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## Why Take Sporting Joy Away from the Colombian People?

By: Victor Joaquín Ortega / Special for CubaSi  
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Taking away the venue of the next Pan American Games from Barranquilla, for not having paid a large amount of dollars to Panama Sport among other things, has an essential cause denounced on several occasions by the rescuer of Olympicism, synthesized at the end of the 19 century when it attacked the “ (...) mercantilist spirit that threatens to invade sporting circles as sports have developed within a society that threatens with rotting to the core because of the passion for money” (1894).

Such delivery will be stipulated, it will be some kind of law, contract or something of the sort. It may be whatever it is, but it's foggy, shreading for underdeveloped countries which are the biggest victims of this sort of blows. The prominent pedagogue referred to the setting of the contest, going back to the Greek and Roman stages: well, we should not consider “(...) the Olympic Games as the goose that lays golden eggs, although it would be childish to believe that the ancients did not worried about the prosperity engendered by the Games and that the movement of traffic around Olympia did not interest them” (1925). For Pierre it was not and cannot be the main issue either.

Regarding the chosen venue and the general realization of the competition, he expressed: “(...) the quality of luxury (during the Games), its vulgarity would transform it into sterile and would only tend to render the average forces useless and make the socialcontrasts more irritating. More simplified organizations, more uniform and quieter accommodations at the same time, fewer celebrations and above all more intimate and more frequent contacts between athletes and leaders without politicians and opportunists to divide them” (October 12, 1912). He stressed: “Is it necessary to remember that the Olympic Games are not the property of any country, nor of any particular race and that they cannot be monopolized by any group? Colophon with these words: “They are global. All peoples must be admitted without discussion, just as all sports must be treated on an equal footing without worrying about the fluctuations or whims of public opinion” (May 29, 1925).

Since the beginning of the Olympics, the fight for the headquarters had stains. Yanqui had to be the unworthy action for becoming the setting for the third edition. I wrote about this in my book *The Olympics from Athens to Moscow* (Editorial Gente Nueva, 1979) in the chapter named *Olympics made in the U.S.A.* “There's no need to be surprised by the atrocities committed in the Third Olympiad, hosted by San Luis, United States, in 1904.

Four years ago, what a confrontation between two North American cities - Chicago and St. Louis. in the fourth session of the International Olympic Committee! Both want to be the venue of the games. Chicago wins: its representatives claim that they have already raised \$120,000 for the big wish and guarantee more than \$200,000 from the box office. The language of dollars prevailed.

But the losers did not consider themselves defeated. They want to obtain the Games to support the exhibition for the centennial of the transfer of Louisiana to the then young American republic. They put pressure, and the IOC gives in to convincing words, too convincing: if it does not happen, the people of San Luis will carry out athletic tests on the date of the games and will give juicy prizes. Amazing? No way! "It's a fight in Yankeeland."

Now I add: the president of the nation himself, Roosevelt, interceded so that San Luis would be the winner. It was, through the purchase, blackmail and political intervention of the lord with the stick. The disastrous nature of what happened on stage led non-leftist newspapers to publish opinions such as the following: "The sensationalism and the desire to do things big was detrimental to the Games... The Third Olympiad has been a real sporting spree." I'm going to tell you the worst. The runners pass the finish line. A black man has won; a Syrian followed in his footsteps... witness an unofficial test. They are the so-called anthropological days, dedicated to the competitions between inferior people according to the Yankees: blacks, mestizos, Indians, Filipinos, Turks, Chinese, Jews, Arabs, Sioux aborigines, born or naturalized in the USA without being recognized as authentic Americans.

Unable to fight in the real battle, they were involved in races in the mud, climbing a threatening vertical pole. There were even fights between pygmies. Many of the participants were plagued by physical and mental problems. They made fun of them, they humiliated them. Coubertin did not attend the Games, he was represented by several colleagues and he harshly criticized the barbarity. Discrimination has continued to occur, and the ambition has increased to be the theater of muscle operations in favor of the merchants, the transnationals with the big chunk, especially after the impulse of Samaranch and his story of embracing dialectics to save Olympism, and in truth destroy the essence of the event, by embracing more strongly the dogmatic marriage of Mr. Money with the right.

With the little trick of being apolitical, the IOC has been able to dance with evil at various stages. For example, the venues in Berlin in 1936 and, therefore, providing support to fascism and allowing the use of the contest to disseminate Nazi ideology; to Los Angeles in 1984 while a dangerous anti-communist hysteria was publicly vibrating there to and against everything that smelled of progress; and to Seoul in 1988, at inconvenient times given what was happening in South Korea at the time, in addition to the avoidance of North Korea. Cuba abstained from participating in the XXIII and XXIV Games out of solidarity, sportsmanship, and humanism.

It also proposed anti-sectarian solutions in search of unity. They ignored them. The absence reported damage to our sports movement. However, Fidel had taught us long before that "we like to win gold medals, but more important than gold medals are sports and physical education themselves" (September 1, 1976). He deepened it even further on February 24, 1988: "We do not exchange principles for a few gold medals..." Following these concepts, we act.

The Commander in Chief has given his opinion on the issues related to the venues of the multiple competitions, first recognizing that "the principles of Olympicism that is talked about so much have been transformed into commercial policies around sports (July 26, 1999). And that "sport has been prostituted and commercialized, regardless of its role as an instrument for the health and well-being of the people (August 13, 1999). There lies the root of arbitrariness in that sense, of doping, of muscle theft.

As the Commander in Chief added on that date: "the countries with the greatest wealth and development in the world have been exclusively privileged throughout the century with the venues for the Olympic Games (...). The granting of the venue for an Olympics in a specific country must move away from the method that has been progressively established of putting the venue up for auction, where the country that has more money and offers more things has the possibility of achieving the same..."

In the speech he points out one of those victimized by this scourge that disrespects even history: "On the centenary of the 1896 Olympics, it must have been given to Athens. They received (the United States) the see for the fourth time in this century and relegated Athens." On July 26, 1999, he had attacked that type of injustice: "It's the only rich countries that can, in reality, constantly host major competitions, organize Olympics, buy athletes."

In March 1988 he noted: "The Olympics until now have served, above all, to showcase the wealth, the good

nutrition, the excellent technique of the rich industrialized countries." He called to continue fighting "so that the Olympics are also a right of poor countries and not of the super-rich" (September 29, 2000). He goes further: "We have to fight against the vile and vulgar commercialization of sport" (February 23, 2001). He clarifies: "Healthy sport is incompatible with consumerism and waste, which is at the root of the current and irreversible economic and social crisis of the globalized world" (August 7, 2007). Everything raised in this text has to do with other multiple competitions.

What our Senior Athlete warned on July 15, 1983 is valid: "Sport, PASO and the Olympic movement were also made for the people of the Caribbean and Latin America." Panama Sport must interpret it especially. I don't want to fail to mention that barbarities carried out against the America of Bolívar and Martí cannot be allowed, such as the Yankee attempt to prevent the work of Cubans in San Juan 1966, defeated by the Delegation of Dignity, and the most recent: not giving visas or giving them late to compete in various tournaments, and the staging of the Caribbean Series in Miami without being from the area or deserving it, in search of profits, of the show. If they are carried out, the culprits must be punished whoever they are.

**Translated by Amilkal Labañino / CubaSí Translation Staff**

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