

The Olimpiada Popular: Barcelona 1936

Sport and Politics in an age of War, Dictatorship and Revolution

*In an attempt to undermine the IOC Games of 1936, organisations linked to the international worker sport movement responded to an invitation from the Comité Organizador de la Olimpiada Popular (COOP) to take part in an alternative Olympics, the Olimpiada Popular, in Barcelona in July 1936. It is estimated that some 10,000 athletes and 25,000 visitors were in Barcelona to celebrate the Olimpiada. Following the Fascist rising, which began in Spanish Morocco on 17, and reached mainland Spain the following day, the Games had to be abandoned, despite attempts by the organisers to go ahead with a truncated programme. **This article will assess the importance of the Olimpiada Popular in the context of the worker sport movement during the inter-war years and its significance with regard to international campaign to boycott the Berlin Olympics.***



Line drawing printed during July 1936 in El Mundo Deportivo

*'If the armed front uses force, the cultural front has to open minds. I think the principal lesson of this cultural front is to unify people in every part of the world, people that have suffered a great deal, and continue to, from mendacious precepts of humanity.'*¹

Introduction

During the inter-war years there was a vibrant international worker sport movement; a movement that organised several prestigious worker sports events including three Worker Olympiads and two international *Spartakiads*. The first two Olympiads and the *Spartakiads* reflected the split that had developed in the worker sport movement, between the Socialist Worker Sports International (SWSI) and the Red Sport International (RSI), in the immediate post-WW1 period. The former was organised under the banner of the Second (Socialist) International, the latter was associated with the Comintern, or the Third (Communist) International. However, following the rise of Hitler to power in 1933, the two movements agreed to bury their

differences and organise a joint Worker Olympiad in Antwerp in 1937. The agreement to hold a joint Olympiad reflected a wider change of political direction by the Soviet Union. Between 1929-1933 the Comintern, under the leadership of Stalin, regarded workers associated with social democratic parties as social fascists.² This disastrous policy split the labour movement internationally, essentially enabling Hitler to come to power without the expected resistance of the labour movement within Germany. This resulted in an *volte-face* in policy by the Comintern: now not only were the social democratic parties allies in the struggle against fascism but they should, along with Communist Parties, form alliances with so-called progressive capitalist parties. This policy resulted in coalition governments in France and Spain, governments known as Popular Fronts. According to Gounot, the idea of establishing popular fronts extended into sport as early as 1934 when the RSI developed the idea of overcoming the divide within the worker sport organisations. The main outcome of this was that the Communist and Social Democratic organisations agreed to organise the aforementioned Workers' Olympiad in Antwerp in 1937.³ This change in tack was also reflected in the People's Olympiad planned for Barcelona in July 1936. The Games were not to be a Workers' Olympiad but a sporting event that would include athletes from outside the international labour movement. Hence they were to be held under the banner of the People's Olympiad or the *Olimpiada Popular*. This article will assess the importance of the *Olimpiada Popular* in the context of the worker sport movement during the inter-war years and its significance with regard to the international campaign to boycott the Berlin Olympics. The research for the article is based on Trades Union Congress (TUC) files, located at the University of Warwick, relating to the People's Olympiad and from articles in newspapers such as *El Mundo Deportivo*, *The Manchester Guardian* and the *New York Times*. To the best of my knowledge this is the first time that an academic study of the *Olimpiada Popular* using the TUC files has been undertaken. These files are of significance as they show that the TUC was prepared not only to support the Barcelona Games but also to express its opposition to fascism, to challenge a movement that was increasingly using sport to reinforce its racial ideology.⁴ Academic studies of the *Olimpiada* in Spanish and Catalan have also been consulted. Given the lack of academic studies in English, this study fills a gap in the historiography of the worker sport movement.

While it is important to stress that the worker sport movement of the inter-war years enabled millions of workers to take part in international sporting competition at a high level, it was essentially a political movement inculcated with the idea that socialism was a viable alternative to capitalism. Although the movement has been the subject of substantial research by a number of academics, most notably by Riordan and Krüger, who were pioneers in the study of the Worker Olympiads and the *Spartakiads*, it has in recent years been neglected.⁵ Moreover, in comparison to the extensive academic research undertaken into the Olympic Games academic studies of the worker sport

movement, despite its significance, have been somewhat limited. This article seeks to begin a process that corrects this research imbalance. From a British perspective, Jones' work has provided a lot of detail with regard to British Workers' Sports Federation, with a focus on the relative weakness of the worker sport movement within Britain in comparison with its counterparts in Europe.⁶ Wheeler provides a useful overview of worker sport showing how it evolved from its roots in the workplace to becoming an expression of the working-class desire to 'substitute socialist for capitalist values' and in the process develop a 'uniquely working-class culture.'⁷ Steinberg has analysed the development of the RSI and the splits within the international worker sport movement between social democracy and communism. He makes the point that both organisations had similar aims with regard to sport being able to 'inoculate the workers against bourgeois culture, at the same time educating them in a socialist spirit', although the SWSI could not concur with the aim of sport being a bridge to the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism.⁸ This was the core reason why the leadership of the SWSI barred members of the RSI from the Worker Olympics of 1925 and 1931. His work, however, only covers the period between 1920-1928 and thereby does not discuss that vicissitudes of Stalin's attitude towards the international labour movement.⁹ Unlike Steinberg, Riordan does consider the impact of the 'Third Period', when workers with social democratic allegiances were regarded as social fascists, he also discusses the period between 1934-35 when Comintern policy somersaulted to one where they not only embraced social democratic workers, and by inference their worker sport organisations, but also bourgeois democrats. This change in policy had a profound effect upon the worker sport movement and was a major reason behind the potential success of the *Olimpiada*.¹⁰

The work of these historians, however, pays only cursory attention to the *Olimpiada Popular*, which had the potential to be the most significant of all the organised Olympiads outside the jurisdiction of International Olympic Committee (IOC). The *Olimpiada* has been the focus of several studies by Spanish, French and Catalan historians, including works by André Gounot, Gabriel Colomé, Martínez Fiol and Castelló Mateo.¹¹ Their research will be considered throughout the article, especially where it helps to reinforce the significance of the TUC archive.

The *Olimpiada* emerged out of the campaign to boycott the Berlin Olympics, a movement that has received attention from several sport historians, including Guttmann and Kessler.¹² To date, however, the TUC files have rarely been consulted with regard to the issue and have, moreover, been totally disregarded for research in connection with the *Olimpiada*. This article, therefore, offers a unique insight into how the idea of an alternative Olympics developed in Barcelona in the spring of 1936, how it gained significant financial support from three elected governments and outlines the reasons why the event did not actually take place. The documents contained within

the TUC archive reveal how Britain became a staging post for the USA and Canadian teams en route to Barcelona and how the British team for the *Olimpiada* emerged. The article also explores how the British team fared in Barcelona, culminating in hitherto unpublished information, in an academic form, relating to attempts to stage the games despite the fascist rising. The latter information is provided from an interview conducted by *The South Wales Evening Post* with a returning British athlete, an oral testimony that deepens our understanding with regard to the desperate attempts of the COOP to save the *Olimpiada* from complete collapse.

During the inter-war years, sport associated with the international labour movement grew exponentially. Despite there being two competing international bodies that organised worker sport in this period, the worker sport movement grew into a mass movement throughout Europe. According to Riordan: 'for millions of workers between World War 1 and World War 11, sport was an integral part of the Labour Movement' it was in fact 'the largest working-class cultural movement.'¹³ The SWSI organised the first Worker Olympiad in 1925 in Frankfurt and a second in Vienna in 1931: both of these events excluded athletes associated with the RSI. Similarly, the RSI organised two international athletic tournaments (*Spartakiads*) in 1928 and 1931, both of which drew in athletes associated with the newly formed Communist Parties. The ethos behind the worker sport movement was to generate socialist solidarity and to undermine the dominance of bourgeois sporting values.¹⁴ They were also held under the banner of 'No More War' and were organised 'as a counter to the chauvinistic tendencies of the more well known modern Olympic Games and as an expression of international working-class solidarity.'¹⁵ It also made a conscious effort, unlike the IOC, to include women on a large scale and to include 'black as well as white' athletes.¹⁶ It has been estimated that there were 350,000 women members within the workers' sport movement.¹⁷ Overall the scale of the movement can be judged by the size of the 1925 and 1931 Olympiads, which 'easily surpassed their rival, the bourgeois Olympic Games, in the number of competitors and spectators and in pageant, culture and new sports records.'¹⁸ The Vienna Olympiad held 220 contests involving 100,000 athletes in all athletic disciplines, while the closing ceremony, which was watched by 250,000 spectators, was a match for the IOC equivalent.¹⁹ These two factors alone indicate both the scope and the popularity of the event. Also, in the first Olympiad the world record in the women's 100 metres relay was broken, an indication that there were quality athletes within the worker sport movement.²⁰ Likewise, the *Spartakiads*, although not as extensive as the SWSI sponsored Olympiads, also attempted to attract wide layers of workers to the banner of sport.²¹

Formation of the *Comité Organizador de la Olimpiada Popular*

This thumbnail sketch of the worker sports movement between the wars provides the necessary context to the formation of the Catalan Sports

Committee, *Comité Catalán pro-Deporte Popular (CCEP)*, on 17 March 1936, with the aim of holding a worker football tournament, with football teams drawn from across Spain, and an *Olimpiada Popular* competition in conjunction with 18 Spanish sports clubs associated with the Communist Party of Spain (*PCE*). Both events were to be held in Barcelona.²² It is worth noting that prior to the election of the *Frente Popular* in 1936, the worker sport movement, *La Federación Cultural Deportiva Obrera (FCDO)*, was very weak in Spain, consisting of only 9,500 members in 1933, half of whom were based in Madrid. The *FCDO* was founded by the *PCE* and was affiliated to the RSI. The Socialist Party in Spain (*PSOE*) was largely hostile to the idea behind worker sport prior to 1936.²³

The principal sports and cultural organisations behind the establishment of *CCEP* were: *Comitè foren l'Ateneu Enciclopèdic Popular (AEP)*, *la secció Esportiva del Centre Autonomista de Dependents del Comerç i de la Indústria (CADCI)*, *el Centre Gimnàstic Barcelonès (CGB)* and *el Club Femení d'Esports (CFE)*, all of whom had been associated with the Fair Play Committee set up in 1934 in the USA with the intention of organising a boycott of the Berlin Olympics.²⁴ The first event organised by the new body was the *Copa Thälmann*, which was held between 11-13 April 1936. The tournament was named after the German Communist leader Ernst Thälmann who had been imprisoned by the Nazi regime. The tournament was held on the football grounds of Barcelona-based FC Martinenc and CD Júpiter, and involved four teams from Asturias, Madrid, Valencia as well as Barcelona.²⁵ Holding such a tournament was important to the newly formed *CCEP* as it provided a platform for their opposition to the forthcoming IOC Games to be held in Nazi Germany. On the eve of the tournament a daylong cultural festival was held near the Plaza de España, in effect an opening ceremony for the football tournament. The cultural programme also included amateur boxing and gymnastics.²⁶ Asturias, who beat Castilla by 2 goals to one, eventually won the tournament.²⁷

The initial ideas that emerged from *CCEP* grew into a much bigger project culminating in the idea to hold a People's Olympiad to rival the forthcoming IOC Olympic Games to be hosted in Berlin. On 'the eve of May Day 1936'²⁸ the *COOP* was created and aligned itself with the growing boycott movement, the organisation of the *Olimpiada Popular* now had more focus as an alternative to Berlin. A key member of the executive committee was Ramón Mercader, who was an influential member of the *PCE* and the *FCDO*. He was pivotal in obtaining the support of the RSI for the *Olimpiada*, even though the secretary of the *FCDO*, Andrés Martín, was uncertain about their overt involvement with the Games.²⁹ Originally, the *Olimpiada* was scheduled to run from 22-26 July, but such was the volume of athletes wanting to take part in the Games that they were brought forward to 19 July and were to be held for the full week.³⁰ The venue for the Games was the 72,000 seated Montjuïc Stadium, which was opened in 1929 to coincide with the celebrations for the

World Exhibition, which was held in Barcelona. The stadium, which was eventually renovated for the 1992 IOC Games, also had 3,000 single rooms that could accommodate some of the athletes taking part in the *Olimpiada*.

Contextual Background to the Formation of the COOP

There are several other contextual situations to consider before proceeding with a discussion about the proposal to stage the *Olimpiada Popular*. The first being that Barcelona had sought selection to host the XIth Olympiad in 1936 but was passed over in favour of Berlin in May 1931. Barcelona had been among the favourites to get the vote to host the Games, especially as the infrastructure to hold the games was already in place. The XXIXth session of the IOC was held in Barcelona in April 1931. Following the meeting a football match between the Irish Free State and Spain was staged at the Montjuïc Stadium. At the subsequent press conference, the IOC President, Baillet-Latour stated that:

The Olympic calling of Barcelona is beyond any doubt. I have been to the splendid Montjuïc Stadium, the pride of Spanish sport, and I have no doubt that the city has the strength, the capacity and the spirit to organise the Olympic Games. The presence of the presidents of the Second Republic of Spain and the Generalitat of Catalonia in the box shows that the whole country participates in these sporting events.³¹

Baillet-Latour's comments had given the Spanish Olympic Committee added hope that Barcelona would be chosen to host the 1936 Olympic Games. Initially, the XXIXth session was to decide who would host the 1936 Olympic Games, but owing to the small number of delegates present at the session it was decided to defer the vote and invite other Olympic Committees to cast their votes via telegram. This was a de-facto postal ballot, which resulted in Berlin winning the nomination by 43-16 votes.³² Whether the political situation in Spain influenced the vote (the Spanish Monarchy had been overthrown two weeks before the IOC meeting in Barcelona) is hard to determine, but such a possibility cannot be ruled out.³³ Other factors could have influenced the vote: Berlin had been the intended hosts for the cancelled 1916 Games. Also, that the awarding of the Games to Germany was a recognition that the Weimar Republic was a reliable and peace-faring state despite its growing social and economic problems. However, Barcelona did feel aggrieved at the outcome, especially because it was only in 1928 that Germany had been re-admitted to the Olympic Games: this followed the Locarno Treaty of 1925 which had paved the way for Germany to be admitted to the League of Nations.

Campaign to Boycott the Berlin Olympics - Spain pushed to the Forefront

Between 1931 and 1936 Spain was in a state of upheaval. The establishment of the Second Republic in April 1931, following the demise of the Primo de

Rivera dictatorship the previous year, paved the way for a more democratic Spain. The great hopes of the left were soon dashed, however, when elections in November 1933 saw Lerrox's Radical Party and Gil Robles' *Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas* (CEDA) emerge as the largest political groupings resulting in a significant shift to right. Along with the Radicals, CEDA formed a right-wing government that governed until January 1936. Their two years in office became known as the *Bienio Negro* as the right sought to reverse the social gains made under the previous coalition government. Elections in February 1936, however, saw a small majority for the *Frente Popular*, which in-turn formed a Government under the leadership of Manuel Azaña Díaz.³⁴ From this point onwards, the right wing within Spanish politics began the military and political process that would eventually lead to the overthrow of democracy and the establishment of the fascist dictatorship of General Franco. However, from February 1936, revolutionary Spain was propelled into the political forefront of the international campaign against fascist Germany: a key plank of this campaign was to garner support for an international boycott of the Berlin Olympics scheduled for August 1936.

From 1933 there had been a concerted and developing effort within the international worker sport movement to boycott the Berlin Games and to have the XIth Olympiad moved to a more democratic country. This broad international campaign to boycott the Berlin Games gathered pace following the passing of the Nuremberg 'race laws' in September 1935. However, all attempts to have the Games moved were rejected by the IOC and, in light of this, the idea grew for an alternative Olympics based on the worker sport principle. With the inception of CCEP, the idea of holding an *Olimpiada Popular* based in Barcelona gathered pace. However, once Avery Brundage was appointed to the IOC, from the American Olympic Committee in 1936, support for Berlin on the IOC executive committee increased. Ironically, the movement for a boycott of the Berlin Games was very strong in the USA and received the support of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) and the Jewish Labor Committee, while the Amateur Athletic Union was on the verge of voting to boycott the Games until Brundage intervened.³⁵ A meeting of these three groups took place on 7 March 1934: arising from the meeting, the Committee on Fair Play in Sports (also known as the Fair Play Committee) was established; George Battle and William Chamberlain, both of the AFL, were elected president and general secretary respectively of this committee.³⁶ In Britain the boycott campaign was largely ineffective, despite the efforts of the British Workers' Sports Association (BWSA) to have the situation with regard to the Berlin Olympics discussed at a special meeting of the Amateur Athletics Association (AAA). The BWSA discussed and passed the following resolution in January 1936:

This special meeting of the Amateur Athletic Association is of the opinion that the spirit that prompted the organisation of the Olympic Games cannot be forwarded by participation at the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin and instructs

the Association to withdraw its support and withhold the necessary permission to any of its members who make an application for a permit to compete.³⁷

The motion was due to be discussed at the March meeting of the AAA, but, worried that support for a boycott would gain significant, but minority support, the executive of the AAA postponed the discussion until the May meeting. When the AAA finally discussed the resolution on 23 May, the motion was defeated by 200 votes to 8. Lord Burghley and Harold Abrahams were vocal and active campaigners against a boycott.³⁸ The vote at the AAA reflected the general weakness of the boycott campaign within the official structures of national and international sporting bodies.

In effect, the campaign to boycott the Berlin Olympics was at best fragmented. Thus, with the likelihood of a successful boycott campaign ever receding, the COOP's idea for holding a popular games gained increasing support. The intention was to host an alternative games that would draw on the historical aims and ideals as laid out in the modern Olympic Charter drawn up for the 1896 Olympics.³⁹ Indeed, the manifesto for the *Olimpiada Popular* was written with the specific aim of showing that the organisers of the Barcelona Games were the true inheritors of the ideals of the Olympic Movement:

It is shameful that in present day society there are elements who abuse sport, exploiting it for their militaristic and warlike ends. Taking advantage of the eagerness and enthusiasm for sport they lead the youth along the road to war. Under the pretext of strengthening their bodies and adding happiness to their lives, they systematically subject the youth to a strict military discipline and a thorough technical and ideological preparation for future war.

It is especially in fascist countries such as Germany and Italy...and also in other countries where fascist tendencies exist that sport is being abused for militaristic purposes and where, almost openly, recruits are being trained for the fascist gangs and fascisised armies.

Fascism changes the true spirit of sport, turning a progressive movement for peace and brotherhood between peoples into a cog in the machinery of war.

The People's Olympiad of Barcelona revives the original spirit of the Games and accomplishes this great task under the banner of the brother-hood of men and races. The People's Olympiad not only brings together in friendly competition the leading amateur sportsmen of Spain, Catalonia and Euzkadi with those of other countries, but also promotes the general development of popular sport; at the same time giving an opportunity for enthusiasts in the more modest categories to gauge their strength against sportsmen from other districts and countries.⁴⁰

Although the COOP was not affiliated to either the SWSI or the RSI, its appeal for participants to take part in the *Olimpiada Popular* was clearly aimed at athletes associated with the worker sport movement. The manifesto appealed directly to:

WORKING MASSES! The whole of youth, your children and the future generations await your help. Support Popular Sport! Forward to the organisation of the People's Olympiad.⁴¹

The manifesto also made it clear that it was for the inclusion of all athletes, not just those of elite standard. Moreover, its ethos stood, not only for the ideals of the Olympic Charter, but also for the traditions of the worker sport movement that had been developed since its inception prior to World War One. Lastly, the manifesto called upon the peoples of the world to unite under the banner of sport, which can promote 'peace, culture' and enhance the 'progress of humanity'.⁴²

Significantly, unlike the Worker Olympiads organised by the SWSI, the *Olimpiada Popular* received both public and financial support from three governments: the Spanish donated 250,000 pesetas, the French 600,000 pesetas and the government of Catalonia gave 200,000 pesetas. Also, Lluís Companys, President of Catalonia, was made honorary president of the *COOP* in May 1936 and had agreed to address the opening ceremony of the Games.⁴³

Women's Representation at the *Olimpiada Popular*

The organisers were also committed to the widest possible participation of women in the Games. The June bulletin of the *Olimpiada* stated it aims clearly:

The picture of the People's Olympiad would not be complete if woman did not take her place in it. Particularly in Spain is woman far from being free. That sport, and above all sport of a general, popular character, is one of the best and most important means of achieving women's freedom, cannot be open to doubt. The PO in Barcelona, which in its manifesto stands for the freedom of mankind, the freedom of all oppressed peoples and races, cannot pass unheeded the position of woman, and above all that of Spanish woman. The participation of many women in the PO is, therefore, one of the most important objects which this great institution has to fulfil.⁴⁴

The bulletin explains that entrants from women were not numerous but the 'greatest women's sports club in Barcelona is represented on the organising committee by its president Aminda Valls and from many parts of the country there are delegations with women members.'⁴⁵ Three events for women, the high jump, 60 metres hurdles and a 300 metres sprint were included in a preparation day for athletes held at Estadio de Montjuïc on 29 June.⁴⁶ In contrast to the approach of the *COOP* the IOC were still taking a cautious approach with regard to the involvement of women in the Olympics. For the Berlin Games the IOC agreed unanimously to allow women to participate in skating, fencing, swimming and gymnastics but only approved women's participation in athletics by 11 votes to 9 and women were not allowed to take part in equestrian sports.⁴⁷

The manifesto is also clear that all peoples, no matter their racial or religious background, would be welcome to take part in the Games. The bulletin sent to the TUC was boastful about the inclusivity of the *Olimpiada Popular*:

The words of the manifesto have been realised: the People's Olympiad unites in brotherhood all peoples and races, it is the great demonstration against Berlin, against fascism in sport, for the free cultural development of mankind.⁴⁸

In comparison to the IOC, the organisers of the Games had limited resources but, despite this, they were determined to spend time and money to ensure that women and other oppressed sections of the world's population were able to attend and take part in the *Olimpiada Popular*. Their success at including women and oppressed minorities was at best limited but the important factor to note is that, unlike the IOC, the organisers of the *Olimpiada* did not discourage participation on the basis of gender or ethnicity.⁴⁹ A lack of time and resources was the key reason why the programme was dominated by male events.⁵⁰

The Sporting Programme

The programme for the Games was extensive and was designed to enable all competitors to compete at a suitable level. For some events such as swimming, there was a competition level to include children: boys under the age of 14 and girls under 13 could take part. As with the IOC Games, athletics was the major sport. Races from 100 metres through to the marathon were all included for men as were all the usual field events. Hurdles, pedestrianism and walking were also included. For women, race categories were limited to 100 and 600 metre races and the 80 metres hurdles. In the field event section, the high jump, long jump and weight throwing, the javelin and the discuss were all included in the programme.⁵¹

To enable full participation of athletes with differing abilities there were three distinct categories in the athletics section: international championships, which included events for athletes of Olympic standard, international competitions, which were broken down into second and third class races, and international competitions for regional or provincial teams. Events in the latter category were confined to relay races.

In the international championships section, up to three athletes per nation were allowed, for relay races a national team of four athletes could compete, although teams could also be multinational. Selection for the international championships was dependent upon past performances: athletes had to submit their race times to the Athletic Commission, the body responsible for ensuring that all competitors were placed in the appropriate race category, prior to the start of the *Olimpiada*. For the regional and provincial relays only one team from each area was allowed. Entrants for the international

championships section could not take part in other competitions, which were reserved for lower ranking athletes. Although athletics was the dominant sport, all other Olympic sports were included in the programme including boxing, swimming, football, wrestling and cycling. There were also other sports not normally included in the IOC programme such as rugby, *pelota* and lawn tennis. Chess was also an integral part of the *Olimpiada* programme. As with athletics, each sport had different categories to enable the widest possible participation. Exhibition or non-competitive sports included gymnastics, which was open to men, women and children, handball and baseball. For the latter sport there was to be an exhibition match between teams from Mexico and Cuba included in the programme.⁵² There was also a strong cultural programme for the *Olimpiada Popular* that included songs and folk dancing from the different nations represented at the games. An exhibition of art at the Palacio de Arte Moderno at Montjuïc was also to form part of the cultural celebrations: over 40 artists from various art disciplines submitted work for the exhibition. The cultural side of the Olympic Festival was overseen by Victor Gassol, who was the minister for culture in the Catalan Government.⁵³ Lastly, for the opening ceremony the renowned Catalan poet José María de Segarra wrote a poem in honour of the Games: this was to be performed to music composed by Hans Eisler at the opening ceremony.⁵⁴ In short, there was a cultural programme to rival the one being prepared in Berlin.

Building Support for the Games

To build support for the *Olimpiada*, preparation days were held in several parts of Spain, and in some of the participating countries. On 29 June full-scale athletics and swimming programmes were organised at Montjuïc.⁵⁵ Also, in most regions of Spain, and in some countries, parallel *Olimpiada* committees were established. In Asturias, for example, the committee organised regional and local competitions with a view to finding suitable athletes to take part in the Barcelona Games. A major sports event was held in Oviedo over the weekend of 4 July and included athletics, swimming, cycling, boxing and football, plus several other sports in its programme.⁵⁶ The cultural aspect of the *Olimpiada* also received support from most parts of Spain. The Navarra region intended to send teams of dancers and singers while Granada had indicated that they were to send flamenco singers and dancers.⁵⁷ Given the increasing turmoil in Spain in this period it was quite remarkable that such sporting and cultural events were organised: it clearly indicates just how important the Games were to the people of Spain in this period of social and economic crisis.

Some of the most significant developments in the growing support for the Games emerged from France. The Léon Blum Government, while not openly supporting a boycott of the Berlin Games, did offer financial support to the *Olimpiada*, donating a total 600,000 pesetas to the *COOP*.⁵⁸ Also, the Paris-

based *Comité international pour le respect de l'esprit olympique*, hosted an International Conference for the Defence of the Olympic Sport in Paris on 5-6 June. The organisation had the support of sport organisations from countries such as Britain, France, Holland, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia and Belgium. It also had the support of the Second International and its affiliated sports body. Not only did the conference come out in support of the *Olimpiada*, but it also helped to organise a *People's Olympiad* day in Paris on 5 July, held in St Garehes Park. The festival was addressed by Léo Lagrange the Under-Secretary of State for Sports in the French Popular Front Government, another indication that the Barcelona Games had the support of the French Government. On the same weekend of the festival, the International Fair Play Committee also held a conference in Paris. Support in France for the *Olimpiada* was extensive; it was estimated that 1,500 athletes would go to Barcelona on special trains from several towns and cities including Paris, Limoges, Lyon and Toulouse.⁵⁹ Moreover, in countries as far apart as Canada and Norway, sport festivals were being organised to raise money with the aim of sending athletes to the *Olimpiada*.⁶⁰

By early July, support for the *Olimpiada* was gaining momentum. The COOP estimated that up 10,000 athletes, 6,000-8,000 of them coming from Spain, would take part in the Games. In addition, up to 25,000 visitors from outside Barcelona were expected with the specific aim of attending the events at Montjuïc. The expectation was that the stadium would easily be filled on each day of competition.⁶¹ International visitors from the Workers' Travel Association, whose holiday ship the *Esperance Bay* was to be diverted to Barcelona with 500-600 tourists on board, were expected for the Games.⁶²

In addition to the large Spanish contingent, competitors were expected from a further 22-25 countries. The table below detailing the countries is by no means an exhaustive one, further research will undoubtedly reveal more:

Insert Table 1

There were also small delegations expected from Portugal and Ireland, and interestingly, Alsace. Moreover, reflecting the increasing decentralisation of Spain at this time, there were to be teams representing Catalonia, Euskadi and Galicia.⁶³ Full information about all the teams is hard to come by but the British delegation had a strong Welsh contingent, not surprising given the relatively strong position of the Communist Party in Wales in this period. The following table gathered together from diverse sources identifies 34 of the 47 athletes that went to Barcelona:⁶⁴

insert table 2

The TUC worked closely with the BWSA to ensure that there was to be a British delegation to the *Olimpiada*. A circular sent out by the BWSA to its

branches endorsed the view of the *COOP* that the *Olimpiada* aimed to revive 'the original spirit of the [Olympic] Games.'⁶⁵ Moreover, Walter Citrine's office ensured that all bulletins received from Barcelona were passed on to the Association. Such was the enthusiasm of the BWSA to take part in the Games they organised a special conference on Monday 22 June at 8pm to discuss the *Olimpiada* and to receive the report from the International Fair Play Conference recently held in Paris. In a letter to Citrine, the BWSA informed the TUC General Secretary that they had received a grant in the form of tickets for athletes attending the Games from the *COOP*. Those able to pay their own way could book passages to the Games from Collet's bookshop in London (trips cost £10), which included full board and accommodation. The delegation gathered in London on the evening of 16 July and met the following morning at Victoria Station where they had breakfast before setting off for Spain. The party marched to their train led by four Scots pipers who were to take part in the Folklore Competition.⁶⁶

Insert table 3 (images)

Although among the smallest, the two North American delegations are of particular interest. The Canadian team was made up of Eva Dawes (high jump), sprinters Tom Ritchie and Bill Christie and boxers Sammy Luftspring and Norman 'baby' Yack. Information with regard to the sprinters is sparse but Eva Dawes was a proven Olympic athlete: she won a bronze medal at the 1932 Los Angeles Games in the high jump. In 1935, Dawes went to Moscow to compete in a sporting event, upon her return the Amateur Athletic Union of Canada (AAUC) duly suspended her. Aware of her medal-winning potential in Berlin, the AAUC lifted her suspension so that she could compete in the Olympic Games. She refused the invitation and chose instead to attend the *Olimpiada*, commenting that: 'I will be glad to compete in an Olympiad where the true meaning of sport will exist.'⁶⁷

Insert image 1

Luftspring had also been selected to represent Canada in Berlin but, following pressure from family and friends, he withdrew in favour of competing in Barcelona. He also persuaded fellow Jewish boxer Yack to join him in the protest against Berlin.⁶⁸

The Committee on Fair Play in Sport sponsored the 11-strong United States of America team. The co-chairmen of the committee, George Battle and Dr Henry Smith-Leiper, accompanied them. The USA team had a strong trade union influence; at least three of them were from the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union and also included a number of black athletes. The team had the support of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). The NAACP wanted African-Americans to boycott the Berlin Games but Jesse Owens, Ralph Metcalf, Cornelius Johnson and John Woodford, among others, competed in Berlin. The mission statement of

the Committee on Fair Play in Sport upon leaving the USA made it clear that their participation in Barcelona was the 'final gesture of protest against the Hitler Nazi Games'; it recognised that the campaign to boycott the IOC Games had failed, but participation in the *Olimpiada* reflected the wider aims of the boycott movement, namely 'to defend human freedom and progress by taking part in an international truly Olympic manifestation free to all progressive sportsmen.'⁶⁹ En route to Barcelona the team stopped off in London where they met Walter Citrine, but no record of the meeting seems to have survived. One of the team Alfred 'chick' Chakin, a boxer from New York, returned to Spain where he joined the Abraham Lincoln Brigade.⁷⁰

Opening of the Games Thwarted

With all the preparations in place for the start of the Games, Barcelona was anticipating a week of sporting activity that the *COOP* hoped would show the world that it was possible to organise an international sporting event that embraced all peoples regardless of ethnic background.⁷¹ A run-through of the opening ceremony was held at Montjuïc on the evening of 18 July; everything, it seemed, was all in place for a sporting spectacle.⁷² Alas, the social explosion that had been building from within Spain since February 1936 finally broke following the fascist uprising of 17 and 18 July. The following day, rather than attend Montjuïc to watch thousands of athletes, Barcelonistas built barricades to defend the city against the rebels. It is estimated that there were over 25,000 visitors in Barcelona to attend the *Olimpiada*. At least one visitor was taken by surprise. E.J. Burford, a pharmacist from England, was awakened by gunfire and the noise of aircraft. His first thoughts were that the explosions were a 'super firework display arranged in honour of the *Olimpiada Popular* which was scheduled to start today.'⁷³ Whilst out and about in Barcelona he met two Dutch people who were in Barcelona for the *Olimpiada*. They told him that: 'Thousands of foreigners arrived for the sport and I am told that hundreds are armed and helping the workers.'⁷⁴ Burford's diary confirms that there were many thousands in the city for the Games. What is interesting from this section of the diary is the inference that many people associated with the *Olimpiada* actually became involved in, to what became in Barcelona, the defence of the revolution. How many athletes and visitors became involved is very hard to determine, some web-based estimates put the figure at 200-600; Beevor estimates that around 200 athletes actually joined the militias: verification is very difficult to obtain.⁷⁵ We do, however, have on record that two women athletes, Clara Thalmann, a swimmer from Switzerland, and Marina Ginestá, an athlete from France, who were in Barcelona for the Games, joined the militias.⁷⁶

It would seem that none of the British team became involved in the fighting, but they were clearly aware of the conflict between the government and the rebels. R.G. Hopkins, a member of the British team, gave the *South Wales Evening Post* a graphic account of the uprising:

At half-past four...on the Sunday morning we were awakened in our hotel by the sound of shooting...planes were flying overhead too. [The] shooting continued until late in the afternoon. It appears that the object of the shooting in our immediate vicinity was the Iglesia Elpi, the church next door which had been turned into a fortress by the Spanish Fascist rebels...The churches, in fact, were the most difficult strongholds of the Fascists which the Government had to overcome.⁷⁷

Despite the dangerous situation within Barcelona, the *COOP* attempted to reorganise the Games albeit on a smaller scale. Hopkins' account reveals how on Tuesday 21 July the athletes paraded through the streets of Barcelona from the Plaça de Catalunya to the Montjuïc Stadium:

On the Tuesday morning things had quietened down...it was decided by the Olympiad executive to hold a grand parade of athletes. The distance from the hotel to the stadium was roughly two and half miles...This wonderful procession marched through the streets, and it was cheered by four or five thousand people. In front of the procession we were headed by four pipers who had come with the Scottish contingent of the British team.⁷⁸

Insert Image 2

On the way to the stadium the athletes saw fighting between the defenders of the Republic and the rebels. Despite this they arrived at Montjuïc safely, Hopkins continues his account:

After the parade we had some light training, as it was fully intended to hold the Olympiad on the Friday, Saturday and Sunday, curtailing some of the least important events.

The parties returned individually to their hotels. By this time, about dusk, firing had started again. We of the British party went through the main streets and saw a good deal of shooting but not a shot was aimed deliberately at us. The Americans had Olympiad printed in large letters across their jerseys, but the British members only had white shirts as a distinguishing mark. The fighting troops helped to get us to safety.⁷⁹

Although the shooting had died down by the evening and it appeared that the rebels were defeated, the British team were denied their chance to take part in the truncated Games. Hopkins continues his story:

On Wednesday morning, however, we received a visit from the British vice-consul, who advised us that in the interests of personal safety to make arrangements to get out of Barcelona as soon as we could.

This did not meet with the approval of our party, who felt that as they had come such a long way, they wanted the sports meeting to be held. After several meetings and consultations with the executive committee of the Olympiad, it was decided to hold the meeting over till Thursday morning, to see if there was any possibility of the games proceeding.⁸⁰

However, following pressure from the British Consul, the British contingent was forced to sail from Barcelona aboard HMS London to Marseilles from where they travelled by train and ferry to London.

Conclusions

The Official Report of the XXV Barcelona Olympiad devoted just two pages to the *Olimpiada Popular*, an indication perhaps that the IOC is still not prepared to come to terms with the decision to hold the 1936 IOC Games in a country where people were being killed or gaoled because of their religious or political affiliation. The first two Worker Olympics held in Frankfurt and Vienna were held under the clear programme that sport could be a mechanism for peace, they were also held under the banner of socialism and against capitalism. Clearly the manifesto published by the COOP was linked to peace and the idea that sport and culture could progress humanity. The Barcelona Games, like the first two Worker Olympics had a different ethos to the IOC Games in that participation was regarded more important than competition. They were not, however, to be held under the banner of socialism but were a reflection of the idea that Fascism had to be fought in alliance with 'progressive forces', which in effect meant forging political alliances in the form of Popular Front Governments. A similar ideology was framed around the third Worker Olympics held in Antwerp in 1937. At the Antwerp Games, Spain was represented by a team from the Fourth Division of the Republican army, a division that had been fighting on the Andalusian and Aragon fronts. As the image shows, they marched through Antwerp in front of a banner with the slogan of the Civil War emblazoned on it: *No Pasarán*.

Insert image 3

The tragedy for Spain was that the cancellation of the *Olimpiada* came to reflect the defeat of the working class by the nationalists led by Franco, who eventually came to power in 1939. In relation to Spain, the symbol of sport - to show that it could be a force for peace and unity and to expose the horrors of fascist Germany - was cruelly crushed by a fascist rising supported by Hitler and Mussolini.

Despite the fact that the *Olimpiada Popular* did not go ahead, the widespread support it received in Spain and internationally underlies a number of important factors relating to working-class sport in the inter-war years. Firstly, the movement was organically linked to the international labour movement. What is more, the worker sport movement, in contrast to organised 'official' sport, had a different ethos. Organisers of the movement were keen to draw the distinction between what was termed bourgeois sport and worker sport. Moreover, as indicated above, the movement was openly

socialist and stood for peace not war, the very banner under which the first Worker Olympics was held under in Frankfurt in 1925. A similar theme ran through the veins of the second Worker Olympics held in Vienna in 1931. The Worker Sport movement aspiration of peace reflected the opposition of the international labour movement during the inter-war years to another war. The IOC Charter, of course, also placed sport at the centre of humanity as a mechanism to promote peace, but its actions in refusing to relocate the 1936 Games clearly undermined its own aspirations.

What is remarkable about the *Olimpiada Popular* is that despite Spain being in political turmoil, workers throughout the country eagerly supported the Games, both as participants and as spectators. This passion and commitment was repeated in many countries and within the space of two months the COOP was able to enlist the support of worker sport enthusiasts from over 20 countries. All teams attending the *Olimpiada* could not draw upon the same resources as their IOC counterparts, who were often attached to elite sporting organisations. Yet they raised money collectively to pay for participants and spectators to go to Barcelona.

From the outset, people attending the Games knew that they were making a political statement, most notably against the IOC and national Olympic Committees, who turned deaf ears to the demands to move the XIth Olympiad from Berlin. In this situation the demand grew for a boycott of what has become known as the Nazi Olympics. Although the boycott movement failed to inflict any damage upon the Berlin Games, the campaign did serve to make clear the political contrast between the IOC, who were indifferent to the racist laws passed by the Hitler regime, and the organisers of the *Olimpiada Popular*. Moreover, the organisers of the Barcelona Games made it clear that sport was being used as a vehicle by the Nazis to legitimatise its racist rule, contrasting this with the political aims of the *Olimpiada Popular*, which clearly linked the Games to the defence of democracy. This alternative vision, to what were regarded by many as the bourgeois Olympics, was a key reason for the popularity of worker Olympiads. Their demise in the post-war epoch contrasts with that of the ever-increasing significance of the IOC Olympics. The reasons for this are complex, but, essentially, the desire of the USSR to enter the 'bourgeois' Olympics was a key factor. The Stalinisation of the USSR had resulted in a stratified society that did not encourage independent cultural development. Also, unlike the post-1918 period when the workers' movement embraced cultural alternatives, based on socialism, instead of capitalism, the post-war workers' movement in Europe was a defeated and a depleted force, rendering it incapable of organising mass cultural events comparable with those of the inter-war years.

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- ¹ Roberto Eduardo Matta - Chilean born artist. Source is from an exhibition, *Past Disquiet*, at the MACBA Gallery, Barcelona 20 February – 1 June 2015.
- ² André Gounot, 'El Proyecto de la Olimpiada Popular de Barcelona (1936), entre Comunismo Internacional y Republicanismo Regional', *Cultura, Ciencia y Deporte*, vol. 1 (2005), 117.
- ³ Gounot, 115-118.
- ⁴ The TUC had a track record here. They did, for example make a delegation to the Home Office to protest at the international match between England and Germany that was staged at White Hart Lane in 1935. Walter Citrine, the TUC General Secretary, also wrote a pamphlet about sport in Nazi Germany, *Under the heel of Hitler: the dictatorship over sport in Nazi Germany* (Trades Union Congress, 1936), in which he condemned how sport was being used in fascist Germany.
- ⁵ James Riordan and Arnd Krüger (eds), *The Story of the Worker Sport Movement*. (Leeds: Human Kinetics, 1996).
- ⁶ Stephen Jones, *Sport, Politics and the Working Class: Organised Labour and Sport in Inter-war Britain*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992). The Federation changed its name to the British Workers' Sport Association in 1936.
- ⁷ Robert F Wheeler, 'Organised Sport and Organised Labour: The Workers' Sports Movement', *Journal of Contemporary History* vol.13 (1978) No2, 196.
- ⁸ David Steinberg, 'The Workers' Sport Internationals, 1920-1928', *Journal of Contemporary History* vol.13 (1978) No2, 240.
- ⁹ *Ibid*, 233-250.
- ¹⁰ James Riordan. 'Worker Sport within a Worker State: The Soviet Union', (In Riordan and Krüger.
- ¹¹ André Gounot, 115-223). Gabriel Colomé, 'La Olimpiada Popular de 1916: deporte y política', *Institut de Ciències I Socials*, (2008). David Martínez Fiol, 'Els sindicats de funcionaris de la Generalitat de Catalunya (1931-1939)', *Centro de Història Contemporània de Catalunya*, (2010). Rubén Castillo □ Mateo, 'Patrimonio Histórico Español del Juego y del Deporte: la Olimpiada Popular de 1936', *Museo de Juego*, (2011).
- ¹² Allan Guttmann, 'The Nazi Olympics and the American Boycott Controversy', 37-50 (in P. Arnaud and J. Riordan (eds), *Sport and International Politics*, London: Routledge, 1998). Mario Kessler, 'Only Nazi Games? Berlin 1936: The Olympic Games between Sport and Politics', *Socialism and Democracy* vol.25 (2011).
- ¹³ Riordan and Krüger, vii.
- ¹⁴ Steinberg, page 240. Similar arguments are made by Riordan and Krüger. Citrine in his pamphlet argues that the worker sport provided working-class youth opportunities to take part in sport, he does not refer to its socialist aspirations.
- ¹⁵ Wheeler, 200.
- ¹⁶ Riordan and Krüger, vii-viii. See also Wheeler, 'Organised Sport and Organised Labour'.
- ¹⁶ Wheeler, 191-219.
- ¹⁷ Wheeler, 201.
- ¹⁸ Riordan and Krüger, vii.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid*, vi.
- ²⁰ See Wheeler, 200-201.
- ²¹ Riordan and Krüger, 43-65.
- ²² *El Mundo Deportivo* 18 March 1936. See also Colomé, 9-11.
- ²³ Gounot, 116-118. Gounot points out the PSOE had denounced the formation of the Socialist Worker Sport International in 1920 taking little or no part in the organisation.
- ²⁴ Castillo □ Mateo, 3-4. Barcelona had numerous popular cultural and sports organisations in this period that attracted wide participation from the working and middle-classes. The AEP was a cultural organisation formed by intellectuals and workers in 1902; the CADCI was a professional trade union association that helped workers with taxation and other work related problems, the CGB, the Barcelona Gymnastic club, was formed 1933 while the CFE was a women's sports club formed in 1928.

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- ²⁵ Martínez Fiol, 162. *El Mundo Deportivo*, 5 April 1936 refers to Thälmann as a *Deportista* (sportsman), I have been unable to confirm whether he was also a sportsman. See also Gounot, 118-119 re the tournament.
- ²⁶ *El Mundo de Deportivo* 10 April 1936.
- ²⁷ *ibid* 15 April 1936
- ²⁸ Castelló Mateo 3, in the original Spanish it is written: 'que en vísperas de mayo de 1936.'
- ²⁹ Gounot, 119-120. It must be remembered that in the early stages of Popular Front the *PCE* was relatively weak. Mercader became ultimately famous in 1940 when he murdered Leon Trotsky, the Russian revolutionary in Mexico. He was to take part in the equestrian events in the *Olimpiada*.
- ³⁰ *Olimpiada Popular de Barcelona Bulletin 18 June 1936 (henceforth OPBB)*. The English Edition is in the TUC archives held at the University of Warwick. The University has an extensive collection of TUC archives relating to the *Olimpiada* these can be downloaded at: <http://contentdm.warwick.ac.uk/cdm/search/collection/scw/searchterm/olimpiada/order/nosort>
- ³¹ 'Official report of the Games of the XXV Olympiad', Barcelona (1992), 211. Baillet-Latour was also present when the foundation stone for Montjuïc was laid in 1927.
- ³² Minutes of IOC XXIXth Session held in Barcelona 25-26 April 1931. An addendum to the minutes notes that the count took place on 13 May 1931 at the IOC headquarters. Forty votes were received via correspondence; there were eight abstentions. At the meeting in Barcelona only 19 out of a possible 67 delegates were in attendance.
- ³³ It is worth noting that the bid was supported by aristocrats such Joan Antoni Güel I López who were obviously supporters of King Alfonso XIII.
- ³⁴ These were to be the last national democratic elections to be held in Spain for 40 years.
- ³⁵ Guttman, 37.
- ³⁶ Kessler, 125.
- ³⁷ Included in an article by H.R. Underhill writing in *Challenge* January 1936.
- ³⁸ *Manchester Guardian* 25 May 1936.
- ³⁹ Castello □ Mateo, 3-5
- ⁴⁰ Manifesto of the People's Olympiad. In the TUC archive. The quotation used is from the original translation, I have retained this version for authenticity. Note the words 'men' and 'races' are written as *hombres* and *pueblos* in the Spanish version of the manifesto. These words convey different meanings in Spanish, *hombre* equates to human beings and *pueblos* means peoples of the world. Likewise, sportsmen is written as *deportistas* in the original Spanish and is not gender specific in this context.
- ⁴¹ *ibid*.
- ⁴² *ibid*. Broad values that had been incorporated into the original IOC charter in 1896.
- ⁴³ *El Mundo Deportivo* 8 May and 4 July 1936. It is important to note that the literature produced by *COOP/CCEP* at this time often referred to Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia as independent states.
- ⁴⁴ *OPBB* 18 June 1936. Translation as in the original.
- ⁴⁵ *ibid*. Translation as in the original. Valls was a member of the *Club Femení i d'Esports*, Barcelona.
- ⁴⁶ *El Mundo Deportivo* 27 June 1936 which previewed the event.
- ⁴⁷ Minutes of IOC XXXI Session held in Athens 17-23 May 1934.
- ⁴⁸ *OPBB* 8 June 1936.
- ⁴⁹ The IOC document of 1933 'The International Committee and the Modern Games' has one reference to the involvement of women in the Olympic Games. It states that: 'Women are not excluded but the IOC, if requested by an International Federation, decides the events in which they may take part.'
- ⁵⁰ Compared to the budget for the Berlin Games the *Olimpiada* had a minimal budget. One source Frank Zarnowski, 'A Look at Olympic Costs' estimates that the Berlin Municipal Government spent \$16.5 million, the National Government contributed \$30 million.

Zarnowski's article is available online at:

<http://library.la84.org/SportsLibrary/JOH/JOHv1n1/JOHv1n1f.pdf>

⁵¹ Presumably weight throwing is the shot put. The Spanish term for the shot put is lanzamiento de peso. In the programme of events for the *Olimpiada* the event is listed as the 'peso' in Spanish and 'poids' in French.

⁵² For details of the baseball match see *El Deportivo Mundo* 27 June 1936.

⁵³ See *El Mundo Deportivo* 27 June 1936 and Gounot p.121. Although I have identified the artists who submitted work, to date I have been unable to trace any of the artwork.

⁵⁴ The full programme for the Games was published in *El Mundo Deportivo* 4 July 1936. Eisler was, of course, in exile from Nazi Germany living in Britain at the time.

⁵⁵ *El Mundo Deportivo* 1 July 1936. The names of the winners, as well those coming second and third, are listed for each event.

⁵⁶ For the full list programmes see *El Mundo Deportivo* 1 July 1936.

⁵⁷ *ibid.*

⁵⁸ France did not officially participate in the Berlin Games but the French Parliament did vote to award one million francs to assist private sporting associations to send their representatives to Berlin. See *The New York Times* 20 June 1936 for details.

⁵⁹ *El Mundo Deportivo* 6 July 1936.

⁶⁰ *OPBB*, 19 June, 1936.

⁶¹ See *El Mundo Deportivo* reports between 1-19 July 1936.

⁶² *OPBB* 25 June 1936 and *El Mundo Deportivo* June 1936.

⁶³ *OPBB* 25 June and *El Mundo Deportivo* 29 June 1936.

⁶⁴ See *OPBB* 25 June and *The Daily Worker* 20 July 1936 and the *Liverpool Evening Express* 16 July 1936. Some sources say that a party of 65 went to the Games, some of whom were coaches, the reports are conflicting. Details for King were sourced from the *Surrey Advertiser*, 15 January 1944. Taylor's details are from the *Motherwell Times*, 24 July 1936, Elliot's from the *Daily Worker* 2 July 1936, Parnell's from the *Daily Worker*, 13 July 1936, Hamilton's from the *Daily Worker* July 1936. My thanks to Stuart Walsh of the Working Class Movement Library for supplying the names of the last three named athletes. Some of the British team were members of the National Workers' Sports Association, which was founded in 1930 and was affiliated to the Labour Party and the TUC.

⁶⁵ BWSA circular 9 June 1936. Located in the TUC archive.

⁶⁶ *Daily Worker* 18 July 1936.

⁶⁷ Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre, available at:

http://vhec.org/1936_olympics/canadian_athletes/eva_dawes.

Dawes never competed for Canada again, moving to England in 1937 where she died in 2009.

⁶⁸ Information about the Canadian delegation to Barcelona can be obtained from the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre. Luftspring turned professional upon his return from Spain, winning the Canadian welterweight championship in 1938; he was forced to retire in 1940 due to a bad eye injury.

⁶⁹ The manifesto of the Committee on Fair Play in Sports was reprinted the *New York Times* 2 July 1936.

⁷⁰ Mario Kessler, 125 and *OPBB* 18 June 1936. One of the team, Bernard Danchik, has left an extensive record of his time in Barcelona; the file is located in New York. I hope to consult these files in the near future. Chakin was captured in March 1938 while fighting for the Republic in the Battle of Teruel and was duly executed.

⁷¹ See the manifesto cited above.

⁷² *El Mundo Deportivo* 19 July 1936. Two photographs of the event appear on the front paper of the paper.

⁷³ Diary of E.J. Burford; in the University of Liverpool library. Special Collections section.

⁷⁴ *ibid.*

⁷⁵ Antony Beevor; *The Battle for Spain*, (London: Pheonix, 75).

⁷⁶ For Ginestá see the *Independent* 22 January 2014. Her image on top of the Hotel Colón in Barcelona, taken by Hans Gutmann, has become synonymous with the Civil War in Spain.

For an overview of Thalmann's life see <https://libcom.org/history/thalmann-clara-1910-1987>. She fought on the Aragon Front alongside the Friends of Durruti.

⁷⁷*South Wales Evening Post* 27 July 1936. The name of the church could be a misspelling or a poor translation. It could possibly be the Santa Maria del Pi. There is no doubting, however, that many churches were taken over by the Fascists.

⁷⁸ *ibid.*

⁷⁹ *ibid.*

⁸⁰ *ibid.* The experiences related by Hopkins are similar to those experienced by the American team. Chakin, for example, notes that the athletes were cheered as they marched to the stadium. See Baruch College online exhibition at www.baruch.cuny.edu for the diaries of Bernard Danchik for this information. In another report in the *National Society of Operative Printers and Assistants* journal of September 1936 Tim Binet relates that on Thursday 23 July the British team: 'had the honour of marching at the head of the column of the worker's militia that was proceeding to the battlefield at Saragossa.' Binet was also a member of the British team.