

EVOLUTIONS OF THE OLYMPIC MOVEMENT UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF THE CHANGES ON THE WORLD POLITICAL MAP IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD

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Abstract: The use of sports and politics has had both positive and negative implications over history. Sports competitions or activities have had the intention to bring about change in certain cases. Nationalistic fervor is sometimes linked to victories or losses to some sport on sports fields. Also, new independent countries need to be recognized on international arena, so participating at the Olympic Games, they become more visible and marginalization is broken. National feelings are boosted by some of the finest sports performances. The interwar period took politics to the sporting arena; when governments decided to control the sport and politics became more authoritative and states went on to find new ways to dominate the thinking process and imagination of their citizens. Fascist regimes developed techniques that allowed them to use achievements made in sporting arena to inspire people within their geographical boundaries and impress those beyond these boundaries. A fanatic love with sports was developed and through it, symbols of nationalist socialism were entrenched.

Key words: Olympic Games, nationalism, politics, interwar

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INTRODUCTION

During its evolution, the sport went through a series of transformations due to which it became, besides its traditional valences, more of a social, political and economical phenomenon. Given this context, the study and development of sports required interdisciplinary research, carried out by specialists from various scientific domains that worked in interdisciplinary

teams. This way of thinking and acting stimulated the emergence of integrative, transdisciplinary ideas, particularly useful for better understanding and explaining some aspects of the evolution over time of the sport phenomenon.

Even if some have looked for the accreditation of the thesis that the Olympic movement and the politics are two aspects of modern society who have nothing in common with one another, life has shown that as the servants of sport cannot totally escape to politics, so it is not possible for politicians to be kept away from sports, especially in situations where sport has a major impact as it is publicized worldwide (Samaranch, 1999). At the level of international politics it is impossible to separate sports from political issues, particularly in the situations related to the recognition of states (Hill, 1996). We consider that the Olympic movement under the influence of interwar political changes is an issue that can be addressed from that perspective.

1918 - 1924

After the cessation of hostilities of the First World War, in the context of major political tensions between states, the Olympic principles were expressed with great difficulty, the renewal of the great Olympic family seemed unmanageable. Thus, at the 1920 Antwerp Olympics, despite the efforts of the members of the International Olympic Committee from the United States, Italy and the Scandinavian countries, the political circumstances have made the athletes from the countries of the Central Powers - Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Turkey and Hungary - defeated in World War I, not to be invited to participate (Keresztényi, 1980). Moreover, at the 1924 Paris Olympics, the invitation for participation of the German Olympic Committee was not sent, the organizers arguing that the French authorities cannot guarantee the security of the members of the German delegation (Kun, 1984).

The end of the First World War and the signing by the belligerents of the Peace Treaty of Versailles shortly resulted in the breakup of empires, the emergence of several independent states and the change of the political regime in some countries (Giurcăneanu, 1983). This process took place especially in Europe, but was also present in other geographical areas.

Before World War, Tsarist Russia had an active presence in the Olympic movement, being among the twelve countries represented in the Congress from 16 to 24 June 1894, where General Butovski was one of the great personalities who founded the International Olympic Committee. Russian athletes participated in the 1900 Paris Olympic Games, 1908 London and 1912 Stockholm, winning seven medals (***) (Chronicle of the Olympics, 1998). With the establishment of the Bolshevik authorities in November 1917, Russia / The Soviet Union, due to international pressure led by prince Urasov, one of the leaders of the Russian emigration, and to the rigid attitude showed by the authorities from Moscow, remained outside the Olympic movement for more than three decades, a situation that obviously had repercussions on the soviet but also international sport.

Since the first session after the war, held on the 5th, 6th and 7th April of 1919 in Lausanne, convinced of the value and sustainability of the ideals that underpin the Olympic Movement, the members of the International Olympic Committee have reinforced the desire to act in order to achieve its universality by accepting those who have the vocation to be members of the organization and express the desire to achieve common goals through joint efforts.

Given the momentum of sports, the growth of the impact and influence that the Olympics and the Olympic movement began to exert internationally, many leaders of sports organizations and policy makers became aware of the role that sport in general and the Olympic movement in particular can play in promoting their country, in the formation and strengthening of national consciousness in the countries that recently gained independence, in sustaining the ties between countries and individuals. Thus, they have supported the accession of the sports structures from their countries to international federations and of the national Olympic committees to the Olympic movement. In many cases, the decision makers at national level were as interested in this as in their country's membership in the League of Nations and other international political and professional organizations at the time (Silance, 1997).

Table 1. National Olympic Committees established between 1918-1940
(Source: 5 List of NOCs by recognition date; Matei et al, 1995)

No.	Country/Territory	Political status at NOC formation	Independence Day	NOC formation	IOC recognition
1	Poland	Independent country	11.11.1918	1918	1919
2	Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes*	Independent country	11.12.1918	1919	1920
3	Iceland	Sovereign country, personal union with Denmark	17.06.1944	1921	1935
4	Ireland	Independent country	21.01.1919	1922	1922
5	Latvia	Independent country	18.11.1918	1922/1991	1991
6	Argentina	Independent country	09.07.1816	1923	1923
7	Mexico	Independent country	24.02.1821	1923	1923
8	Uruguay	Independent country	25.08.1925	1923	1923
9	Bulgaria	Independent country	05.10.1908	1923	1924
10	Estonia	Independent country	24.02.1918	1923/1991	1991
11	Lithuania	Independent country	16.02.1918	1924/1991	1991
12	Peru	Independent country	28.07.1921	1924	1936
13	Cuba	USA Protectorate	1902	1926	1954
14	India	British Colony	15.08.1947	1927	1927
15	Malta	British Colony	23.12.1974	1928	1936
16	Dutch Antilles	Dutch Colony	Autonomy	1931	1931
17	Bolivia	Independent country	06.08.1925	1932	1936
18	Palestine (Israel)	British Mandate	14.05.1948	1933	1952
19	Chile	Independent country	12.02.1812	1934	1934
20	Panama	Independent country	03.11.1903	1934	1947
21	Southern Rhodesia**	British Colony	18.04.1980	1934	1959/1980
22	Afganistan	Independent country	18.02.1919	1935	1936
23	Bermuda	British Colony	Autonomy	1935	1936
24	Guyana	Independent country	26.05.1966	1935	1948
25	Lichtenstein	Independent country	1866	1935	1935
26	Venezuela	Independent country	05.07.1811	1935	1935
27	Colombia	Independent country	20.07.1810	1936	1939
28	Jamaica	British Colony	06.08.1962	1936	1936
29	Ceylon***	British Colony	04.02.1948	1937	1937

* Yugoslavia from 1929

** Zimbabwe from 1980

*** Sri Lanka from 1972

By studying historical (Ravasz, 2000), geographical political works (Lacoste, 1995) as well as works depicting the Olympic movement between 1918-1924 (Bucur-Ionescu et al., 2002), we find, in many cases, a direct relationship

between the alteration of the political map of the world and the accession of new members to the International Olympic Committee (Stauffer, 1999). Out of the twelve new members of the Olympic movement, six were national Olympic Committees formed in countries that have won their state independence immediately after World War I - Poland, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, Ireland, Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania. Iceland also joined, declaring its state independence in 1918, but as a personal union with Denmark. The other five new members were National Olympic Committees of the countries that have achieved independence before 1918 - Argentina, Mexico, Uruguay, Peru and Bulgaria (4. National Olympic Committee).

An interesting aspect of this period was represented by the national Olympic committees which, before the First World War, joined the Olympic movement but were protectorates, Monaco, autonomous regions within empires, Finland, hereditary areas Bohemia, personal unions, Norway and after 1918 declared independence and became independent states (4. National Olympic Committee).

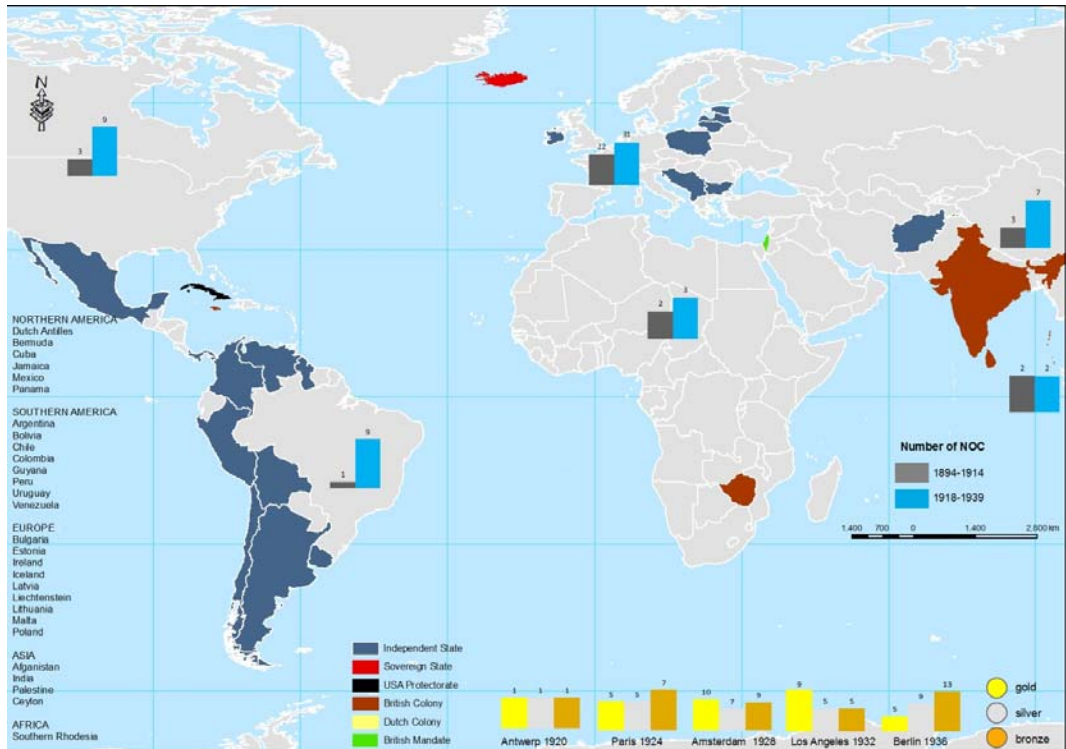


Figure 1. Olympic Movement between between 1918-1940. New Territories and their impact on Olympic Games

1925 - 1939

In this period, the Olympic movement, true to the principles contained in the chart, not allowing any interference, any commercial, political or other pressures, and fighting against all forms of social, religious, gender or race discrimination tried to adopt equidistant positions, keeping away from partisanship and government interests (Olympic Charter, 2014).

Between 1925 and 1939, the International Olympic Committee, in its efforts to meet the principle of universality, encouraged the constitution, accession and recognition of new National Olympic Committees: Bolivia, Cuba, Chile, Panama, Afghanistan, Liechtenstein, Venezuela and Colombia.

The International Olympic Committee has proved to be one of the most democratic international organizations at the time. Among its members, along with national Olympic committees that operated in independent countries, were accepted some who were active in the territories or regions that were not sovereign. As an expression meant to change the optics of colonial powers over the relationship with the territories under their control, especially the UK and the Netherlands. Thus, during this period the Olympic family included national Olympic committees from territories under colonial rule: Netherlands Antilles, Bermuda, British Guyana, India, Palestine, Jamaica, Malta, Ceylon and Southern Rhodesia (5. List of NOCs by recognition date).

Although efforts have been made in order to put into practice the principles of the President of the United States, Thomas Woodrow Wilson, which proclaimed the right of nations to self-determination, no noticeable changes took place in the territories under colonial dominion. Exceptions were the territories that were part of the Ottoman Empire and the former German colonies. On most of them, at the proposal of the Prime Minister of South Africa, Christiaan Smuts, was established a system of international mandates. This institution has brought changes in the structure of colonial empires (Bolintineanu and Malița, 1970) and relations of these territories with the Olympic movement (4. National Olympic Committee).

Following the Imperial Conference from London in 1923, which stated the right of dominions to conclude agreements and separate treaties with other countries on an equal footing, to join international organizations, following the adoption of the Balfour Declaration in 1926 as a result of the entry into force of the Statute of Westminster 1931, the United Kingdom and Britain's dominions agreed that "are equal in status, not subordinated in any way to one another in any aspect of their domestic or foreign policy, although joined by their common loyalty towards the Crown, and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations (6. Commonwealth of Nations, 7. Member states of the Commonwealth of Nations). Following these changes, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, Ireland and Newfoundland have a more active presence in the Olympic movement, reflected by the participation in the Olympic Games.

The distribution of the new members by geographic area was 34.48% in Europe, 27.58% in South America, 20.68% in North America, 13.79% in Asia and 3.44% in Africa. An analysis of the status of the countries or territories in which the new national Olympic committees activated showed that 41.39% were operating in countries that have gained independence sooner, 24.13% in newly independent states emerged after the First World War world 34.48% in colonies or autonomous territories under warrant (4. National Olympic Committee).

Following the accession of new national committees, there have been a number of changes in their geographical distribution, thus achieving a better distribution from this point of this view. The percentage of Europe dropped from 66.66% to 50.81%. The National Olympic Committees in North America increased from 9.09% to 14.75%. The highest increase occurred at the level of South America, whose National Olympic Committees have come to represent

14.75% versus 3.03% in the period before 1914. The National Olympic Committees of Asia accounted for 11.47% of all the members of the Olympic movement in the interwar period. For Oceania there were changes in terms of the number of national Olympic committees that adhered to the Olympic family.

Table 2. Comparison of the distribution of National Olympic Committees on continents, 1894-1914 and 1918-1939

Period	Europe		Northern America		Sothern America		Asia		Africa		Oceania	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1894-1914	22	66,66	3	9,09	1	3,03	3	9,09	2	6,06	2	6,06
1918-1939	31	50,81	9	14,75	9	14,75	7	11,47	3	4,91	2	3,27

Table 3. The ratio of the new National Olympic Committees that adhered to the Olympics in the interwar period

Olympic Games Edition	1920	1924	1928	1932	1936
% new NOC attendance	17,24	29,54	34,78	27,02	34,69
% medals won my new NOC	0,67	4,49	7,95	5,49	6,95

If the number of new members in terms of percentage has registered a significant growth, 41,54%, the contribution of these national committees to achieving performances translated into medals has been lower. The athletes in the new twenty-nine national committees have managed to win only 92 medals, 4.88% of the one thousand eight hundred eighty-two attributed to the five editions of the Olympic Games held in the interwar period (Bucur et al, 2002).

Table 4. Medals won by the new National Olympic Committees at the Olympics between 1920-1936

(Source: Bucur et al, 2002)

Medals	Olympic Games									
	Antwerp, 1920		Paris, 1924		Amsterdam, 1928		Los Angeles, 1932		Berlin, 1936	
	Nr.	%	Nr.	%	Nr.	%	Nr.	%	Nr.	%
Gold	1	0,63	5	3,96	10	9,09	9	7,75	5	3,84
Silver	1	0,67	5	3,96	7	6,48	5	4,31	9	7,03
Bronze	1	0,72	7	5,55	9	8,25	5	4,38	13	10,00
Total	3	0,67	17	4,49	26	7,95	19	5,49	27	6,95

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

Under the influence of the changes that have occurred internationally, at the session of the International Olympic Committee in Rome, 7 to 12 April 1923, at the initiative of Pierre de Coubertin, the agenda also focused on the possibility of organizing under the auspices of Olympic large-scale regional competitions, nominated All-Africa Games (1. All-Africa Games). A separate decision was taken, establishing that the organization of the first edition of this competition in 1925 in Algiers, and the next, in 1927, in Alexandria. Their organization was attributed to the French, Italian and Spanish colonial authorities (2. Afrikai Játékok). The Moroccan Crisis, the revolt led by Abd el-Kimarif, and a series of disputes between the colonial powers led to their postponement and subsequently to their cancelation (Mayer, 1960).

In the 1930s, the totalitarian regims, the fascist Germany in particular, have used the Olympic movement for political purposes as a means of propaganda to promote their ideology. It was common practice to use the results of competitors

in the respective countries at the Olympic Games and other international competitions for political purposes (Riall, 2004). These practices were more harmful because despite the warnings that Germany could use the Olympic movement, the events of the Olympic Games for propaganda and legitimization of ideas about the superiority of the Aryan race, the Olympic movement has failed to respond promptly and appropriately (Wellwchinsky, 1996).

The annexation of certain territories, the deterioration of relations between some countries, the radicalization of certain representatives of the Olympic Movement in their respective countries, the military interventions have led to the outbreak of World War II and, as a consequence, to the reprogramming of the Olympic Games from 1940 and finally, to their cancelation because of the armed conflicts (Wellwchinsky, 1996).

CONCLUSION

The Proclamation of the nation's right to self-determination and the political actions for providing mutual guarantees of political and territorial independence for the states has helped the Olympic movement in its efforts to achieve one of its principles, the universality.

The changes appeared in the relations between the countries of the world, the declaration of independence of seven states, the degree of autonomy reached by ten territories and the changes that appeared in the relationship between the colonial powers and the dominions within the British Empire contributed to the facilitation of the accession and participation of twenty-nine new members to the Olympic movement.

Most of the new members, 41.39% came from countries that were independent before 1914.

Seven countries, 24.18%, National Olympic Committees who joined the Olympic movement in this period were established in countries emerging on the world map after the First World War.

The openness of the Olympic movement manifested itself by admitting into its ranks six National Olympic Committees - Malta, Ceylon, Guyana, India, Jamaica and Southern Rhodesia - that operated in colonies and four National Olympic Committees - Iceland, Netherlands Antilles, Bermuda and Israel - of autonomous regions or under warrant.

From a quantitative point of view the increase in the number of the new members was significant, 41.54%, but their contribution to winning medals at the five editions of the Olympic Games in the period 1920-1936 was only of 4.88% of all medals awarded.

The reminiscences of the war that just ended, the nature of the relations between the states have led to a series of situations that contravened the Olympic principles. Athletes belonging to National Olympic committees from Germany, Austria, Hungary, Turkey and Bulgaria were not invited to participate in the 1920 Antwerp Olympics. At the Olympic Games in Paris, 1924 the German athletes could not participate because the organizers augmented that they cannot ensure their security.

The efforts made by certain powers to isolate Soviet Russia and the rigid position of the authorities of this country in relation to the International Olympic Committee made the interwar Soviet Union to be outside the Olympic movement.

The use, especially in Germany, of Olympic tournaments and sport results as a means of ideological propaganda, as a way to promote political ideas, have

generated a mingled period, especially in regards to the right to organize and conduct the Berlin 1936 Olympics.

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