

Britain's Attitude Toward 1980 Moscow Summer Olympics

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KEYWORDS

ABSTRACT

Britain's,Attitude, Olympics, Moscow. Political, economic, and ideological considerations have been major forces behind the Olympics since their inception. Numerous instances exist, including Hitler's attempts to showcase the might and triumph of the Nazi regime in the 1936 Berlin Olympics, Japan's attempts in 1964 Tokyo Olympics to overcome the legacy of its World War II defeat, and the Republic of Korea's display of the success of its democratic experiment. In the year 1988 in terms of technology. Taking advantage of the US boycott of the 1980 Moscow Games, this study attempts to look into the strategies employed by Britain to stop its athletes from competing in those events. Confusion prevailed among the governments of Carter and Thatcher, as well as among the allied nations and the International Olympic Committee, due to the boycott's unclear objectives.

1. Introduction

Since the advent of the Olympics, political, economic and ideological factors have played a prominent role in driving them. Totalitarian and democratic regimes have been making great efforts to highlight the positive aspects of the existing system. Examples abound, such as Hitler's efforts to demonstrate the strength and success of the Nazi regime during the Berlin Games in 1936, attempts Japan get rid of the effects of its defeat in World War II during the Tokyo Games in 1964, and the Republic of Korea in demonstrating the success of its democratic experiment. and technological year 1988⁰. The boycott of the 1980 Summer Olympics (Moscow Olympics) was one of the crises of the Second Cold War (1979-1985), which emerged with the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan late 1979, and was held in Moscow for the first time in the Soviet Union from (19 July - 3 August 1980), the twenty-second session of the Olympics. This session was characterized by boycotts by some countries, led by the United States The importance of sport in the Soviet Union has undergone great changes, as sport has become not only an ideological means dominating certain problems within the country, and here I mean distracting the population from internal problems, but also became a weapon of struggle during the duration of the Second Cold War, but the problem was the question of including the Olympic Games in the equation.

In the Berlin Olympics in 1936, Hitler tried to use the Olympic Games to legitimize his government, as well as the 1964 Summer Olympics, officially known as the XVIII Olympic Games, were held in the Japanese capital, Tokyo, the latter wanted from those Olympics Proving its scientific and technological capabilities to the whole world, consolidating the bonds of peace and communicating with all countries of the world. This study tries to investigate the methods used by Britain to boycott and prevent its athletes from participating in the 1980 Moscow Games, taking advantage of the position of the United States in its boycott of those games, and since one of the main problems of the boycott initiative was that it lacked a clear goal, which is that it (the boycott) came in protest against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, so the question that arises here is whether the boycott forced the Soviets to withdraw their troops from Afghanistan? Or was it to prevent Moscow from achieving a propaganda victory by successfully hosting the Summer Games in the presence of the countries of the world? Or was it merely a deterrent to future Soviet expansion as part of a long-term strategy?

2. Britain's position on the Moscow Summer Olympics (1980)

Britain is one of only three countries (the United States, Britain and Italy) that have competed in every Summer Olympics since the revival of the modern Games in Athens in 1896, but this tradition of



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association with the Olympics ()is close to breaking in the case of the Moscow Games in 1980, as the developments of the Cold War and its political effects, especially in the seventies of the twentieth century, caused a rift in the history of the Olympic Games () After the twenty-second Summer Games were decided to be held in Moscow against the backdrop of the decision taken by the International Olympic Committee at its seventyfifth meeting in October 1974, the press immediately called the Games 80 Olympic⁰, an event that was preceded by a long history of relations between the Soviet Union and the International Olympic Committee.) (IOC)⁽⁾ and was the first time ()in the history of the modern Olympic Games that a communist State was chosen to host the Games. That decision was met with great satisfaction within the political and sporting circles of the Soviet Union, believing that the Soviet Union deserved the honour of hosting the Olympic Games, as it was not only the most successful and diverse nation in the history of the Olympic Games, but also did much at those Games to promote the prominent role of sport and the Olympic Games, as well as to use sport for peace and to show goodwill and understanding⁽⁾. Preparations were even begun among representatives of the International Olympic Committee shortly after the twentyfirst session held in Montreal, Canada, in 1976⁽⁾, and from the beginning of preparations for the Games and at the level of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, strict control was exercised over all nuances of preparation, including construction, propaganda, spending money in rubles and foreign exchange, international communications and contracts⁽⁾.

Moreover, speculation within the Soviet security institutions raised great concern about foreign visitors watching life in the Soviet Union or interacting with citizens who did not participate in the Games, and as a result, the Soviet intelligence service Komitet Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti (KGB) arrested political opponents who believed they would try to interact with Westerners during the upcoming Games at the time, the most famous of which was the trial of the Jewish scientist and activist. Natan Sharansky in 1978 (he was active in the process of immigration of Jews from the Soviet Union in the eighties of the twentieth century), as he was arrested on charges of spying for the United States, and it was believed that his arrest was part of the Soviet campaign to censor opponents in preparation for the Games, which prompted some members of the US Congress to approve sanctions against the Soviet Union, which was to call for the transfer or boycott of the Olympic Games to be held in Moscow. Similar to The Berlin Games in 1936⁰, concerns about the safety of Jewish athletes and spectators emerged as a result of the repressive policies adopted by the Soviets, as the debate over the Olympic boycott focused on arguments about human rights, especially after the arrest by the Soviet authorities of Andrei Sakharov (1921-1989), a Soviet nuclear physicist, for defending human rights and victims of politics and placing him under house arrest⁰.

The entry of Soviet troops into Afghanistan on the twenty-seventh of December 1979 gave an additional impetus, or perhaps just a new pretext, to activate the policy orientations of the Governments of the United States and their Western allies to protest the idea of holding the Olympic Games in Moscow⁽⁾, and indeed on the first of January 1980, at a meeting of NATO countries, the governments of the United States, Britain and Canada spoke in favor of boycotting the Moscow Olympics, and their proposals were sent to the International Olympic Committee after those countries had given an ultimatum. The final withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Afghanistan coincided with preparations for the Winter Olympics to be held in Lake Placid, New York, in February 1980, in which the Soviet Union refused to participate⁽⁾. It is worth mentioning that since the summer of 1978 the KGB has reported that there has been information about some radio stations in Europe publishing information for the transmission or cancellation of the Games to be held in Moscow on the pretext of Soviet violations of human rights⁽⁾, especially after David Owen, British Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1977-1979), stated that The Labour Party at the time, on the twenty-fourth of August 1978, in a television news interview on the British channel ITN at its headquarters in London: "The Russians should not promise that the 1980 Games will be held in Moscow."This confirms the minister's awareness of the magnitude of the preparations for the opposition, which preceded the date of the Summer Olympics in Moscow by a long time, as evidenced by the fact that the calls to cancel the holding of the Games in Moscow came before the entry of Soviet forces into Afghanistan, and this refutes the American and British claims that their



calls to transfer or cancel the Games in Moscow were under the pretext of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

The Carter administration launched a major campaign to persuade the allied countries to support the United States to refrain from attending the Moscow Games, stating during his public address on the fourth of January 1980: "International sports competition in the Soviet Union is itself an aspect of the policy of the Soviet government⁽⁾", noting that the Soviet government attached great importance to hosting the Moscow Olympics, expressing concern that a successful Olympics in Moscow would be a propaganda victory for the government. The Soviets, as he stressed the extent of the intertwining of sports and politics in the Soviet Union, because the latter wanted to invest the Games in Moscow to achieve political gains in an attempt to gain external support and support in his expansionist projects, as the US administration was of the opinion ()), and in the same regard indicated by the Central Intelligence Agency, symbolized by the abbreviation (CIA), pointed out that the Soviet regime wanted to make positive use of the media aspect of these games and exploit them against its opponents, and even a report stated: "The Soviet Union continues to view various dissident groups as a serious political problem". \(\)

Carter sent a letter on the fifth of January to the president of the United States Olympic Committee, known as the United States Olympic Committee (USOC), urging him to cooperate with other national committees in order to inform the IOC that if Soviet forces did not withdraw from Afghanistan within the next month, Moscow would be an unsuitable place for a festival aimed at celebrating peace, pointing to an attempt to move the Games to another location, such as Montreal in Canada or any Elsewhere, the next day, Carter sent letters to more than 100 heads of government asking them to support him in his proposal⁰. President Carter had a strong majority of Americans who supported the proposed boycott, as a poll conducted by the International Association Gallup was conducted after it asked the American people, do you think the United States should or should not participate in the Olympics this summer? 63% of the population agreed with President Carter's views while 29% disagreed, and 8% disagreed.⁰

A large percentage of Americans sympathized with Carter's proposal, while opinions came in a similar poll of the British public after 1,200 British adults were asked, "Would you agree or disagree if Britain withdraws from the Moscow Olympics this summer?" The results showed that (44%) refused to withdraw, while (41%) agreed to participate, while (11%) had no opinion on it, and (4%) were not aware of the supposed boycott⁽⁾. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was a strong supporter of the proposed boycott of the Moscow Games⁽⁾, especially since, in Thatcher's view, the sensitivity of that subject was subject to the need to reaffirm Britain's position on the world stage and to establish the Anglo-American "special relationship" in the face of Soviet expansion. The judiciary over the Games is the responsibility of sports federations and the government cannot impose its will on independent bodies, and since Hector Munro (1920-2014), whom Thatcher appointed as British Minister of Sport since 1979, does not personally believe in the need to use sport in political matters, Thatcher wanted there to be coordination between the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to determine Britain's position on the Moscow Games and leave the Minister of Sports on the sidelines, and as a result Thatcher met Lord Carrington, the British Foreign Secretary in The eighth of January in 1980, shifted the focus on pressuring other European countries to move the Games elsewhere⁽⁾, especially since the Foreign Office in particular, since Hitler blatantly used the Berlin Games in 1936 for Nazi propaganda purposes, was alert to the potential impact of sport on relations between nations, but Britain has a voluntary tradition of regulating and controlling sport, as governments have moved away from it.British succession in engaging in bodies such as the British Olympic Committee, which had the primary responsibility for organizing and raising travel and accommodation funds for amateurs () and unpaid athletes to compete wherever the Olympic Games took place.

Thatcher had hoped to issue a decision to cancel the Summer Games in Moscow by relying on the support of the majority in the House of Commons, especially since the International Olympic



Committee is a completely independent authority from governments, and as a result Thatcher informed the British House of Commons that the British Government wished to move the Games from Moscow, writing on the twenty-second of January 1980 to the British Olympic Committee urging them to refer the proposal to the International Olympic Committee. Her calls were rejected by the President and members of the British Olympic Committee, with Hector Munro even replying: "We believe that the venue and time of these Games must remain without any interference from Governments, as it is a matter for the IOC and the international federations of sport concerned". I have informed the Olympic Committee that with the invading Soviet forces in Afghanistan neither I nor the American people will support the sending of an Olympic team to Moscow."

Moreover, Thatcher asserted: "The most effective thing we can do is to prevent them from using the Moscow Olympics for propaganda purposes()", and she relied heavily on the attitude of the British public and exploited the anger at the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, especially the role played by the British press in describing the Soviets as the source of evil, so Thatcher believed that her people preferred a hardline stance towards Soviet orientations. Any threat to the holding of the Olympic Games, denouncing the British press, which he described as a "conservative pro-American press⁽⁾", referring to the media controlled by the Conservative Party, that it tried to "blow up the Moscow Games" several times, and that the Conservatives launched a large-scale attack on them and the entire Olympic Games, so the Soviet media was focused on showing the role played by the British government, which was determined in its position with the American administration to prevent the holding of the Games in Moscow⁰. The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination. Front-page reports show that the Soviet authorities were planning to take all schoolchildren out of Moscow for fear of coming into contact with Western tourists, and that all political opponents would be relocated from the capital, as reported by the British newspaper The Guardian on the fifteenth of September: "The Moscow Olympics are gaining momentum in the capital as the authorities prepare for the 1980 Games".0, so there was no doubt that there was a coordinated campaign organized mainly by the right and extremist religious groups, especially from some members of the House of Commons who found it easy propaganda in promoting the anti-Olympic cause.

For its part, the Anglican Church in Britain played an important role in calling for a boycott of the Moscow Olympics, with Trevor Beeson (1926-2023), a prominent cleric, describing the Soviet Union as "an inhumane totalitarian regime that denies some basic human rights, including freedom of expression", and Robert Ronsie, Archbishop of Canterbury, whose position was later endorsed by the Church's International Affairs Committee, rejected the boycott as a weak political tool, calling instead for greater emphasis on traditional and military deterrence methods on the question of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and as the leading Anchican figure in relations with the Orthodox Churches, including the Orthodox Church in the Soviet Union⁰. On a broader level, Lord Killanin, President of the International Olympic Committee (1972-1980), was determined that international athletes attend the Games in Moscow, noting that the IOC would not succumb to political and international pressure⁰, and Killanin remained firm in his position despite the visit of Lloyd Cutler, Carter's special envoy (1979-1981) to his home in Dublin, where he rejected Carter's demands to postpone or cancel the Moscow Games, even replying: "President Carter and members of his Cabinet do not seem to be aware of the Olympic Rules", asserting that the Carter Administration is uninformed and ignorant of Olympic affairs⁽⁾.

As the 1980 FebruaryWinter Olympics approached the start of Lake Placid in New York, and in the presence of Soviet competitors, the International Olympic Committee voted unanimously for the Summer Games to be held in Moscow, as planned^{0,} after all 73 of its members attending the Lake Placid meeting had voted unanimously. The end of the coordinated attempts by the Carter and Thatcher administrations to cancel the Moscow Olympics opened a new phase marked by the Carter and Thatcher administrations taking tougher action against their sports federations. ⁰ The



American administration sought to expand international opposition, as President Carter tried to persuade African countries to support the boycott through appeals for solidarity among non-aligned developing countries on the issue of Afghanistan, as President Carter chose an unconventional method, in his foreign policy he sent Mohamed Ali Clay, the heavyweight world champion, to African countries and toured between the third and eleventh of February 1980. John M. Ashbrook (1928-1982) criticized Carter's decision, saying: "I don't know why the president sent such a person to Africa to represent this country."

Thatcher was the only European leader to ally sincerely with Carter's policy on the question of boycotting the Moscow Games, but the British government had no legal authority over sports federations to prevent them from participating⁽⁾, so the House of Commons voted after 7 hours of debate overwhelmingly in favor of the boycott at its meeting on the eighteenth of March 1980 ⁽⁾The decision of the British Olympic Committee came to approve participation, as it called on some sports bodies to prepare to participate in the Moscow Olympics, after its meeting on the twenty-fifth of March of the year in question, when its members voted by a majority of (18) votes in favor of participation against one vote to refuse to participate with (4) abstentions from voting on the participation of British athletes in the Moscow Games ⁽⁾⁾Members of the opposition Labour Party welcomed the decision of the British Olympic Committee and the determination of British athletes to participate, noting the need to protect the future of international sports competition⁽⁾.

Thatcher's attempt to exploit the difficulty faced by most amateur athletes in securing funding proved counterproductive, particularly the significant role played by trade unions and the British public in responding to the Olympic call in raising funds to meet the costs of British sports teams participating in the Olympics, raising more than £800,000, a record that was made twice as much as contributions made on any other occasion⁽⁾. Although Thatcher was a staunch advocate of supporting the boycott, she was unable to convince the British Olympic Committee or the majority of Olympic competitors to follow suit. And what could have been done differently to increase their chances of success? The answer here is that Carter may have focused on postponing or moving the Games instead of boycotting, and a one-month deadline to withdraw Soviet troops from Afghanistan hindered that effort, because he obliged the United States to boycott and Carter could not reverse his decision after that, as it would reflect badly on his government's position internally and externally.

Since the deadline for officially accepting the International Olympic Committee's invitation to the Moscow Olympic Games was the twenty-fourth of May 1980, which left President Carter no time to persuade other countries to join his call for a boycott, the White House issued a statement on the twentieth of February stating that the American team had withdrawn from participating in the Moscow Olympics⁰, after President Carter threatened to revoke the passport of any American athlete attempting to travel to the Soviet Union and participate in the Moscow Games⁰. Since 1980, the Carter administration has suspended all trade deals with the Soviet Union, which has led to difficulties March Moscow Olympic organizing committee, with tickets to the Games being barred by Carter's order from being sold within the United States as the latter pressured other pro-Soviet countries to join the boycott campaign⁰.

It seems that the hardline stance taken by the US administration towards a sporting event was based on its view that holding the Olympic Games in the Soviet Union may open a new arena for the latter through which he can fight the Cold War more strongly, especially since the United States viewed the Olympic Games in Moscow as a battlefield for the Cold War, and thus it became necessary not to become a means for the Soviet Union to develop international goodwill towards the Soviet Union through its sporting achievements. The Carter administration viewed the Moscow Olympics as a worthy event to be boycotted to further U.S. foreign policy goals. The twenty-second Summer Olympics in Moscow was officially opened on the nineteenth of July 1980, boycotting (65) countries after refusing to send their players compared to the participation of (81) countries, Moscow Radio described that event, which was attended by more than (100,000) people at the opening ceremony at Lenin Stadium as a major and important event in the history of the Soviet Union (1), as the Soviet



media pointed out "that the United States and certain Western countries boycotted the Games because the Soviet Union was faithful to its duty of solidarity with the people of Afghanistan who had requested military support from the Soviet Union", The event also witnessed the arrival of the Afghan sports delegation to the opening ceremony, Radio Moscow reported that the President of the Afghan Olympic Committee spoke in the microphone expressing his happiness at the opening of the Games, and that Western attempts to undermine the Games, he said, ended in failure. "I welcome all the athletes and officials here today, especially those who have shown their complete independence in travel and competition, as well as the many pressures placed on them... I must repeat that these Games belong to the IOC and are reserved only for the ability of the host city to organize them, I ask all of you to compete in a true spirit of mutual understanding, and above all differences in politics, religion or ethnicity in the wonderful facilities here." with his positive positions in favor of the Soviet Union.

The approval of the Olympic committees in many countries of Europe after the boycott and rejection of their governments, especially in France, Italy, the Netherlands and Greece, represented a direct challenge to the wishes of their governments Just like the situation in Britain, as well as the vote of their committees to play, some sports federations, individually, including yachting in Britain and Australia, and equestrian in France decided to boycott the Games, depriving these events of a great deal of their competitive position⁰, especially after the Board of Directors of Yachts announced that the British team would not Attend "unless there is a radical change in circumstances".⁰ The participation of sports delegations in the Moscow Games despite the opposition of their governments, which prevented them from playing the national anthem and raising their countries' flags at the Games, led to the playing of the IOC anthem instead of the anthems of their countries, however, there were incidents that violated that ban, for example, during the award of the British runner Steve Ovett (1955-), the gold medal after his compatriot Sebastian Coe (1956-) in the 800 m, to the playing of his country's national anthem (Let him save Allah Queen)(God Save the Queen^{0).}

The Games were attended by 5,928 competitors from 81 countries, which constituted the smallest arena since the Tokyo Games in 1964, so many Soviet newspapers criticized the role played by the United States and their allies in boycotting them and the non-participation of their countries' teams in that international forum, and at the same time praised the preparations, service and organizational aspect shown by the Soviet side On the other hand, the results of the Olympics resulted in the control of the Soviet team consisting of (506) athletes on a number of medals, as it won (197) medals, including (80) gold medals, (70) silver, (47) bronze, and the British team won many medals between gold, silver and bronze in various sports Oh as it won (5) gold medals, (7) silver and (9) bronze, to end in ninth place in the official medal table. TheOh Optional Protocol to the Convention on the EliminationThe XXII Summer Olympics in Moscow concluded on the third of August 1980, and after the return of the participating British teams, the Prime Minister rejected the proposal in the House of Commons to arrange a reception on Downing Street for the British team, asserting that "it may seem unlikely Logically", the Government should support official recognition of any kind of successes at the Games when, for very persuasive reasons of serious international issues, they did everything possible.

It is clear from the foregoing that the crisis over the Moscow Games had profound and long-lasting repercussions on global diplomacy, as it helped to provoke renewed hostilities of the Cold War and the Olympic movement, as the threat of boycott continued to cast a shadow over the Olympics for years to come, especially when the Soviet Union boycotted the Olympic Games held in Los Angeles in 1984. Externally, American and British pressure was intended to use the boycott of the Olympic Games to cause divisions between the Soviet people and their leadership, especially as it came at a critical stage in the conflict between the two poles, which is the new Cold War stage, and thus came the argument that was the turning point in the preparations for the Olympics-80, which was used by Carter and his ally Thatcher in the winter of (1979-1980). When the international situation changed dramatically after the entry of Soviet forces into Afghanistan, so Anglo-American cooperation based



on their common interests in convincing other countries to boycott the role of the Games was an important axis in the foreign policy of the two countries, through which they sought not to exploit the Soviet regime of the Games to improve its image internationally on the one hand, and the hostile policy shown by Thatcher towards the Soviet regime and its attempt to stir up national feelings within her country on the other hand, so after the end of the Olympic Games Neither the enormous success sought by the Kremlin, nor the loss that the boycotting countries hoped to join the Soviet Union, was written, especially since one of the main problems of the boycott initiative was that it lacked a clear goal, which is that it forced the Soviets to withdraw their forces from Afghanistan? Or prevent Moscow from achieving a propaganda victory by successfully hosting the Summer Games in the presence of the countries of the world? Or was it merely a deterrent to future Soviet expansion as part of a long-term strategy? The absence of a clear and consistent goal for the boycott led to confusion in the Carter and Thatcher governments on the one hand, and the allied countries and the International Olympic Committee on the other, and such differences and apparent contradictions in the resolution had a detrimental effect on the ability of that alliance (Carter-Thatcher) to implement their goal of boycotting the Moscow Olympics, and it is no secret that the boycott called for by Carter failed either to move the Games from Moscow or even force the Soviet Union to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan.

3. Conclusion

The 1980 Moscow Olympic Games once again confirmed the extent to which sport and politics were intertwined in the Soviet Union, as the latter wanted to invest the Moscow Games for political gains in an attempt to gain external support and support for him in his expansionist projects, as the American administration saw, but from Margaret Thatcher's point of view, she tried to exploit the boycott of the United States of the need to reassert Britain's position on the world stage and consolidate the Anglo-American "special relationship" in the face of expansion. Soviet The absence of a clear goal for the boycott led to confusion in the governments of Carter and Thatcher on the one hand, and the allied countries and the International Olympic Committee on the other, and it is no secret that the boycott called for by Carter failed to move the Games from Moscow or even force the Soviet Union to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan, and such differences and contradictions in the resolution had a detrimental impact on the ability of that alliance (Carter-Thatcher) to implement their goal of boycotting the Olympic Games in Moscow, especially since British officials were familiar with international sports methods, asserting that jurisdiction over the Games rested with sports federations and the government could not impose its will on independent bodies.

Appendix No. (1)
States that participated in the 1980 Moscow Olympics⁽⁾.

The participating country and the number of its players	The participating country and the number of its players	The participating country and the number of its players
New Zealand (5)	Greece (42)	Afghanistan (11)
Nicaragua (5)	Guatemala (10)	Algeria (59)
Nigeria (44)	Guinea (9)	Andorra (2)
Peru (30)	Guyana (8)	Angola (13)
Poland (320)	Hungary (279)	Australia (126)
Portugal (11)	Iceland (9)	Austria (89)
Puerto Rico (3)	India (74)	Belgium (61)
Romania (243)	Iraq (44)	Boys (17)



and (48) Botswana (7)
ly (163) Brazil (109)
aica (18) Bulgaria (295)
rdan (4) Burma (2)
wait (58) Cameroon (26)
os (19) Colombia (23)
anon (17) Congo (23)
otho (5) Costa Rica (30)
oya (32) Cuba (216)
mbourg (3) Cyprus (14)
gascar (11) Czechoslovakia (216)
Iali (7) Denmark (63)
alta (8) Dominican Republic (6)
East Germany (362)
golia (43) Ecuador (11)
nbique (14) Ethiopia (41)
pal (11) Finland (124)
rlands (86) France (125)
K (231)

^{*}The number in parentheses indicates the number of participating players from each country.

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