

Concerning China

Many sports officials and athletes have recently been to mainland China. The comments in the press concerning the IOC's attitude towards this huge country are so varied and contradictory that we feel the time has come today to recall the origin of the whole affair.

In 1922, the IOC coopted Dr. Cheting T. Wang, of Shanghai, and received the Chinese Olympic Committee as a member¹.

Dr. Wang was, at the time, President of the Federation of the Far Eastern Games, which had been founded in 1913. In this capacity, he had organized the Far Eastern Games in Shanghai in 1921 and played a big part in their success. Being at the same time a career diplomat and China's delegate to the Versailles Treaty negotiations, he was quite naturally chosen by Baron de Coubertin and his Executive Committee to join the Olympic assembly. Dr. Wang later became Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kuomintang. His responsibilities as a statesman kept him more and more in Chungking. This is undoubtedly why, in 1939, the IOC elected a second member for China: Dr. H.H. Kung.

Dr. Cheting T. Wang followed the destinies of Chang Kai-shek's government and

¹ In this connection it should be pointed out that in those days the notion of a National Committee was quite different from what it is today. In the twenties, a country, a region, a geographical unit could join the IOC at the same time as one or two individual members, as soon as proof of sporting or athletic activity had been supplied. The country's most representative organization became the IOC's direct correspondent, while the National Committee was set up every time the Olympic Games were held and only for their duration. Today, the IOC *recognizes* an NOC; it no longer receives it as a member. In addition, the NOC's are now permanent organizations.

retired in Hong Kong, becoming an honorary member of the IOC in 1957 and remaining so until his death in 1961. His colleague, Dr. Kung, very seldom attended the IOC's sessions, moved to New York in 1949, and finally vanished completely from the Olympic scene in 1955.

After the Second World War, in 1947, the IOC selected a third member for China:



Dr. Cheting T. Wang

Mr. Shou Yi Tung. Mr. Tung was a brilliant all-round athlete, being a member of the national basketball, football, baseball, athletics and tennis teams. As a student he had gone to Springfield College in Massachusetts (USA) for two years. An instructor in physical education, he was made head of the Institute of Physical Education of the YMCA in Tientsin. In 1944, he was appointed secretary general of the China National Amateur Athletic Federation, which acted as the Chinese Olympic Committee and had its headquarters in Nanking. Shortly afterwards Mr. Tung joined the ranks of the followers of Mao Tse Tung and went to live in Peking.

So much for the Chinese members of the IOC.

What was the position of sport in China before the start of the "affair", which has not yet been settled?

The Chinese had regularly taken part in the Far Eastern Games. Their most popular Olympic sports were athletics, swimming

and basketball. At the Amsterdam Session, in 1928, Mr. Tsung Yee Lo, a diplomat, made a speech to the IOC “expressing the interest of the Chinese world in Olympism and promising a big participation in the Los Angeles Games.” This participation was purely formal, in fact, since only one athlete, Mr. Cheng Chung Liu, represented his 400 million fellow-countrymen in the 100 m and 200 m heats.

To the 1936 Games in Berlin, on the other hand, China sent 52 male athletes and 2 female athletes. In London, in 1948, 26 men were entered for the sports events and seven for the art contests.

The Oslo Session (the 46th) was held in February 1952. None of the three members of the IOC for China attended. By this time they were in two opposing camps: Dr. Wang and Mr. Kung for the “nationalists”, Mr. Shou Yi Tung for mainland China. Nor did they attend the following sessions.

And yet, on the announcement of the Games of the 15th Olympiad in Helsinki in 1952, the representatives of the Committees of Formosa and Peking wrote to the IOC asking it to take a definite position. Each claimed to be “the only legally constituted organization with which the IOC could deal.”

In actual fact, the Olympic Committee recognized by the IOC which had had its headquarters in Shanghai until 1946 and then in Nanking, moved in 1951, with all its files to Taipei, where 19 of its 25 officials resided from then on.

Mr. Edström, the Swede, who was presiding over a session of the IOC at Helsinki in 1952, for the last time, reminded members that “the Olympic organization must ignore racial, religious and political questions and that its aim is the union of the youth of the World.”

Mr. François Piétri, a member of the IOC for France, then submitted the following motion, which was adopted by a majority of the votes.

“Without prejudice to the final decisions it will be called on to take concerning the respective situations of the Chinese People’s Republic and the State of Taiwan—which will depend mainly on a precise determination of the international status of these two entities—the IOC authorizes the athletes of both countries, in agreement with the Organizing Committee of the Helsinki Games, to take part in the events of the present Olympiad in all sports in which the corresponding International Federations have accepted their entry.”

38 men and 2 women from Peking took part in the 1952 Games. No athlete was entered by Formosa.

The next year a National Olympic Committee was set up in Peking. It was recognized by the IOC at the Athens Session in 1954, under the name of “Olympic Committee of the Chinese Republic”. The “Chinese Olympic Committee”, which now had its headquarters at Taipei, continued to be recognized.

In 1956, Nationalist China took part in the Melbourne Games while mainland China

withdrew its athletes at the last moment “for political reasons”¹.

At the 52nd Session of the IOC held prior to the Melbourne Games, Mr. Shou Yi Tung, the only Chinese member of the IOC present, was asked by the Committee to see to what extent a mixed team could be formed, representing the two Chinas, like that of the two Germanies at the following Games, in Rome in 1960.

Mr. Tung reappeared in Sofia in 1957 for the 53rd Session of the IOC. He made a protest concerning the use of the incorrect name for his country. He asked that it should be corrected to “People’s Democratic Republic of China”. This request was accepted by the Session. A few political outbursts on the part of Mr. Tung caused him to be called to order by the President Avery Brundage. However, calm seemed to reign between the IOC and Peking.

At the beginning of August 1958, there was a dramatic turn of events. A short statement to the press informed the world that the Olympic Committee of the People’s Democratic Republic of China was resigning from the Olympic Movement. Mr. Tung sent in his resignation to the IOC accompanied by a long diatribe against its President and his colleagues. The official announcement reached the headquarters

of the IOC on 25th August. Simultaneously, the International Federations of that country resigned from the International Athletics, Basketball, Football, Wrestling, Weight-Lifting, Swimming, Shooting and Tennis Federations¹.

On 30th August, the IOC accepted Mr. Tung’s resignation and took note at the same time of the withdrawal of the Committee of the People’s Democratic Republic from the Olympic Movement.

The next Session of the IOC, the 55th, was held in Munich in May 1959. The following motion proposed by Lord Killanin was adopted:

“The Chinese Olympic Committee with its headquarters at Taipeh (Taiwan) shall be informed that it can no longer be recognized under this name, in view of the fact that it no longer administers sport in China. Its name will be removed from the official list. If an application for recognition were to be submitted to the IOC under another name, the question would then be re-examined.”

And so the door was left open to the two Chinas.

The matter was taken up again at San Francisco in 1960, resulting in the following announcement:

“About two years ago, the IOC informed the Olympic Committee in Peking that it could not accept the idea that it administered Olympic Sport in Taiwan (Formosa). At the same time, the IOC notified the Olympic Committee situated at Taipeh of

¹ It should be remembered that six National Olympic Committees withdrew at the last minute from the Melbourne Games. Switzerland, Egypt and the Netherlands chose this way of showing their disapproval of the Russians, who had just marched into Budapest. The Lebanon and Irak were protesting against the action of the British, the French and the Israelis in Egypt. Finally, the People’s Republic of China would not agree to the China of Formosa taking part in the Melbourne Games.

¹ In this connection the Marquess of Exeter, in the Olympic Review No. 44, explained in detail the position of the International Amateur Athletic Federation, of which he was President.

the following decision reached by the IOC at its 55th Session in Munich: the Olympic Committee of Taipeh was not in a position to administer Olympic sport in mainland China, but could do so in Taiwan; consequently, its name should be altered. It was then decided to exclude the word China from its name. At the IOC Session in San Francisco, it was announced that the final decision concerning the name of the Committee should be made at the Rome Session in August 1960.

However, in order to avoid athletes from Taiwan being debarred from taking part in the Games of the 17th Olympiad, the IOC allowed the Organizing Committee to accept their entries through the organization which was known at the time as the Olympic Committee of the Republic of China.

It is hoped that this announcement will make it possible to shed light on this affair, which has been distorted in certain circles during the past few months. The position adopted by the IOC shows once again that this body is interested not in politics but in the sporting youth of the world. An international sports organization, the IOC, in accordance with its rules, deals with those who actually administer Olympic sport in a given country."

As a result of this agreement, the athletes entered by the Olympic Committee of the Republic of China paraded, in Rome, behind the sign bearing the name of Formosa, which gave rise to many protests on their part.

At the Tokyo Games, the delegation from Formosa (official name) was allowed to mark the three letters ROC (Republic of China) on its equipment, and in 1968, for the Mexico Games, the title "the team of

the Republic of China" was officially accepted.

So much for the past...
And how about the future?

The Olympic Committee of the Republic of China is still recognized under this name. Its headquarters are in Taipeh. A member of the IOC for that country was elected in 1970: Mr. Henry Hsu.

In order to form a new Olympic Committee eligible to apply for recognition by the IOC, the sports officials of the People's Republic of China must gain recognition by the corresponding international federations for five of their national federations for Olympic sports.

At present, no Olympic International Federation has recognized a national federation of mainland China.

In addition, the statutes submitted must comply with IOC rules.

These requirements do not seem to offer insurmountable difficulties. The real stumbling block seems rather to be the demands still made by Peking today, which are the same as those that led to the rupture in 1958: the withdrawal of the IOC's recognition of the Taipeh Committee.

Skilled diplomacy should be able to overcome the present difficulties. Hundreds of millions of young athletes are the victims of the present situation. Their absence from the Olympic Movement, their non-participation in the great four-yearly festival are felt by all those who follow the white flag with the five rings and are inspired by the same ideals of goodwill, respect for others, and fraternity.

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