *Village Voice*, 14 August 1984, 82.

⁵¹⁰ Dan Sullivan, "It Dared to be Arrogant" *Los Angeles Times*, 12 August 1984, 40.

⁵¹¹ Barbara Isenberg, "What the Games Meant to Los Angeles: The Arts Festival," *Los Angeles Times*, 28 July 1985, 26 (IX).

surface. However, the fanfare was recognized by the older cities of the United States. This was exemplified by the increased presence of world class arts in the years following 1984. The press in Los Angeles also trumpeted the legacy of the festival, by generating excitement for the Los Angeles Festival, to debut in 1987 and which was to be modeled on the Olympic Arts Festival. It was only made possible by a \$2 million contribution by the LAOOC (which came from the profits of the Games).⁵¹²

The Cultural Cold War was fought well at the Olympic Arts Festival – although not as overtly as at the Games themselves. The success of the Festival changed the perception of Los Angeles in the international artistic community, but also added to the new identity of Los Angeles as a true global city. This strengthened the political positioning of the United States as the host nation of the Games dramatically. Many of the Soviet and international criticisms of the city were overshadowed by the artistic successes of the Festival.

⁵¹² Morgan Gendel, “LA Festival: A Gift from ’84 Olympics,” *Los Angeles Times*, 18 April 1985, E1.

Conclusion

The 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles were the last true gasp of the Cultural Cold War at the Olympics. The political statement made by the Soviets when they led the boycott was a final national-level attempt to influence the Cold War through the Olympic Games. In 1988, at the Calgary Winter Games and the Seoul Summer Games, the Soviet Union and East Germany once again won more medals than any other nations for what turned out to be the last time. Unbeknownst to the competitors, commentators, and spectators, the Calgary and Seoul Games were the final Cold War Olympics. At the Albertville Winter Games and the Barcelona Summer Games in 1992, Germany once again competed as a unified team, while the former Soviet Union competed as a collection of Olympic squads representing newly independent republics and a strange amalgam that the IOC dubbed the 'Unified Team of the Commonwealth of Independent States.'⁵¹³ Albertville and Barcelona signified the dawn of a new epoch in world and Olympic history.⁵¹⁴ Confused US television commentators attempted to identify all of the new nations that dotted the opening parades in 1992, a testimony to the uncertainties of new global realities. Historian Allen Guttman has asserted that with the end of the cold war, political controversy seems much less likely to destroy the Olympic movement.⁵¹⁵ This may not be the case, as a new series of challenges threaten the

⁵¹³ Torres and Dyreson, "The Cold War Games," 79.

⁵¹⁴ John Lucas, *The Future of the Olympic Games* (Human Kinetics: Champaign, IL, 1992), 200.

⁵¹⁵ Guttman, 171.

success of the Games. International protests against civil rights violations of host nations have been prevalent regarding the hosts in Beijing in 2008 and Sochi in 2014.⁵¹⁶

The Olympics that were planned with the most reliance on corporate sponsorship in recent years occurred in 1996 in Atlanta. Through the smoked glass of the limousines the Atlanta Olympic Committee unfailingly provided, IOC members could see a city short on Parthenon-like aesthetics but long on hustle (selling sponsorships being a key to the '96 Games), corporate hospitality (as America's No. 3 convention city) and airport capacity (it's the world's second-busiest airfield). There was also the reassuring sight of the headquarters tower of venerable Olympic sponsor Coca-Cola Co. And so, on that fateful September day in 1990 when the bid was awarded, the IOC's choice was Atlanta.⁵¹⁷ Back in the United States for the first time since 1984, the Summer Olympics in Atlanta were planned to be funded and run in the image of what had occurred twelve years before in Los Angeles. It is clear from its bid that Atlanta was seeking to build on Los Angeles' experience of producing what turned out to be the most profitable sporting event in history. The Atlanta Organizing Committee projected a profit of \$200 million, a little less than Los Angeles realized.⁵¹⁸ Atlanta had greater requirements than Los Angeles had for capital investments in facilities, including a new main stadium for the opening ceremonies and track and field. Investment costs were projected as high as \$500

⁵¹⁶ Thomas Omestad, "Protests on Olympics Intensify Over China's Human-Rights Record," *U.S. News and World Report*, April 7, 2008.

Sally Jenkins, "At Sochi Olympics, the podium can be a platform," *The Washington Post*, August 23, 2013.

⁵¹⁷ John Helyar, "The Olympics (A Special Report) --- the Big Hustle: If Today's Olympics are about Business, then Atlanta is the Perfect Place to Hold them," *Wall Street Journal*, Jul 19, 1996.

⁵¹⁸ Kenneth Reich, "Atlanta has a Better Start than L.A. Comparison: Fewer Initial Problems in Georgia, but 1984 Games Warmed Up with the Torch," *Los Angeles Times*, Sep 19, 1990.

million.⁵¹⁹ But television revenues for the Games exceeded Los Angeles' by a substantial margin, primarily because Atlanta is home to one of the most ambitious and fast-expanding cable companies, CNN. NBC paid \$456 million in rights fees to televise the 1996 Atlanta Summer Olympic Games.⁵²⁰

Additionally, sponsorship in Atlanta was modeled on that initiated in Los Angeles. For the Atlanta Games, there were three primary levels of sponsorship, with prices ranging from several million dollars to more than \$40 million. In comparison, sponsorships for the 1984 Los Angeles Games generally cost \$4 million to \$5 million. Ten companies, called international sponsors, have world-wide marketing rights. Another ten companies, so-called domestic partners, have marketing rights only in the US. A third tier of corporate sponsors -- more than 20 in all -- had more-limited, and less-costly, marketing rights. Some 75 additional suppliers and about 125 licensees had even more-restricted marketing rights.⁵²¹

Despite following the Los Angeles model, Atlanta did not meet projected profit margins. Bill Payne, head of the Atlanta Olympic Committee announced that the Games met their budget. "We will break even, and maybe have a few dollars left over, but not much," Payne said.⁵²² Atlanta's finest public park, a \$57 million gift to the city after the 1996 Centennial Olympic Games, left behind a legacy of public benefit that organizers

⁵¹⁹ Ibid.

⁵²⁰ Sage, 169.

⁵²¹ Emory Thomas, Jr, "The Olympics (A Special Report) --- the Bottom Line: Is an Olympic Sponsorship Worth it? As the Price Climbs, Companies are Desperate to Find Out," *Wall Street Journal*, Jul 19, 1996.

⁵²² "Olympic Games: Maligned Atlanta Meets Targets," *The Independent* (UK), November 15, 1996.

took great pride in. "Atlanta benefited more than any other city in the history of the Olympics," said A.D. Frazier, the chief operating officer for the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games. "Afterward, we had no debt and we left behind a legacy of privately funded structures the city would not have seen otherwise."⁵²³ Thirteen years later, the financial legacy of the Olympics in Atlanta is harder to detect. Like many major cities, Atlanta has fallen victim to the recession, forced to lay off teachers and city workers while slashing services. The City Council recently voted to raise property taxes to cover a \$56 million budget deficit.

More than twenty years ago, when Atlanta decided to bid for the games, it was a fairly well-known Southern city that dreamed of rising to international prominence. Winning the Olympic bid catapulted Atlanta into the big leagues, giving it name recognition around the globe – much as other host cities had sought to do. Atlanta's \$1.7 billion private-funded investment in hosting the games helped revitalize its sluggish downtown and poured \$5 billion into the metropolitan area's economy during the next decade, according to the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce.⁵²⁴ Critics, however, said the city got too caught up in the glamour of hosting the games and lost sight of long-term goals such as improving infrastructure and community development.

Olympic organizers pointed to the more than \$500 million in new venues awarded to the Atlanta area at the end of the games, at no cost to taxpayers. Atlanta was left with a \$209 million baseball facility, formerly the Olympic Stadium and now Turner Field,

⁵²³ Dahleen Glanton, "Olympics' Impact on Atlanta Still Subject to Debate," *Chicago Tribune*, September 21, 2009.

⁵²⁴ *Ibid.*

home of the Atlanta Braves. Georgia State University, primarily a commuter school, ended up with the Olympic Village housing complex -- an \$85 million, 2,000-bed dormitory. Georgia Tech got a \$24 million swimming and diving center and a \$12 million makeover of its coliseum. The city's historically black colleges -- Morehouse, Morris Brown, Spelman and Clark Atlanta -- received \$89 million in athletic facilities. Other nearby cities landed a white-water rowing center, a tennis stadium and an international horse park. But the crown jewel was Centennial Park. What had been a 21-acre blighted eyesore on the edge of downtown was transformed into a dazzling central gathering spot for entertainment and mingling during the Olympics. Ironically it was here that the greatest scar on the Olympics occurred -- a bombing that killed one woman and injured more than 100.⁵²⁵ Except for the flameless cauldron that towers over Turner Field, Centennial Park, with its international flags, memorial quilts and Greek columns, is the only obvious indication that Atlanta once hosted the Olympics. Richard Padgett, who headed the Downtown Development Authority, said it was a mistake for Atlanta to try to finance the Olympics only with private funds. As a result, he said, the city missed an opportunity to solicit state and federal funds to revitalize neighborhoods and upgrade infrastructure, such as roads and an aged sewer system that the city is now spending \$4 billion to replace.⁵²⁶

The reception by the press of the Atlanta games was relatively negative. The Games were host to a bombing that killed one person and injured 111 at Centennial

⁵²⁵ Ibid.

⁵²⁶ Ibid.

Olympic Park, but security was not the largest international criticism of the competition.⁵²⁷ Most of the critics of those Games mention the transportation glitches and the seedy commercialism before they ever got around to Eric Rudolph, the bomber who was not caught until 2003.⁵²⁸ Even domestically, journalists “regarded the Games as too commercialized, and described Atlanta as a cheap carnival with so many vendors selling their wares to the public.”⁵²⁹ The City of Atlanta and the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG) competed to sell rights to corporate sponsors, creating an overload of commercialism with vendor kiosks throughout what became known as the Olympic “merchandise mall” of Centennial Olympic Park.⁵³⁰ After the August 5th closing ceremonies, Juan Antonio Samaranch, president of the IOC, “declared the Atlanta Games great -- not the greatest -- but trounced the city’s zealous vending efforts and vowed that future Olympic committees would have control over their municipalities’ moneymaking schemes.”⁵³¹ The Atlanta 1996 organizing committee worked very hard to promote a distinctive image of the American South as part of its global image strategy: a combination of gracious hospitality, racial diversity and progress, musical arts, and high technology. International broadcasters, instead, focused primarily on the hit parade of American stereotypes. The ceremonies were labeled as “Hollywood orchestrated”; the Games were “plagued by excess commercialism”; the city was rife with racial tension;

⁵²⁷ John Cushman Jr., “BOMB AT THE OLYMPICS: THE RESPONSE; Clinton Says The Olympics Will Not Bow To Terrorism,” *New York Times*, July 28, 1996.

⁵²⁸ Mike Lopresti, “A decade later, Atlanta Olympic bombing overshadowed,” *USA Today*, July 23, 2006.

⁵²⁹ Harvey K. Newman, *Southern Hospitality: Tourism and the Growth of Atlanta* (University of Alabama Press: Tuscaloosa, 1999) 277.

⁵³⁰ Charles Rutheiser, *Imagineering Atlanta: The Politics of Place in the City of Dreams* (Verso: New York, 1996), 248.

⁵³¹ Staff, “Great, But Not Greatest: Samaranch: Commercial Efforts Must Be Limited,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, August 5, 1996.

and the primary industry was Coca Cola.⁵³² The world of journalists that descended on Atlanta for the Olympics found it particularly difficult to ignore the prevalent poverty of the citizenry because so much of it was concentrated in and around what is known as the Olympic Ring – a three-mile wide circular area in Atlanta's downtown core which contained nine major venues holding sixteen of the thirty sporting events. According to data collected in 1990, ninety-two percent of the 52,000 people living in the Olympic Ring neighborhoods were African-American, and most of them were poor. The median household income in these neighborhoods was just \$8,621, the median per-capita income was \$5,702, and labor participation rates were no higher than seventy percent and as low as thirty-five percent. As Reverend Austin Ford, who worked in the neighborhood surrounding the new Olympic stadium, put it, "The Olympic stadium is in a very depressed community, and I don't know that the journalists will need for that to be pointed out to them. They might say, 'Well, I can see!'"⁵³³ The international press was not impressed by the Atlanta Games, and the United States was heavily criticized for its overt commercialization.

More recently, China staged a grand Olympic Games in Beijing in 2008. After all of the concerns expressed beforehand concerning human rights, social costs, atmospheric pollution and other issues, the People's Republic of China (PRC) was able to achieve

⁵³² Nancy K. Rivenburgh, "The Olympic Games, media and the challenges of global image making: university lecture on the Olympics," *Series University Lectures* (Centre d'Estudis Olímpics: Barcelona, Spain, 2010), 2-3; Nancy K. Rivenburgh, "Journalists take aim at Atlanta: understanding the dynamics of international media coverage of the 1996 Olympic Games" (1997), A presentation given at l'Institut Nacional d'Educació Física de Catalunya (INEFC), Barcelona, Spain.

⁵³³ Preston Quesenberry, "The Disposable Olympics Meets the City of Hype," *Southern Changes* 18, 2. (1996): 3-4.

their objectives to impress upon the world the greatness of modern China as a participant in the global economy.⁵³⁴ Since the Games were largely not corporate, is not clear what kind of financial successes or failures the Beijing Games incurred, the long-term impact of their hosting has led to a more prevalent place in the global economy and political power structure. The cost of the Games was certainly exorbitant, and the majority of the constructed venues lie mostly abandoned.⁵³⁵ However, cost was no object in Beijing since the central government paid for everything. The benefit was international prestige and legitimacy, not the potential for profit at the Games themselves. The irony is that the long term profits from foreign business agreements were gained through a non-commercialized Olympics.

Twenty-five years after he was hired to direct the committee that put on the 1984 Los Angeles Games, Peter V. Ueberroth has been summoned again to rescue a struggling entity in the Olympic movement, the US Olympic Committee. At a time when the USOC was bedeviled with a bribery scandal involving the 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Games, drug problems and many organizational changes and rivalries, Ueberroth served on the panel suggesting USOC reforms, and then emerged as a highly popular choice for new USOC chairman, a volunteer position. As volunteer chairperson of the USOC, he brought with him not only vast Olympic experience but also the respect and hopes of Olympic organizers throughout the world, who realized how vital the USOC is to

⁵³⁴ Ian G. Cook and Steven Miles, "Beijing 2008," in Jon R. Gold and Margaret M. Gold, eds., *Olympic Cities: City Agendas, Planning, and the World's Games, 1896-2016* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 340.

⁵³⁵ Ben Blanchard and Haze Fan, "Olympics-Beijing grapples with Games legacy four years on," *Reuters*, April 9, 2012.

assuring good competitions in the future.⁵³⁶ The legacy of the successes of 1984 is still clearly revered by the international Olympic community, and Ueberroth is obviously still an important figure as a result.

In 2004, the prospect of landing a third Olympic Games was pursued seriously in Los Angeles civic circles. "The Olympics are coming again to Los Angeles," Mayor Richard Riordan declared during a news conference at Staples Center. "Los Angeles is truly the capital city of the world. We promise we will put on a spectacular 2012 Olympics."⁵³⁷ As the failed 2012 Los Angeles bid underscored, it was still too soon. Skeptics pointed out that 52 years elapsed between the 1932 and 1984 editions.⁵³⁸ Those were the only Summer Olympics held in the United States during that time. John Argue, who for years ran the Los Angeles Games committee, died in 2002; a plaque in his honor was unveiled at the Coliseum shortly thereafter. His death prompted a reexamination of the committee's mission and membership; a review of documents revealed that the committee's charter, which dates to 1939, included not only bidding for the Games but, in a wider sense, promoting the Olympic movement in Southern California.

The 2012 bid underscored the type of bid L.A. can be expected to keep putting on, a "privately funded, no-taxpayer-burden Olympics," the new Committee President Sanders said. It relied on existing facilities and called for minimal construction

⁵³⁶ Kenneth Reich, "1984 OLYMPICS / THE LEGACY; the Ring Leader; Ueberroth, the Man Given Credit for Not Only Energizing the 1984 L.A. Games but also Saving the Olympic Movement, Still Doesn't Shy Away from a Different Vision," *Los Angeles Times*, Jul 25, 2004.

⁵³⁷ Helene Elliott, "Let the Games Begin; Olympics: Los Angeles has Resources to be Host for Third Time, but Bid Hinges on Political Climate," *Los Angeles Times*, Dec 06, 2000

⁵³⁸ Alan Abrahamson. "1984 OLYMPICS / THE LEGACY; Stage Awaits Encore; After Success of 1984 Games in L.A., Many have Worked to Bring them Back," *Los Angeles Times*, 25 July, 2004.

expense.⁵³⁹ A host of venues, including Staples Center and the Arrowhead Pond, have been built since 1984, and would essentially be ready to go -- today -- for a third edition of the Games. Also new in the last few years is the sprawling Home Depot Center in Carson, which features a 27,000-seat soccer stadium, a 30-court tennis complex (which includes an 8,000-seat stadium, expandable to 13,000), and other facilities for softball, baseball, beach volleyball, basketball, track and field and other sports.⁵⁴⁰

In March of 2013, Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa once again notified the USOC of the city's interest in being a candidate for the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The USOC is weighing whether to bid for the 2024 Games after sitting out a bid process for the 2020 Games that took place against a bitter dispute between the USOC and the IOC over the distribution of US television and sponsorship revenues.⁵⁴¹ The IOC now demands a large percentage of television and sponsorship revenues since the successes and profits of the 1984 Games were revealed. The Games are now more dependent upon television and sponsorship revenues than ever before – but the legacy of 1984 is at the center of the massive dollar amounts involved in current Olympic Games.

The legacy of 1984 to Los Angeles is alive and well. "On behalf of the City of Los Angeles, its business, sport, and community leadership, as well as its citizens, it is with great enthusiasm that we communicate our deep interest in bidding for and hosting the 2024 Olympic Games," Villaraigosa wrote in a letter to USOC CEO Scott

⁵³⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁴¹ Reid, "Los Angeles Joins Race for 2024."

Blackmun.⁵⁴² Should the USOC decide to move forward, a privately funded Los Angeles bid would emphasize the city's Olympic history, having hosted the 1932 and the record-setting 1984 Games, the region's cultural diversity and an extensive network of existing facilities stretching from downtown Los Angeles into Orange County. "We have an international population that I think would embrace the Games," said David Simon, president of the Southern California Committee for the Olympic Games.⁵⁴³ Los Angeles made high-profile but ultimately unsuccessful runs at the 2012 and 2016 Games, failing to make the final round of US candidates in 2012 and losing to Chicago in the 2016 United States Olympic Committee process. However, Los Angeles seeks to host the Olympics in 2024 once again, and is campaigning for the USOC to choose Los Angeles and make a formal American bid. Once again, the Mayor of Los Angeles is heavily involved in pursuing the right to host the Games. Mayor Eric Garcetti traveled to USOC headquarters in Colorado Springs, Colorado in July 2014 and continues to represent the interests of Los Angeles in hosting the Games for a third time.⁵⁴⁴

Largely due to the economic windfall of the 1984 Olympics, the IOC's guidelines now call for around ninety percent of the host federation's domestic sponsorship to be channeled to the new organizing committee as part of the Joint Marketing Program Agreement. The USOC, not backed by any government funding, has balked at the terms

⁵⁴² Ibid.

⁵⁴³ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁴ David Wharton, "Los Angeles officials to continue talks for 2024 Summer Olympics," *Los Angeles Times*, July 25, 2014.

because it would have trouble making up for the millions it gives away.⁵⁴⁵ However, the failures of New York and Chicago in the last two US attempts to land the Olympics have not deterred Los Angeles' pursuit of the 2024 Games, which are to be decided upon by the IOC in 2017. Of the four cities in the running for the American bid (Los Angeles, San Francisco, Boston, and Washington D.C.), Los Angeles is the only one to have hosted previously – a serious advantage since it has been overwhelmingly successful from an economic perspective both in 1932 and in 1984.

⁵⁴⁵ Eddie Pells, "Marketing Agreement and Obstacle in US Bid for 2024," *Sacramento Bee*, August 5, 2014.

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