

Paula Hunt
In the Stadium
(the 14 categories)

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Janet Holmes à Court AC



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Polis outside the agora

March 2016

Dear Paula,

Paula Hunt
In the Stadium
(the 14 categories)
16.03.16–02.04.16

For a while now, I feel like you have been looking for a *polis* inside your stadiums. As you probably know, we generally associate a *polis* with ancient Greece, a sacred space located on an acropolis or hill and often fortified (perhaps more like the old Waverly Park, but less windy) — a site for public political encounter and democratic negotiation, the place where political subjectivation emerges and takes place - the negotiation of difference and disagreement.¹

I know you remember the poster I posted inside the *Stadium* Facebook.

1. Lecture by Prof. Erik Swyngedouw: “Exit Polis: Musings on the Post-Political and Post-Democratic City” Center for Metropolitan Studies, June 16, 2009, 6-8 pm.

A visual-cue for an Olympiad that never happened.

This July will be the 80th anniversary of that event that never happened. Baurdrillard's suggestion that 9/11 didn't happen, kind of neatly finds a material reality in this events un-happening - similarly asking, in a world dominated by the promise of one power, one culture and one economy, what becomes of the Other, of those with radically different histories, customs, identities.

Do they move outside the stadium? Who's stadium? In the U.S the size and scale of the fortresses mean many are privately owned.

In 1936, when most of the world was participating in Hitler's Nazi Olympics, Spain and Russian boycotted. Whilst Russia was under the Rule of an increasingly powerful and paranoid Stalin, Spain had recently disposed of their King and elected a socialist government declaring itself united for the first time, and allowing Catalunya independence within it. The optimism of social cohesion and collectivity was extended in Barcelona attempting to represent difference and make a stand against the fascist and racist doctrine that would soon explode from Berlin and into Europe, and to which they saw Hitler's 1936 Olympics representing.

Trade Unions of Workers from around the World, as well as members of Socialist and Communist parties rallied together to send athletes and teams. The People's Olympics, as they would come to be known, would included chess, theatre and arts exhibitions.

With increasing political unrest generated by a frustrated army and isolated right-wing - Frances 3 year civil war and 40 year Franco rule would see the Peoples Olympics never to

happen. With borders closed, some athletes never made it to Spain, others were caught in the violence and armed conflict that saw civilians and police defending the promise of a liberated working class.

Agamben has noted that depoliticisation is characterised by what was once a way of living - essentially an active condition — has now become a purely passive juridical status, in which action and inaction, the private and the public are progressively blurred and become indistinguishable.²

I am wondering if July 1936 in Barcelona demarcates a kind of place for depoliticisation and site for the post-political - a civil war that blurred the geometries of power, the potential for ambiguous political objectives (as the war evolved these became less evident).

I am wondering, if in your 14 chapters, it is not only what your stadiums frame that inform us, but also what they cannot.

Lisa Radford x

PS. Since banning bull fighting, the hippodrome in Barcelona has been converted into a high-end shopping centre and viewing deck - the organised chaos of shopping and a room-with-a-view - Juridical capital with a tower to stop those CNT and Durutti Column fighters.

2. Lecture by Giorgio Agamben, "For a theory of destituent power, Public lecture in Athens, 16.11.2013, Invitation and organization by Nicos Poulantzas Institute and SYRIZA Youth





BARCELONA
22-26 DE JULIOL 1936

OLIMPIADA POPULAR, 22-26 JULIO
OLYMPIADE POPULAIRE, 22-26 JUILLET
VOLKS OLYMPIADE, 22-26 JULI
PEOPLES' OLYMPIAD, 22-26 JULY

COMITE ORGANITZADOR
RAMBLA SANTA MONICA 25
(C. A. D. C. I.)
BARCELONA

PUBLICITAT COLL · TALLERS 7 · BARCELONA

**OLIMPIADA POPULAR
DE BARCELONA
BARCELONA**

22 al 26 JULIOL 1936

**COMITE ORGANITZADOR COMITE ORGANIZADOR COMITE d'ORGANISATION
ORGANIZATION COMMITTEE ORGANISATIONS KOMITTEE**

Rambla Sta. Mònica, 25 (CA.D.C.I.)

Telefon 21204

RS/-

12th. June, 1936.

Sir Walter Citrine,

Secretary, Trade Union Congress General Council,
Transport House, Smith Square,
LONDON, S.W.1.

Dear Friend,

We have great pleasure in inviting you to attend the Peoples' Olympiad which, as you will have learned from the press, is being held here from 22nd. to 26th. July this year.

Under separate cover we are forwarding you the manifesto of the Peoples' Olympiad, and you will see from this that the object of the Barcelona Games is to promote the true spirit, of the Olympiad - the fraternity of peoples and races - which cannot exist in the atmosphere of Berlin. A great deal of propoganda work has been done in all countries against the militarisation and fascisation of sport and, although such propoganda has immense value, it is necessary to give a practical demonstration of international anti-fascist sport, and it is just this that the Peoples' Olympiad is going to do. We have the support, both moral and financial, of the Catalonian and Spanish Governments; the whole Spanish people is behind us, and President Lluís Companys of the Catalonian Government is the Chairman of our Honour Committee.

More than 1,000 sportsmen are coming from France, 150 from Switzerland, 60 from Belgium, over 100 from the Soviet Union, and also delegations from Norway, Algeria, Palestine, the United States, etc. etc. Of particular interest to anti-fascists are the Jewish sportsmen coming from Palestine, the teams of exiled German-Jews from Paris and Amsterdam, and the Negro sportsmen from U.S.A. More entries are arriving every day, and the success of the Peoples' Olympiad as a mighty manifestation against the prostitution of sport and a blow at the Hitler Olympiad is already assured.

We are in touch with the British Workers' Sports Assocn. and also with the British Committee for Fair-play in Sport and we expect that Britain will also be well represented at the Games. In order to facilitate matters we have offered to make a grant to assist British sportsmen with their transportation expenses.

A British Committee for the Peoples' Olympiad has now been formed, and the Secretary is:-

Mr. A. Warner,
75 Gilling Court,
Belsize Grove,
London, N.W.3.

From this Committee may be obtained full information regarding reduced railway fares, special train facilities, etc. etc.

We should be very grateful if you would use your influence to promote interest in the Peoples' Olympiad, and we are sure that you, as a convinced anti-fascist, will appreciate the importance of making sure that Great Britain plays a prominent part in Games of such international interest and significance. We ask you, in the name of all lovers of true sport and fair-play, to do your utmost for the Peoples' Olympiad and to co-operate with those organisations who are preparing for it in Britain.

We sincerely hope that you will be able to come to Barcelona personally, as the guest of this committee, and we assure you of a hearty welcome from the Catalonian and Spanish peoples' sport movement.

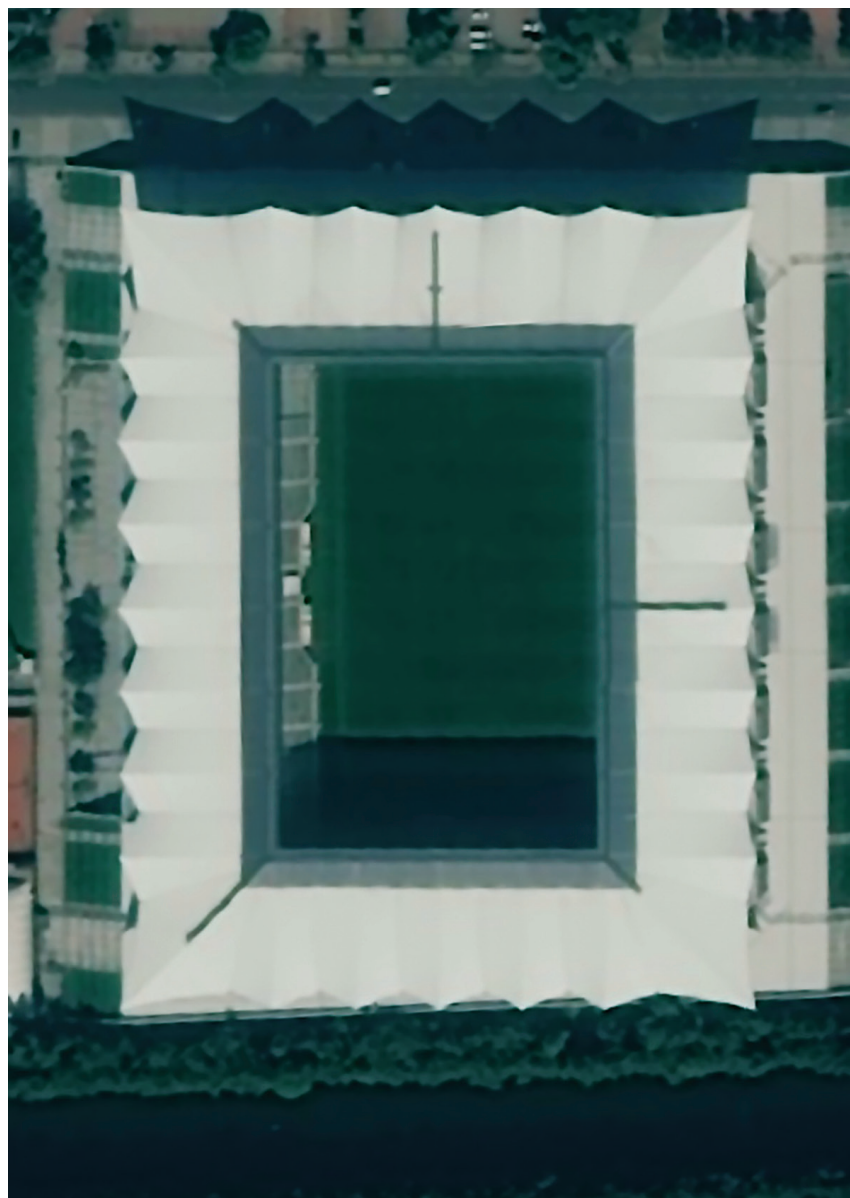
Trusting to receive your support and assistance, and hoping to hear from you,

Yours for Popular Sport,
ORGANISING COMMITTEE
BARCELONA PEOPLES' OLYMPIAD.

Documents on the People's Olympiad from "Trabajadores: The Spanish Civil War through the eyes of organised labour", a digitised collection of more than 13,000 pages of documents from the archives of the British Trades Union Congress held in the Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick, accessed in March 2016

<http://contentdm.warwick.ac.uk/cdm/search/collection/scw/searchterm/olympiad!olimpiada/field/all!all/mode/all!all/conn/or!and/order/nosort>





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