

historians of gender, violence, law enforcement, and memory.

Vivien Miller
University of Nottingham
Nottingham, England

doi:10.1093/jahist/jar262

Dropping the Torch: Jimmy Carter, the Olympic Boycott, and the Cold War. By Nicholas Evan Sarantakes. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010. xvi, 340 pp. Cloth, \$90.00, ISBN 978-0-521-19477-8. Paper, \$28.99, ISBN 978-0-521-17666-8.)

During the 1980 presidential campaign there was a bumper sticker that read: "Carter. He kept us out of the Olympics." Those were the days when Republican bumper stickers could be subtle, humorous, and not embarrassed to make an obscure historical reference to Woodrow Wilson's 1916 slogan about keeping the nation out of war.

Jimmy Carter did keep the United States out of the Olympics in 1980 and that is the topic of an excellent new book. Nicholas Evan Sarantakes provides a well-written account of the Carter administration's efforts to punish the Soviet Union for the 1979 invasion of Afghanistan by boycotting the forthcoming athletic competitions in Moscow. The boycott was popular in the United States and in other Western nations when it was first announced. It appeared to be a relatively simple way to diminish the prestige and publicity that were expected to accompany the first Olympic Games ever scheduled for the Soviet capital. More than public condemnations in the United Nations or an embargo on American grain sales or pronouncements of new commitments to defend the Persian Gulf, the olympic boycott was supposed to be the sanction that hurt the Soviet leadership. It did not.

The boycott ended up being much more difficult to implement than originally anticipated. Early ideas about moving the games away from the Soviet Union or developing some alternative competitions that would provide a suitable venue for Western athletes turned out to be hopelessly impractical. Decision making about international athletic competition was complicated by a variety of committees,

federations, and associations that might follow the wishes of an American president or elected leaders in various countries. As time passed, the boycott became more controversial and less consequential. The number of participating countries decreased. In the end, there was a modest setback to Soviet dreams of international acclaim and acceptance, and there were a lot of gold medals won by competitors from communist countries. Four years later, the Olympic Games in Los Angeles were the mirror image of the Moscow games, this time with Soviet athletes staying home.

The olympic boycott was not exactly Carter's finest hour, and no one should judge his presidency by considering only the complicated conflicts between his administration and the barons of international sport. In the end, not much happened. The modern olympic movement was not destroyed. Soviet troops stayed in Afghanistan without ever gaining effective control of that forbidding land. Carter was defeated for reelection in 1980 for reasons that were only partly related to the souring of Soviet-American relations. And Communist party leaders, old and later young, clung to power in Moscow for another decade.

Sarantakes tells this story of Cold War confrontation and international sport intrigue exceedingly well. He provides equally vivid descriptions of Soviet-American hockey games and bureaucratic political games within the Carter administration. He makes good use of interviews conducted with many of the key players and keeps his readers engaged in a foreign-policy case study that has many characters and complications but not many consequences.

Robert A. Strong
Washington and Lee University
Lexington, Virginia

doi:10.1093/jahist/jar198

Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter: The Georgia Years, 1924-1974. By E. Stanly Godbold Jr. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010. xii, 355 pp. \$29.95, ISBN 978-0-19-975344-4.)

In this first of two volumes on the life and public career of Jimmy Carter, E. Stanly Godbold Jr. offers a thoroughly researched and evenhanded look at Carter's journey from a